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The Ethnic Identity of Returning Immigrants to a Pueblo in Yucatan

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Western Michigan University

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THE ETHNIC IDENTITY OF RETURNING IMMIGRANTS TO
A PUEBLO IN YUCATÁN

by

David Piacenti

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Sociology
Advisor: Paul Ciccantell, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
December 2009
THE ETHNIC IDENTITY OF RETURNING IMMIGRANTS TO A PUEBLO IN YUCATÁN

David Piacenti, Ph.D.
Western Michigan University, 2009

This study seeks to understand: 1) motivations for leaving and, if applicable, returning to Madrina (pseudonym) Yucatán, México from Kalamazoo, Michigan and/or San Francisco, California; 2) how social conditions in San Francisco compare to Kalamazoo and how this might affect ethnic identity; 3) the impact of immigration on the immigrant’s ethnic identity; 4) immigrant perception of change in ethnic identity of family and Madrina. The study employs 52 semi-structured interviews of returned and non-returned Yucatec-Mayan immigrants, as well as an ethnographic description of Kalamazoo, San Francisco, and Madrina. Findings suggest that 1) Yucatec-Mayan immigrants use a family-centered, value-rational decision making process in leaving and returning to Madrina; 2) the ethnic identity of Yucatec-Mayans is still resistant to “Mexicanizing,” and “transnationalizing,” as 80% of the sample still claim “Yucatec-Mayan” as their ethnic identity; 3) immigrants who return from racialized, urban environments return with “U.S. cultural remittances” which are urbanizing the town. Madrina’s immigrants and citizenry attempt to incorporate the perceived positives of immigration into Yucatec-Mayan lifeways, while discouraging unfavorably viewed behaviors from the U.S.; 4) the incorporation of outside lifeways into “being Yucatec-Mayan” operates to temporarily maintain local, traditional lifeways and rituals; 5) San Francisco reflects a more intensely
racialized, segregated environment, which is represented by the returned *cholo*, whose “urban gangbanger” mentality confronts the traditional, rural ethnic identity. San Francisco also affects the overall perception of immigration and desire for permanent U.S. residence. Of the San Francisco cohort, 42% say immigration is “positive overall.” Conversely, 62% of the Kalamazoo cohort says that immigration is “positive overall.” Only 29% of the San Francisco cohort desire permanent residence in the U.S. while 54% of the Kalamazoo cohort desire permanent U.S. residence. Therefore, the suburban context of Kalamazoo may increase desire for permanent U.S residence. This is profound, as permanent U.S residence would indicate a qualitatively stronger change in ethnic identity.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the following people, organizations, and foundations for emotional, academic, and financial support of this project. First, I would like to acknowledge the emotional and financial support of my wife Julie Piacenti, my grandparents Delpho and Mae Piacenti, Harlin and Gladys Boyd, John and Mary Fehrenbacher, as well as my parents Delpho and Mary Piacenti and Bill and Liz Newton. I would also like to acknowledge the emotional and financial support of my brother Michael Piacenti, and sisters Maria and Melissa Piacenti. I would like to acknowledge the friendship and inspiration of Carl Hacker and the mentoring of Dr. Warren Handel.

I would like to acknowledge the academic direction and personal support of Dr. Paul Ciccantell, Dr. Gregory Howard, and Dr. Douglas Davidson of the Department of Sociology and Dr. Sarah Hill of the Department of Anthropology. I would like to acknowledge Dr. James Biles of the Department of Geography at Indiana University for introducing me to my now lifelong love of Yucatán, México. I would like to acknowledge the many faculty in the Department of Sociology at Western Michigan for their encouragement and direction. I would like to acknowledge the Department of Sociology-Kercher Center for Social Research, the Graduate College at Western Michigan University for travel and research support, the Patricia Lee Thompson Foundation for travel and research support, and the
Acknowledgements—Continued

Department of Anthropology and Sociology at Indiana University-South Bend for academic and financial support.

Lastly, I would like to thank the many men and women from Madrina with whom I spoke to for this project, for without your gift of conversation, this project would not have happened—good job and good luck to you and all of your loved ones. I would like to acknowledge the Madrina town government and police department for assisting with logistics, as well as the citizenry in general, who did more than just tolerate a stranger, but accepted and welcomed that stranger warmly. You are all truly special. Finally, I would like to acknowledge Ligia Quintal Sosa, the Gonzalez Euan family of Madrina, Yucatán, México —Don Juan, Doña Angelita, Don Lisandro, Pilar, John, Jassivi, Juanito, Jorge, and Lizbeth Arely, who so lovingly opened their doors, minds, and hearts to me while I worked—we are truly family now. *Kanan ta bae 'ex.*

David Piacenti
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................ ii
LIST OF FIGURES .................................................................................................................. xi
PREFACE ................................................................................................................................. 1

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION ..................................................................................................................... 2

The Topic ............................................................................................................................... 2
Data and Methods .................................................................................................................. 2
General Research Questions ................................................................................................. 3
A New Terminology ............................................................................................................... 3

Why the Work is Needed: Three Literature Biases .............................................................. 4

Bias One: New Sending Geographies ................................................................................... 4
Bias Two: New Destination Geographies .............................................................................. 5
Bias Three: Indigenous Im/migrant Literature .................................................................... 6

The Final Need: Social Justice ............................................................................................... 10

Five Findings ......................................................................................................................... 14

One: A Household Model of Im/migration ......................................................................... 14
Two: Still Yucatec-Mayan .................................................................................................... 16
Three: Buying In, Not Selling Out ....................................................................................... 16
Four: Parallel Universes of Lifeways .................................................................................... 19
Table of Contents—Continued

CHAPTER

Five: The Cholos of San Francisco and Their Social Effects ........................................ 20

Outline of the Book ........................................................................................................ 21

II. IMMIGRATION AND GLOBALIZATION: A HISTORY OF THE
AMERICAS ..................................................................................................................... 23

Globalization ................................................................................................................. 23

The Americas: A Regional Context ............................................................................. 29

Mexican History ............................................................................................................ 33

México: 1900-1964 ....................................................................................................... 43

México: 1965-Present ................................................................................................. 49

Globalization in Sum .................................................................................................... 53

III. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF YUCATÁN AND
MADRINA ...................................................................................................................... 55

Social and Economic Trends ...................................................................................... 57

The Sending Context: Madrina .................................................................................. 60

Socio-cultural Demographics ...................................................................................... 64

México Profundo: Daily Language Use ..................................................................... 66

México Profundo: The Ejidos ..................................................................................... 69

México Profundo: Dwellings and Buildings ................................................................ 71

IV. THEORY: IDENTITY, ETHNICITY, AND RACE IN
MÉXICO AND THE U.S. ............................................................................................... 79

Identity ......................................................................................................................... 79
## Table of Contents—Continued

### CHAPTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Identity in Yucatán, México: A Regional and Culturally</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racialized Identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Colonial Structures and Indigenous Identity</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Caste War and Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mexican Revolution and Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henequen: A Regional Economy and a Regional Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancún</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Ethno-politics</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAFTA and Contemporary Ethnopolitics</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Social, Political, and Academic Construction of Maya</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racialization in México</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity and Race in the U.S.</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan-ethnicization in the U.S.</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality and Nationalism in the U.S.</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, and Yucatec-Mayans in the Racial U.S.</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial History of the Southwest</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Pan-ethnicization</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Ethnic Identity in the U.S.</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic and Racial Assimilation of Spanish-speakers in the U.S.</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER

Racism, Racialization, and Nativist Backlash ......................... 119

V. METHODS: EPISTEMOLOGY AND QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW .. 129

My Position and My Agenda .................................................. 129

The Multiple Referents of Yucatán, México: Epistemological Issues ................................................................. 131

Reality Disconnect: Weber’s Ideal and Real Types .................. 134

Referent Languages, Translation, and Methods ...................... 136

Qualitative Coding ............................................................... 137

Research Procedure ............................................................ 141

The Interview ......................................................................... 143

Risks, Costs, and Protections for Subjects .............................. 146

Potential Benefits of Research ................................................ 147

Confidentiality of Data .......................................................... 147

Data Analysis ......................................................................... 148

Interviewee Demographics ....................................................... 149

The Sample ............................................................................ 149

Age ......................................................................................... 150

Age At Decision to Im/migrate .............................................. 150

Number of Trips ..................................................................... 150

Total Years in the U.S. ............................................................ 151

Languages .............................................................................. 152
CHAPTER

Marital Status ................................................................. 152
Number of Siblings in Immigrant Household ..................... 153
Destinations ..................................................................... 153

VI. DATA: A FAMILY-CENTERED THEORETICAL MODEL
OF IMMIGRATION .................................................................. 154

A Family-Centered Immigration Model .............................. 154
Data-driven Immigration Theory: Household Economics ..... 155

Data: Why I Left ............................................................... 163
Pesos for the Family ......................................................... 166
Curiosity and Travel Experience ....................................... 169

Causes, Not Motivations: The Immigrants Call Out
Governmental Corruption ............................................... 170

Data: Why I Returned ....................................................... 172
Family ............................................................................. 173
For Land and Traditions ................................................... 175
For Family Building ........................................................... 176

Problems and Instability .................................................... 177

VII. DATA: ETHNIC IDENTITY OF THE INTERVIEWEES ............ 181

Self-Selection of Ethnic Identity ........................................ 181
Maya .............................................................................. 182

Yucatec-Maya and Yucateco .............................................. 183
# Table of Contents—Continued

## CHAPTER

Mexicano-Yucateco ................................................................. 185  
Mexicano ............................................................................. 186  
Hispánico ........................................................................... 187  

### VIII. DATA: ETHNIC IDENTITY AND CHANGE ......................... 189  

Introduction .......................................................................... 189  

Data: Changes in Self-Ethnic Identity .................................. 189  

No Change in Self-Ethnic Identity ....................................... 189  

Changes in Self-Ethnic Identity ........................................... 192  

Data: Familial Changes ....................................................... 194  

No Change in Familial Ethnic Identity ............................... 194  

Familial Ethnic Change through Economic Transformation ... 195  

Familial Change through Intermarriage, Changing Gender Roles, and Familial Abandonment ........................... 197  

Data: Madrina’s Change ....................................................... 201  

New Houses ........................................................................ 202  

Change in Town Ethnic Identity: A Blend of Hopes and Concerns ................................................................. 203  

Intergenerational Change: Normative Ethics and the Racialized Cholo ......................................................... 208  

### IX. DATA: THE QUESTION OF PERMANENT SETTLEMENT ............ 219  

Introduction .......................................................................... 219  

I Will Not Settle in the U.S. .................................................... 220
## Table of Contents—Continued

### CHAPTER

- San Francisco and Kalamazoo: Age Differences? .................. 259
- San Francisco and Kalamazoo: Concerns over the Cholo ........ 259
- San Francisco and Kalamazoo: The Commonalities ............. 260

### XI. CONCLUSION: A NEW ETHNIC MINORITY IN MADRINA ....... 263

- Town Concerns over Im/migration: A Postmodern Context ....... 263
- The Fiesta: A Seven-Day Microcosm of Ethnic Change ...... 270
- The Cholo/a at the Fiesta ........................................ 276

### A Postmodern View of Ethnic Change ................................ 280

### Review: Five Findings ............................................ 287

- One: A Household Model of Im/migration ....................... 287
- Two: Still Yucatec-Mayan ......................................... 288
- Three: Buying in, Not Selling Out ............................... 288
- Four: Parallel Universes of Lifeways ............................ 289
- Five: The Cholos of San Francisco and Their Social Effects ... 289

### Future Research .................................................. 291

### Im/migration Policy Recommendations .......................... 291

### ENDNOTES .................................................................. 294

### APPENDICES ................................................................ 295

| A. Glossary of Spanish and Yucatec-Mayan Terms and Phrases  | 295 |
| B. Data Summary .................................................. 300 |
APPENDICES

C. Interviews ................................................................. 301

D. Approval letter from the Human Subjects
   Institutional Review Board ........................................... 308

BIBLIOGRAPHY .............................................................. 309
LIST OF FIGURES

1. Change in Rural Hispanic Immigration 1990-2000 ........................................... 8
2. Distribution of Self-reporting Hispanic-Americans, Michigan, 1980 .......... 8
3. Distribution of Self-reporting Hispanic-Americans, Michigan, 1990 .......... 9
4. Distribution of Self-reporting Hispanic-Americans, Michigan, 2000 .......... 9
5. Indigenous Languages of México................................................................. 67
6. Ejido Tracts, Yucatán State, Yucatán Peninsula ............................................. 70
7. Solar in Madrina ............................................................................................ 72
8. Type One: Traditional Yucatec-Mayan Naj .................................................... 72
9. Type Two: Yucatec-Mayan Naj with Masonry ............................................... 74
10. Type Three: Traditional Mexican House of Spanish Influence .................... 76
11. Type Four: House of Western, North American Influence ............................ 76
12. El Cruzob: El Santuario de la Cruz Parlante (The Sanctuary of the Talking Cross) .......................................................................................................................... 87
13. The Restaurant Poc Chuc .................................................................................. 249
14. The Restaurant Yucatasia ................................................................................ 250
15. The Mission Competition: El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras ............. 250
16. Madrina’s San Francisco Baseball Team ......................................................... 252
17. Madrina’s Catholic Church .............................................................................. 273
18. End of Gremio Procession at the Church ....................................................... 273
19. La Jarana ......................................................................................................... 275
20. A Group of Cholos ......................................................................................... 278

xiii
PREFACE

It is the summer of love—2009. Yucatec-Mayans are on their way to San Francisco to try their luck, reconnect with family and friends, and become a success. Some would make it, some would leave their hearts in San Francisco and light out for Kalamazoo, Michigan, and some would return to Madrina—Pesoless but wiser for the experience. I am a writer and a traveler—just as they. In San Francisco, Kalamazoo, and Madrina, this song is cited and sung by Yucatec-Mayans—it is their tongue-in-cheek anthem—sung with a smile and a wink. The song can be heard blaring from newly built houses in Madrina with U.S. flags on their walls and Yucatec-Mayan food aromas wafting towards the street—cutting through the blazing hot heat and humidity of the mid-afternoon sun. It is time almorzar—lunch time. A time to be born a Yucatec-Mayan and a time to die in foreign frontiers and lands, a time to plant, a time to uproot and migrate, a time to tear down a Yucatec-Mayan house, a time to rebuild a concrete house, a time for revolution, the winds of change—living like a migrating rolling stone. This tale is a fact, a facticity, and a fiction, all rolled into truths that reside somewhere between the three places. This is one version of many tales and many versions of one tale.
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The Topic

To study ethnic identity is to examine the process of defining self and to what extent that self is situated in a socially identifiable ethnic group or groups. Conversely, to study immigration and migration is to study the impact of population movements across neighborhoods, regions, and nations. Immigration and migration imply the possibility of moving away from the spaces inhabited by one’s original ethnic group or groups, which means the process of population movement is an appropriate phenomenon in which to study potential changes in ethnic identity. To be sure, both ethnic identity and immigration and migration both affect and are affected by economic, cultural, and political change, as well as inter-group conflict, inequality, racial and ethnic tension and segregation, and inter-generational change. This is the corazón or heart of this project.

Data and Methods

This project is a description and analysis of over 50 semi-structured interviews of returned and non-returned Yucatec-Mayan im/migrants from Madrina (pseudonym) Yucatán who lived in Kalamazoo, Michigan and/or San Francisco, California, as well as an ethnographic description of life for the im/migrants and their friends and family in Madrina, Yucatán, Kalamazoo, Michigan, and San Francisco. This sample consists of indigenous, Yucatec-Mayan speakers from the state of Yucatán as demonstrated by lifeways in Madrina as well as the material, economic, familial, behavioral, and linguistic cultural choices presented in qualitative interviews. This research is the culmination of a research project that stems from six
months of fieldwork in Yucatán, México, five years in Kalamazoo, Michigan and more than a month in San Francisco, California studying Yucatec-Mayan im/migration, the Yucatecan im/migrant and established community, and ethnic identity. All Spanish and Yucatec-Mayan words are italicized with definitions that can be found in Appendix A.

A New Terminology

In the project, I use the new term “im/migrant.” The term “migrant” implies an agenda of moving to work temporarily and then returning. Likewise, “immigrant” implies an agenda of leaving and settling in another location. My study has found that workers who first have a temporary agenda may settle, and those first having an agenda of settling may return. In the interviews, agendas are always changing and contingent, and so, claiming the sample is only “migrants” or only “immigrants” falsely assumes a lack of friction, unexpected life events, and unexpected feelings that does not allow the individual action, decision, and volition as their agendas change with the social, cultural, and economic currents of life. Identity as a migrant or immigrant is always unknown, unfolding, emerging, and, hence, outside of meaningful, stable definition. In other words—things happen, things change, hearts happen, hearts change.

General Research Questions

Research questions consist of: 1) what are the motivations for leaving and, (if applicable), returning?; 2) how do the social conditions and im/migrant experiences in the older, urban receiving context of San Francisco, California and the newer, suburban receiving context of Kalamazoo, Michigan compare and how the
differences might alter ethnic identity?; 3) what are the general effects of
im/migration on perceptions of ethnic identity, including desire to live permanently in
the U.S.?; 4) what is the holistic impact of im/migration on perceptions of ethnic
identity of the returned and non-returned im/migrant?; 5) what is the holistic impact
of im/migration on im/migrant perceptions of the ethnic identity of their family?; 6)
what is the holistic impact of im/migration on perceptions of the ethnic identity of the
town citizenry?

Why the Work is Needed: Three Literature Biases

It is important to understand the impact of im/migration in both México and
the U.S. The process of cultural change and potential change in ethnic identity is not
uni-directional. Rather, cultural and ethnic change is reciprocal and dynamic in both
México and the U.S. There are three biases in the literature.

Bias One: New Sending Geographies

The first bias in the literature pertains to Yucatán State and the Yucatán
Peninsula. The amount of sociological research on im/migration from the
southeastern state of Yucatán, México is limited, as im/migration is a relatively new
phenomenon in Yucatán compared to the northern states of México. Central and
northern Mexican states are traditional sending regions and so the focus of most
research is biased towards the northern states, rather than the southeastern Mexican
state of Yucatán. However, for a survey of the emerging literature on Yucatán see
Bias Two: New Destination Geographies

The second bias in the literature pertains to research on Mexican and Latin American im/migration, which is largely focused on the Southwest U.S. rather than the Midwest. This is due to the historically peculiar cultural continuity that the former Mexican territory of the Southwest represents. Since past sociological research on Mexican im/migration has largely focused on the Southwest U.S. rather than the Midwest, this research is important for the complete sociological record. (For a survey of works focused on the southwest, see Massey, Alarcón, Durand, and Gonzalez, 1987, Burke 2002, Macias 2003, Vila 2003, Tomás Rivera Policy Institute 2004, Burke 2004, Durand and Massey 2004, Chideya 2004, Beserra 2005, Gonzalez, 2006, Martinez-Curiel, 2006, Cornelius, Fitzgerald and Lewin Fischer 2007, and Adler 2008).

Social scientists are still grappling to make sense of the 2000 U.S. census, and wait in anticipation of the 2010 census. The 2000 U.S. Census was brimming with demographic shifts towards non-metropolitan, new destinations—including the Midwest, for a new and emergent survey of work on the new geographies and destinations of im/migration like this project, see Jezierski 2002, Fink 2003, Millard and Chapa 2004, Zuñiga and Hernandez-Leon 2005 and Massey 2008. Consequently, spaces in the sociological record exist in the study of both the sending region of Yucatán and receiving region of Kalamazoo, Michigan, which should be compared to im/migration from traditional sending regions in northern México and to traditional receiving regions such as San Francisco.
Bias Three: Indigenous Im/migrant Literature

The third bias is that sociological literature on indigenous im/migrant groups is paltry. History shows that at the national level in the U.S., ethnic identity is subject to redefinition. For example, the 2000 U.S. census allowed respondents to check Hispanic and American Indian, which results in new indigenous categories for Mexican, Central and South American indigenous peoples. With this change, Michigan emerged as the second largest destination state for indigenous Hispanics in the Midwest, behind only Illinois (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

What this implies is that the population was here but uncounted until the census change in political language changed the ethnic character of im/migration. Because of this shift in political language, this project seeks to contribute information about an oft-missed element of im/migration from Latin America—that of the indigenous Latin American im/migrant. For example, although Millard and Chapa (2004) thoroughly discuss new im/migration to the rural Midwest, they fail to mention the special circumstances of primary language indigenous-speaking populations. Their focus is also on the more traditional sending areas of Durango and Aguascalientes México to name a few, rather than on Yucatán as a newer sending region.

To fuse theses three biases together, there has been a recent population increase in indigenous, Yucatec-Maya im/migrants to the new destination of rural, non-metropolitan areas in and around Kalamazoo. Kellogg (2004) states that the Hispanic population, (which includes and obscures many indigenous groups such as the Yucatec-Maya), is increasing in southwest Michigan and the North Central U.S.
In the last ten years, there has been an 11 percent increase in the Hispanic population, with St. Joseph County realizing a 25 percent increase from 2000 to 2003. Millard and Chapa (2004) state that from 1990-2000, the Latino population grew by 80% (compared to only 8% from 1980-1990), or by 800,000 people in the Midwest region, which includes a 61% increase in Michigan alone. Similarly, California is also engaged in a changing racial and ethnic demographic. Figure 1 shows the shift to rural, non-metropolitan destinations in the U.S. Figures 2-4 display the change in the Hispanic population in Michigan from 1980-2000.

The “Spanish speaking only” and “primary Spanish-speaking” myths of Latin American im/migrants is pervasive. Whenever the plight of the Latin American im/migrant is addressed, the language barrier discussed is usually in reference to Spanish and to the experiences of Spanish-speaking people. This project is concerned with primary Yucatec-Mayan speakers whose second language is Spanish, it is in response to a changing census that this project reacts—as well as taking on the more specific, and complex phenomenon of new im/migration from newly arrived indigenous people (for a review of the new literature see Klaver 1998, Burke 2002, Fink 2003, Burke 2004, Cohen 2004, Fox, Jonathan, Rivera-Salgado, Gaspar 2004, Lewin Fischer, Pedro, & Guzmán, Estela. 2004, Cornelius, Wayne, Fitzgerald, David, Lewin Fischer, Pedro 2007, and Adler 2008).

Figure 1
Change in Rural Hispanic Immigration 1990-2000
Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2001

Figure 2
Distribution of Self-reporting Hispanic-Americans, Michigan, 1980
Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2001
Figure 3
Distribution of Self-reporting Hispanic-Americans, Michigan, 1990
Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2001

Figure 4
Distribution of Self-reporting Hispanic-Americans, Michigan, 2000
Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2001
The Final Need: Social Justice

The final need for this project results from the often racist and violent reactions that come whenever im/migration geographies shift. The social climate and mood of the settled im/migrants and im/migrant descendents at the local level, especially when the local level constitutes a new destination such as the Midwest, can range from violent and criminal to tolerant and accepting. Moreover, social infrastructure such as hospitals, law enforcement and policing, and other public safety agencies can be ill-equipped to deal with Spanish-speaking, not to mention Yucatec-Mayan speaking populations. Millard and Chapa (2004) found a broad range of experiences in rural Indiana and Michigan. In Maryland, Zuñiga and Hernandez-Leon (2005) found that im/migrants were crowded into company trailers with their passports taken from them. Stories of married couples in a poultry packing plant in Maryland being forced to live with a third stranger who was male have pushed im/migrants to new environs due to the lack of cultural sensitivity and disrespect for privacy and safety. In Morgantown, North Carolina, it comes in the form of a labor strike and movement towards unionization of exploited im/migrant factory workers (Fink, 2003).

Consequently, this research is important at the local level in Madrina, Yucatán, Kalamazoo, Michigan, and San Francisco, California, as these communities are the poles of human connection that endure most of the changes that are part cause and part effect of im/migration. Historically, new im/migrants have had to endure prejudicial and, at times, violent reactions to their arrival in the U.S. by previously settled im/migrants with all-too-soon nativist perspectives. One inter-racial, inter-
ethnic altercation in the new destination of rural Indiana, which shares a common
demographic change as other Midwestern areas such as Illinois, Michigan,
Wisconsin, and Minnesota, culminated in the spray-painting of the word “México”
over the town name “Ligonier, Indiana” on the welcome sign at the edge of town.
This was followed by near violent reactions by some of the citizens, who felt that they
were indeed being invaded (Millard and Chapa, 2004).

In other new destination areas, however, such as Marshalltown, Iowa,
im/migrants have saved a small Midwestern town from the trajectory of Walmartized
blight that has seen many heartland downtowns gutted. With the tax base slumping
and elementary school attendance declining because of the flight of non-Hispanic
families searching for better opportunities elsewhere, im/migrants revitalized the
town by rehabilitating shops that had been abandoned because of the impact of local
superstores and their low prices. However, even in this locale, people are only
willing to incorporate the new arrivals with the expectation that their culture is
“checked at the door” like a coat to be taken off in lieu of a local, less Hispanic, more
European style. This is enforced in countless city council meetings and public school
meetings throughout the U.S. Zúñiga and Hernandez-Leon (2005, p. 142) quoted a
townsperson, who stated “Conservatives insisted their concerns about...making
English the official language, were not a matter of bias or discrimination, but
‘lawlessness’...with some arguing, ‘we don’t need diversity, we need unity.”

These types of confrontations can and have resulted in reactionary political
policies. For example, House Bill-4437 of 2006, also known as the “Sensenbrenner
Bill,” would have defined new, undocumented im/migrants and their children

11
regardless of their age, as felons facing deportation, effectively barring the children from ever im/migrating to the U.S. This is in stark contrast to the current sanctions, which define undocumented status as a civil misdemeanor. Gamboa (2006, p 2) states, “Any bill produced by the Senate also would have to be reconciled with the get-tough House bill, which would make illegal immigrants [even the babies of illegal immigrants] felons.” More recently, the flu that was rumored to have emerged from a transnational, U.S. owned pork producing company had the following media metamorphosis; at first the influenza was called “H1N1”, which then morphed into “swine flu” and ultimately being called “Mexican swine flu” by some media outlets. This, of course, was coupled with new calls to “close the border.” To be sure, many anti-im/migration advocates were attempting “to not waste a good crisis.” President Obama chief of staff Rahm Emanuel, made this quote famous in reference to the U.S. economic crisis of 2008-9.

As a more recent example of the dance between agency and structure, the Obama administration recently “normalized” relations between the U.S. and Cuba, which allows for the sending of remittances between family members in the U.S. and Cuba. A few weeks later, a star left-handed pitcher from the Cuban national team named Chapman defected while staying in the Netherlands. He was quoted as having “made the best decision of his life” because not only does he have the talent to succeed in the U.S. Major Leagues, but that he now would also be able to support his wife in Cuba—as well as their child who had been born in Cuba only days before the defection. In other words, change the structure, and change the agency, change the agency, and change the structure.
To be complete, it is likewise important to understand that returned im/migrants experience various levels of hostility in their hometowns in México, too. For example, repaying missed compulsory work duties called *tequios, cargos*, or *faenas*, in some pueblos can cause the town to marginalize the individual or family, thereby attempting to control im/migration in the local sending context. In reference to a pueblo in Oaxaca, Mutersbaugh (2002, p. 482), states,

> After little more than a year he [an immigrant] wanted to return to the village...his savings were insufficient to both pay his *tequio* debt and re-establish his family in the village...villagers sadly and quite vividly described how his family sat on the ridge above the village and cried as they were leaving.

Likewise, Klaver (1998) claims that the political power of the *tequio* system actually combats transnationalism because many im/migrants are forced to forfeit citizenship in Oaxaca if they fail to provide the required assistance and fail to find an adequate work replacement. In this case, the local context temporarily wins the front-line battle over a transnational im/migrant citizen by mandating either loyalty to, or exclusion from, the community.

Similar attempts to regulate the changes that emerge from im/migration are evident in Madrina, which is the town studied here, as well. To paraphrase a citizen of Madrina, “It is ok to speak English when you return to Madrina, as long as you don’t use it too much.” [My italics] The overuse of English or the outward display of other forms of U.S. material culture, attitude, economic abundance, and non-local knowledge-sets can, at times, create social friction between citizens of Madrina who have not, cannot, or wish not to im/migrate in pursuit of more lucrative employment to support the family, and those who have done just that. The individual, family, and
town citizenry actively and dynamically negotiate the incorporation and non-incorporation of new cultural knowledge of im/migrants. Im/migrants who return actively define and redefine ethnic identities that represent both types of lifeworld experiences—that of being born and raised Yucatec-Mayan, and that of being an experienced im/migrant—in other words, the expression of local and global forms of lifeways.

Five Findings

**One: A Household Model of Im/migration**

Yucatec-Mayan im/migrants use a *ch'iibal*-centered, or family-centered, value-rational decision making process in which to frame leaving and returning to their hometown. This “family-centered im/migration model” follows Massey et al (1994), Massey and Durand (2002), and Cohen’s (2004) “household” or “new economics of migration”, as well as the findings of Cornelius, Fitzgerald, and Lewin Fischer (2007), Martell, Pineda and Tapia (2007) who studied the reasons for im/migrating from the Yucatecan town of Tunkás, and Piacenti (2009). However, I employ Weber’s “wert-rational” social action to underpin this conceptualization. Massey et al. (1994, p. 709) state, “[The new economics of migration] is consistent with a growing body of circumstantial evidence...that suggests that poor households use international migration in a deliberate way to diversify their labor portfolios.”

Leaving is rational economically, but is typically a reflection of an emotional, absolute value system connected to family maintenance and family creation in Yucatán. Weber (1947, p. 114) states, “Wert-rational [involves] a conscious belief in
the absolute value of some ethical, aesthetic, religious, or other form of behavior, entirely for its own sake and independently of any prospects of external success.”

The household model highlights the deficiencies of the neoclassical migration economic model. According to Massey, Durand, and Malone (2002), neo-classical migration economics claims that migration is caused by disparities in wages between two contexts. This is coupled with low labor supply and high labor demand in the receiving context, causing a labor im/migration. As the labor supply increases in the receiving context, wages are lowered through increased labor competition. Meanwhile, wages in the sending context increase from the labor vacuum, and, as the two contexts reach parity, the labor shifts back towards the original sending context, effectively recreating the initial unbalance and disequilibrium, which is perpetuated through a series of purely rational choices by the individual.

Using the household model, this sample finds permanent settlement in the U.S. less desirable than returning to family in Yucatán. Most importantly, the idea of marrying a U.S. citizen, even a Mexican-American, is the exception, not the rule. This is a reflection of the power of ch’i’ibal (family) and kaaj, (community) as marrying an outsider would certainly go against expectations of family and community. Next, the findings are in contrast to Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994), who found “curiosity” and “adventure” were the most commonly cited reasons for emigrating from the northern state of Michoacan, but support Cohen (2004) who studied an indigenous town in the southern state of Oaxaca, and found similar sentiment.
Two: Still Yucatec-Mayan

The ethnic identity of Yucatec-Mayans is still resistant to “Mexicanizing,” as well as “transnationalizing,” as 80% of the sample claimed “Yucatec-Mayan” as their ethnic identity. This clearly reflects a history of confrontation between clearly demarcated cultural and racial sides. Yucatecans clearly recognize a regionalized ethnic identity. This is due to slavery and the resultant Caste War, geographic isolation from infrastructures linking Yucatán to the political metropole of northern México, cultural oppression and cultural racism, and cultural warfare between indigenous Maya, the arriving Spanish, and the Mexican national government, henequen production, and, now, the emergence of Cancún and maquiladora production, (for a cross sample of this history, see Reed (2001), who addresses the 19th century Caste War, Carey (1984) who addresses the Mexican Revolution, Batalla (1987) and Hostetler (2004) who discuss the contemporary lived Yucatec-Mayan ethnic identity, and Cornelius, Fitzgerald, and Lewin Fischer (2007) and Adler (2008) who speak of the ethnic identity of the contemporary Yucatec-Mayan transnational im/migrant). These works, as well as the work offered here, outline the resistance to change, while paradoxically living a history of cultural incorporation and social change.

Three: Buying In, Not Selling Out

Since many im/migrants return from racialized, marginalized urban environments, they inadvertently return with “urban cultural remittances” which are transforming and urbanizing the town. This is similar to Adler (2008) and Re Cruz’s (2008) “social remittances,” in which a reciprocal dynamic emerges. In line with
Nash (1958), Farriss (1987), Batalla (1987), Everton (1991), Jimenez-Castillo (1992), Cornelius, Fitzgerald, and Lewin Fischer (2007), and Heusinkveld (2008), Madrinas’s im/migrants and citizenry attempt to incorporate the perceived positives into being Yucatec-Mayan while discouraging unfavorably viewed cultural behaviors. However, this transformation includes the shift away from a subsistence economy based on the milpa. As one Madrina citizen claimed, “95% of the money in the town is from immigration, and the children expect to have money and buy these new technologies in order to stay in touch with loved ones in the U.S.”

Although all social groups in the world assimilate into new forms of living as a component of intercultural contact, the difference is that Yucatec-Mayans perceive the change as centrifugal towards being Yucatec-Mayan, rather than centripetal towards outside lifeways. This effectively reduces the perception of “selling outward,” and increases the perception of “buying inward” of novel, urban, lifeways that can “be Yucatec-Mayan.” As an example, in reference to a Yucatec-Mayan language website that promotes Yucatec-Mayan culture, one citizen of Madrina stated, “My internet blog, my twitter updates, my cell phone, and my I-Pod—they are all part of being Mayan.”

This tendency towards incorporation of positively viewed outside lifeways is documented in the available literature. Nash (1958, p. 74) claims, “[The Maya] have a remarkable integrative power which may permit constructive fusions of traditional and modern ways of life...a factory in a small Maya community will turn out to be more communally structured and thus a very different institution from what we know it to be in Columbus, Ohio or Manchester, England.” Fariss (1987, p. 580) states,
"The Maya assimilated some of the elements of Hispano-Christian teaching but incorporated them into a wholly Maya framework, a wholly Maya perception of the way the world operates." Jimenez-Castillo (1992, p. 199), who studied Yalcobá, Yucatán, says, "The God Chac is a large part of Mayan existence, but nevertheless that same God, within Catholic and Protestant religion is God the Father, and Jesus Christ as well. That is to say, for the Yalcobeños, both gods are the same, but carry out different roles at distinct moments of ceremonies." Finally, in reference to an interview with members of a syncretic, Maya-language church, Heusinkveld (2008, p. 131) states, "These young men explained to me that they believed in the Mayan wind god Ik', as well as Jesus and the Virgin Mary" [my translation].

This process is not, however, without its concerns and contestations, as some outside lifeways confront and contradict the idea of being Yucatec-Mayan. The centerpiece of this social dynamic is the racialized cholo, or gangster, who returns as a controversial new ethnic minority. In line with the findings of Grimes (1998), Cohen, (2004), Quinones (2007), Cornelius, Fitzgerald, and Lewin Fischer (2007), Adler (2008) and Re Cruz (2008), the returned, racialized cholo is viewed as an "other." The cholo is treated differently and is actively contested as a "new ethnic minority" who does not exhibit the normative ethical behaviors of the rural indigenous lifestyle. Normative ethic is defined as a "socially-shared understanding of how one ought to behave, which reflects ethically or morally expected outcomes." The normative ethics are related to Batalla’s (1987) orientations toward an indigenous cosmic order and present themselves as non-Western orientations towards environment and production, indigenous linguistic orientation, and orientation
towards communal, local lands. Changes away from these lifeways towards urban consumption and behavior, Spanish and English language, and loss of interest in planting and harvesting corn are indicated here.

Four: Parallel Universes of Lifeways

To follow the logic of finding three, I suggest that the perception of incorporation or "centrifugal buying in" operates to prevent (at least temporarily) the deterioration of local, traditional lifeways and rituals in the town. This is similar to the findings of Cornelius, Fitzgerald, and Lewin Fischer (2007) who studied the similar-sized town of Tunkás, Yucatán and Heusinkveld (2008), who studied the effect of im/migration to Cancún on Tinum, Yucatán. In both studies, im/migration has yet to degrade many community-level traditions and cultural practices, but rather produces parallel practices alongside the traditional. Due to the relative newness of the town to the im/migration process, attitudes towards im/migration are an intermingling of hopes based on economic advancements and new consumptive abilities, and concerns over changes in the normative ethics of behavior of the town. Ambiguity and juxtaposition mark im/migrant perceptions on change in family and town.

Intergenerational and long-term changes are yet to be fully realized and are still emergent, requiring a longitudinal approach to examine the continuing effects for years to come. This is to say that permanent, future social and cultural changes are likely. Although inter-generational behavioral changes such as the racialized cholo are a current point of controversy, other social concerns such as mixed-status families, use of technology, use of language, and change in economic orientation are
likely to emerge. Practices such as the fiesta, ceremonial beliefs and culinary practices, and orientation towards ch'i'ibal (family) and kaaj (land) appear to temporarily remain intact as part of the Yucatec-Mayan incorporation strategy.

Five: The Cholos of San Francisco and Their Social Effects

The San Francisco cohort appears to reflect a more intensely racialized, segregated environment and marginalized experience. The focus of this social concern is the cholo, who returns with a way of being Yucatec-Mayan that confronts the traditional, rural ethic and ethnicity. The San Francisco cohort was twice as likely to make mention of the cholos as a threat to ethnic identity during the course of the conversation than the Kalamazoo sample. This variation likely reflects the differences in racializing living conditions between the urban and dangerous San Francisco and the comparatively tranquil and suburban Kalamazoo. That is to say, the San Francisco cohort lives a more intensely marginalized, racialized, and segregated existence than their Kalamazoo counterparts as evidenced by the Latino ethnic-based gang membership in MS-13 and the sureños. This environment results in less access to wealth, power, and prestige and a stronger likelihood of existing alongside the bedfellows of structural and institutional inequality—poverty, gang activity, lack of education, and a general lack of opportunity for advancement.

The San Francisco cohort is divided on whether im/migration is positive or negative in general, with 42 percent saying that im/migrating has been “positive overall” for themselves, their family, and Madrina, while 38 percent say “negative overall.” The Kalamazoo cohort appears to have a distinctly different perspective on im/migration than their San Francisco counterparts. A much higher 62 percent say
that im/migration is “positive overall” and 38 percent say “negative overall.” Twenty percent also said it was “a blend of economic positives and negatives due to personal risk and cultural change.” For those who were in both San Francisco and Kalamazoo, 75 percent say “positive overall,” while none said “negative overall.” Perceiving im/migration as a blend of economic positives and cultural negatives was consistent between the two cohorts. However, the sample from Kalamazoo reports a stronger positive perception of the impact of im/migration in general.

Because of this overall perception above, the San Francisco cohort is more likely to say “no” to permanent residence in the U.S. at seventy-one percent, or 17 of the 24 respondents not wanting to remain in the U.S. permanently. The Kalamazoo cohort was substantially less likely to say “no” to permanent residence, at forty-six percent or 6 out of 13 saying “no” to permanent residence. Fifty percent or four of eight of those who lived in both San Francisco and Kalamazoo would stay permanently, so Kalamazoo may have an effect on im/migrant perception of the U.S. in general. Life and work in Kalamazoo is more suburban and tranquil like Madrina than is San Francisco, thereby Kalamazoo may have a “positive staying” effect.

Outline of the Book

The remainder of the text will unfold in the following manner. Chapter 2 addresses the longer historical foundation upon which the current socio-economic context of globalization emerges. This includes first European contact, colonization, the 19th century Caste Wars, the henequen boom, neo-colonial tourism, and globalization. Chapter 3 outlines the socio-economic profile of the focus of the study.
the Yucatán peninsula, Yucatán state, and the town of Madrina. Chapter 4 summarizes current theories on identity, ethnic identity, as well as ethnic identity and race in the sending context of Mexico and Yucatán, and the receiving context of the U.S., San Francisco, California, and Kalamazoo, Michigan. Chapter 5 deals with qualitative methods as well as methodological and epistemological concerns. Chapter 6 discusses available literature on im/migration theory, as well as the “household” theoretical model. Chapter 7 is the first of the data chapters and outlines the demographics of the sample as well as the im/migrants’ self-ethnic identification. Chapter 8 presents the perceptions of change in personal, familial, and town ethnic identity as an effect of im/migration. Chapter 9 focuses on permanent settlement in the U.S. as an indicator of change in identity and ethnic identity. Chapter 10 is a comparison of the experiences and effects of San Francisco and Michigan as each are destination areas of this sample. Chapter 11 is a conclusion chapter, which seeks to summarize the overall impact of im/migration on the im/migrants, their families, and the citizenry of Madrina. Chapter 11 also seeks to imagine future research and im/migration policy based on the findings here.
Historians and social scientists alike have been in charge of analyzing the socio-economic present in terms of the socio-economic past. From anthropological perspectives that seek to find continuities from ancient civilizations to today, to colonial historians seeking to connect colonial contact to neo-colonial liberal economic imperialism today, it is clear that continuities exist. As the movie Magnolia claims, “We may be through with the past, but the past is not through with us.” For the last twenty years, the academically fashionable word that seeks to continue this mantra is “globalization.” However, what is also clear is that the jury is still out as to what, if anything, globalization really means as a new type of social process. Since there is little agreement as to what globalization entails and how long it has been in motion, I will offer a variety of theoretical approaches, as well as risk offering my own opinion on the question.

Globalization, no matter how long it is argued to have been around, is fundamentally distinct in all times, but is in all times based on the ability to extract and transport resources back and forth from capital metropoles to outposts of extraction and exploitation (Bunker & Ciccantell 2005). This approach focuses on the ability to move labor, resources, capital, and terror across time, space, and national boundaries rapidly and with little hindrance from the geopolitical boundaries of those nation-states. To be sure, the events of 9-11 are impetus to a bold new look at border security among nation-states and the mark of a new era of global
perspective. These threats to the concept of the nation-state may signal the beginning of a universal economic hegemony that confronts if not threatens the local through the coercion of a wider availability of economic choices—that is to say, local actors have more options in which to act otherwise, such as to emigrate.

Another approach is to look at the multilayered reciprocal networks that emerge from this heightened interconnection between locales. Beck (2000, p. 11) defines it as “the processes through which sovereign national states are criss-crossed and undermined by transnational actors with varying prospects of power, orientation, identities and networks.” As an example, the television station that was recently shut down by the Chavez government in Venezuela for supposed anti-Chavez leanings adapted by moving to the borderless media juggernaut “YouTube” online. The recent circumventing of Iran’s state censorship after the 2009 presidential election through “I-journaling” is also a clear example that nation-states and their borders are more permeable than ever before.

Seeking to globalize Marxism, Wallerstein (2000) divides the world into clearly demarcated core and peripheral regions. In his model, the economic bases and inherent contradictions between the proletariat and the capitalist extend beyond national contexts. In other words, the world is fundamentally divided between regions of capital and regions of labor. Today this division is largely seen as a division not between Eastern and Western hemispheres, but between Northern and Southern hemispheres and is largely a result of neo-colonial liberal economics. These divisions call colonial structures to mind and seek to understand the colonial relationship not at the end of a gun, but at the end of economic policy.
There are also critiques of the clearly demarcated center-periphery model. In critique to the Wallerstein’s strict center-periphery dialectic model of world systems theory, Appadurai (1990) perceives the process as layered and full of disjunctures and ruptures in the continuities of the social landscape. Appadurai (1990: 24) says, “the new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping disjunctive order that cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models (even those that might account for multiple centers and peripheries).”

Moving beyond the center-periphery dialectic, Appadurai (1990: 24) continues, stating, “the central problem of today’s global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization.”

Others feel that describing globalization as if it were a new phenomenon would be to misinterpret the expansion and diffusion of cultures for the last 400 years and arguably for the last ten thousand years from anthropological standards of human time. In other words, globalization is not new, but rather describes the current technological ability to transcend time and space through new mediums of symbolic exchange. Wolf (1982) prefers to acknowledge that globality, or world-systemic culture is a part of the past, the present, and the future; and that it encompasses both biological and social globality. Wolf (1982: 3-4) states, “Irish children were sold into servitude in the West Indies. Fugitive African slaves found sanctuary in the hills of Surinam. Europe learned to copy Indian textiles and Chinese porcelain, to drink Native American chocolate, to smoke Native American tobacco, to use Arabic numerals.” Therefore, debunking the myth of past global isolation and the idea that globalization is new is Wolf’s (1982) theoretical calling card.
There is also speculation as to whether or not globalization, if it exists, is irreversible. Beck (2000) claims it is an irreversible process, and claims that the process has constructed an at-risk world. Beck feels that the localized risks of the past, such as violence, terror, and epidemics, are now interconnected much like the economy in a social structure of adverse potential. Consequently, much like the economic collapse of 2008 and the H1N1 outbreak of 2009, a tremor in one locale is likely to be felt globally—as it is only a matter of time before the interconnectedness brings the local and global together through each successive shockwave.

If there is one main critique of these theorists, it is the homogeneity of their position in the metropoles of the process. Connell (2007) writes of Southern Theory, in which the indigenous and the southern hemisphere becomes a source of competing approaches to the masculine and northern approach to the topic. Connell (2007) assaults this process as profoundly shaped by and defined by the metropoles of Europe and North America, in lieu of sociologies that exist that see globalization from the position of the oppressed, the subaltern, and the unpublished global south. Clearly, from Connell's position, I am yet another white male component in this northern-versus-southern battle over the dissemination of knowledge and power. I accept this as reasonable to assume, and as indicative of past historical assemblages as well as current realities, and seek to address it in chapter 5.

For me, globalization is reversible. An enormous increase in petroleum prices can assure of this. Penetrations are incomplete, regional at times, and contextual to certain spheres of activity. Complete economic and cultural integration may never happen, but telecommunications integration, as an example, is sure to continue
bridging vast distances at the speed of light from the soft glow of a computer monitor. Globalization, like all processes, is a contingent type of social reality, and in so saying, the definitions and the realities are always open for creative change. To be sure, politics, science, and social science actively create and re-create this reality as seen fit within the present intellectual mood. Nevertheless, globalization is an analytical frame that each successive generation of social researchers either rejects wholesale, or accepts and modifies from their position in geography, polity, and history—always contingent, and always the same analytical subject framed—that of the movement of capital, resources, bodies, and violence.

To unpack the details of this debate, it is also important to recognize the nuances of each context, both historically and geographically, as distinct and complex, with no one situation perfectly mirroring any other. From the colonization in Madagascar to the iron mines in South America, to the rainforests of Indonesia, to im/migration to Marshalltown, Iowa, all have one thing in common—and little more. All of these environments share the commonality of change from the processes of globalization, yet none of them shares exactly the same penetration breadth, depth, reaction to, and realization of global changes. From violence and protest to acknowledgment and embrace, the local within the global is as varied as the pattern on a snowflake. From afar, all snowflakes seem the same, but a more focused micro and local level reveals distinct patterns of structure and change. Each context has its own pattern of interaction, negotiation, dynamic change, static maintenance, and integration, though not necessarily complete, of impinging external cultural and economic forces on each respective community.
I also approach this writing with the frame that the nuances of current globalization are new in that international relations between autonomous nations have made way for globalized nations between integrated economies. However, it is but a continuation of the long-term process of migration of people, currency, and resources across artificial political boundaries for purposes of economic, religious, and cultural domination, profit, livelihood, and subsistence. I accept the premise that the old hat economy of conquest has a new size, and that current technologies and economies allow for the flexibility of both labor and capital.

The extent of contemporary international linkage of labor and commodity is unparalleled historically. As I look around my environs at this moment, I see baskets from India, computer hardware from Korea, and clothing from Lesotho and México. I am also multitasking by chatting in Yucatec-Mayan with friends in Yucatán. However, different from the past, I am not of the upper echelons of society, who would have enjoyed access to items from abroad on a regular basis. I am of modest upbringing and modest present, and I know that I am not alone in my enjoyment of commodities from abroad, for a simple audit of the houses on my street would surely uncover similar descriptions of the origin of countless materials. This is the new globalization, always low prices, and, at times, with an even greater cost at the local level, where communities and labor battle with outside capital for resource allocation, community preservation, and labor and environmental rights—welcome to your future, welcome to your present, welcome to your past.
The Americas: A Regional Context

Much like other countries that have endured the effects of colonization, the nations that now inhabit North, Central, and South America exhibit cultural characteristics that are windows into, and expressions of, past inter-cultural contacts. However, it goes deeper than this. Although cultural contact between the Americas and Europe, Asia, and Africa has clearly been a conduit of violence at the hands of European colonists, this has not meant the complete obliteration of pre-Columbian, pan-ethnic cultural gestalts, which suffered at the wrong end of a gun or blade. In other words, the resiliency of indigenous cultures in the Americas is still present in mindsets, behaviors, and orientations towards space, hearth, time, and earth (Batalla, 1987).

In the last thirty years, much of Latin America has experienced massive im/migration from the more traditional, rural, agricultural areas to the new, hulking urban centers (Winn 1995). For better and for worse, the connection to land has been altered by the prospect of lucrative opportunity in cities such as Buenos Aires, Ciudad México, Medellin, Rio de Janeiro, Chicago, San Francisco, Mérida, and Caracas. Oftentimes, the im/migrant arrives in urban contexts already rife with opposition and resentment from the previously settled, as the perception of increased labor and resource competition maintains, if not heightens, anxiety over the ability to prosper. These urban contexts are also the archetypical context of environmental destruction, crowding, and unsanitary conditions, poverty, gang violence, and deprivation. The im/migrant and their family seek and find urban employment—connecting to broader global contexts by way of transnational corporations such as maquiladoras. The
technology and clothing that are often assembled in these plants are owned by leasing agencies that are local, but the products being realized are ultimately owned by transnational companies such as Reebok, Nike, Maidenform, American Eagle, Tommy Hilfiger, Ford, and Sony, to name a few.

However, this movement of commodities towards labor as part of the “race to the bottom” of pay scales is not exactly new. It also has the secondary reciprocal effect of altering cultures. For example, refrigeration technologies in the late 19th century allowed beef from Argentina to be transported to Europe. Soon, Europe would be plunged into a revolution of its own—this revolution was the tango—and the new style of dance would demonstrate one of the latent functions or unintended consequences of cultural contact—cultural diffusion. For the same reasons you find Coca-Cola side by side with Catholicism in the Latin American landscape, culture and religion tend to gravitate towards larger economic spheres. Being pushed in and pulled back in economic flow, residuals of contact manifest themselves across space and time. New spices, flavors, cultural sensibilities, big screen televisions, and entertainment begin to morph and be incorporated and molded into local lifeways, demonstrating both the beauty and absurdity of change that the gestalt shifts signify. In certain contexts and at discrete moments in time, this happens slowly and imperceptibly, while at other moments and contexts the change is dramatic, rapid, and disruptive. To be sure, the reaction to new Latin American im/migrants in Elkhart, Indiana, as presented in the 2006 movie Fuerza, which entailed protest and counter protest, for example, is quite different from the reaction to new cell phones in Madrina.
Through the years, changes occur within populations as new complexities of complexion transform the ethnic and racial landscape. Indigenous groups in the Americas, though certainly dynamic and changing throughout a deep history, were and are intimate with Europeans, Asians, and Africans, creating new self-identified groups of people. Though indigenous and European families did not necessarily share food and drink in each other’s salas, for this is truly intimate at a social level, the two groups met in the physical sense, and the change was underway as it is today. In Winn (1995, p. 244) the Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa had this to say about the process in Peru: “[Peru is] an artificial gathering of men [sic] from different languages, customs, and traditions whose only common denominator was having been condemned by history to live together without knowing or loving one another.”

This process is certainly not specific to any one country, but rather endemic to all of the Americas. In México, the words of Paz (1950) announce the arrival of a new history, the history of Mexicanidad or mestizaje. This process is also intertwined with indigenous im/migrations from rural areas to the city. In Winn (1995, p. 244), Llosa states, “the price that they must pay for this integration is high...renunciation of their beliefs, their traditions and customs, and the adoption of the culture of their ancient masters. After one generation, they become mestizos. They are no longer Indians.” Though this statement is certainly heavy-handed and fails to allow space for cultural resiliency and even a revitalized development and preservation in current political arenas, the statement indeed describes an aspect of the acculturation process when the individual drifts from the moorings of the rural pueblito and immerses herself in the urban landscape.
To be sure, this process plays out differently for each individual and context, but the general aggregate data largely shows the change that can occur in the worldview and mindset of the individual from experience in the cosmopolitan city. As a case in point, Guzman and Lewin Fischer (2005) call Cancún, where 25% of the people are from the more rural state of Yucatán, the *escuela de inmigracion*, or “immigration school.” In line with Bourdieu, 1991, Cancún is a highly urbanized context where Yucatec-Mayan has been transformed into a commodified myth to be marketed to tourists. As the rural, indigenous Yucatec-Mayan im/migrant engages this environment, learning English and other forms of job-related cultural capital become valuable assets in other urban and tourist areas such as Mérida, México City, Los Angeles, and, in this project, San Francisco and, to a lesser degree, Kalamazoo.

This process has been dubbed the liberalization of the economy. This liberalization of the economy has been felt in all of the Americas at different times and at different rates and impacts. To this end, Winn (1995, 90) states, “drawn into the orbit of the world economy by the magnetic attraction of an industrial Europe and U.S., the products that they specialized in varied with their resources—meat, wool, and grains in Argentina, minerals and oil in México, nitrates and copper in Chile, coffee in Brazil and Colombia, and sugar in Cuba and the Dominican Republic.” The overall cost-benefit analysis of this process is open to interpretation, with some claiming that colonialization was followed by neo-colonialization and dependence between countries with labor and countries with capital (Gonzalez, 2006). Others are less critical of the outcomes and view the process as simply world history. Regardless, the process entails products and people showing up in new locales, with
invisible labor producing ubiquitous consumer products—fulfilling the northern hemisphere’s seemingly insatiable need to consume the latest, greatest gadget and apparel. I now focus on the more specific task—México.

Mexican History

The deep history of México does not include México as a political region, but rather the various indigenous groups that composed pre-Columbian México. Meyer and Sherman (1995) claim the Olmecan city of La Venta is most likely the earliest civilization within contemporary México, according to current anthropological and archeological knowledge. The Olmecs of the area now known as Tabasco and southern Veracruz attained a society that was both literate concerning the use of symbolic language and urban in that there was a concentration of people in one geographic area with a town center. Later, the Oaxacan city of Monte Alban, the Mayan city of Chichén Itzá and the Azteca/Méxica center of Tenochtitlan would also lay claim to being the premier cultural centers between the Gulf of México to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west.

Fifteen years after arriving in Hispaniola in 1504 and eight years after landing in Cuba in 1511, Cortés reached the island of Cozumel in the eastern shores of the Yucatán peninsula near what is now Cancún in 1519. Cortés was initially welcomed by the Yucatec-Mayans, likely due to his immediate acquaintance with Geronimo de Aguilar, a Yucatec-Mayan-speaking Spanish refugee from the boats of Hernández de Córdoba, who had arrived in Yucatán two years prior in 1517 (Berdan, 2005).
However, the goodwill and pleasantries would subside as the people of the Yucatán peninsula soon experienced the wrong end of a pattern of exploitation and violence.

Another possible explanation for the welcome by the Yucatec-Maya, as well as other central Mexican groups were prophesies of doom and conquest that seemed to be interpreted, in the moment and in hindsight, through the arrival of the Spaniards (Joseph and Henderson, 2002). As the Spanish attempted to impose Christianity upon the locals, they kept one eye on the religious conversion of the people they encountered, and the other eye on the lookout for gold or any other resources that could be extracted for the Spanish Crown’s profit. If there were any doubt as to whether the true motivation was religious or economic, Cortés removes all doubt, famously claiming, “I came here to get rich, not to till the land like a peasant” (Berdan, 2005, p. 170).

With technologies that were unrivaled in most if not all of the world, the early Yucatec-Mayans were the crowning achievement of cultural advancement in the Americas. As an example, the Maya conceived of and understood the theoretical implications of the mathematical concept of “zero” and created architecture and an astronomical calendar with remarkable precision. With intricate sculpture, art, religion, and architectural understanding blossoming from sedentary, subsistence living, which allows more time to engage in specialized skills and artisanry, the indigenous groups of México carved out a society that demonstrated all of the hallmarks of contemporary society. Hegemony, violence, and political control emerged and stratification based on divisions of labor also became part of the religious order of life. Abstract thought, philosophy, and sedentary agriculture were
common and life revolved around large-scale production techniques that supported large cities and promoted acquiescence to both cosmic spirit and political ruler (Batalla 1987 and Berdan, 2005.)

Throughout México, religion offered perceived insight into the control of agricultural forces that could not be controlled by scientific knowledge or methods of domestication and irrigation. For the Yucatec-Maya then and still to an extent today, corn was the cornerstone of cultural history. The creation story includes the Maya symbolically emerging from the sacred maize, originally created by God. Thompson (2002, p. 86) claims, “maize was a great deal more than the economic basis of Maya civilization; it was the focal point of worship and to it every Maya who worked the soil built a shrine in his [sic] own heart.” The Yucatec-Mayan religious life included connecting favor with the gods to working the cornfields. The extra security of spirit petition allowed the individual and the community to ask pardon for trespasses, which were then easily interpreted as such after the fact when the weather was amiable and the crops were abundant and stout.

Systemic violence became so decentralized and uncontrollable that even the Spanish Crown became weary by the lack of centralized, administrative control of the problem. During this systemic period, the encroachment continued to leach into new areas, with Francisco Montejo conquering the Yucatán and naming the colonial city of Mérida in 1542. All the while, other contemporaries of Cortés such as Guzman, Sandoval, Marin, and Alvarado expanded into contemporary Guatemala, Honduras, and the U.S., with Coronado reaching what is now Wichita, Kansas. Much like the history of globalization in other contexts, economics is tightly linked to religion, and
by 1537, the brand of Spanish Catholicism was responsible for nearly 9 million 
baptisms (Meyer and Sherman 1995). It should, however, remain clear that the 
baptisms in Yucatán did not entail the elimination of Yucatec-Mayan rituals—as rites 
such as the *hetzmek* still exist in profound, symbolic use today.

Nevertheless, Cortés’s forces marched towards the Aztec/Méxica city of 
Tenochtitlán, which had been populated by the nomadic Mexica who arrived from the 
possibly mythical Aztlán in the 13th century. The city was situated among 
*chinampas*, or floating agricultural plots that still exist today in a shallow lakebed in 
the geographic basin of Lake Texcoco (Berdan, 2005). Cortés encountered 
resistance, but then incorporated the forces of indigenous Tlaxcalans into his military 
party (Joseph and Henderson, 2002). While in Cholula, however, Cortés caught wind 
of a plot to sabotage the Spanish from a maiden interpreter by the name of Doña 
Marina. The plan was remotely planned by the leader Moctezuma in Tenochtitlan. 
Cortés reacted with the massacre at Cholula. Eventually, Cortés would encounter 
Moctezuma, who would symbolically welcome back Cortés as if he were the plumed 
serpent god Quetzalcóatl, regaining a lost throne. Eventually, Tenochtitlan would 
fall, and a new epoch would begin based on the oppression and violence of the 
encomienda system (de Zorita, 2002).

The encomienda system of tributes to land-controllers came into existence and 
would be followed by the *latifundio*—the impetus for the Mexican revolution. To say 
that the encomienda system was marked by abuse, violence, and most importantly 
threat of violence is an understatement. Economically akin to slavery, the system was 
feudal serfdom in practice, and was based on tributes or payments to the Spanish
land-controlling group. Meyer and Sherman (1995, p. 131), state “the individual deserving Spaniard (the encomendero) received the tribute of the Indians, as well as their free labor, in return for which the natives were commended to the encomendero’s care. He was to see to their conversion to Christianity, to ensure good order in the village, and in all ways to be responsible for their welfare.” This entailed families being geographically separated in a divide and conquer fashion much like slavery in other parts of the Americas.

As a matter of cultural worldview, the groups of México understood what it meant to be at the mercy of, but also unified with, the environment. The Aztecs understood that natural dangers abound and that the penalty for disfavor with God could be of the harshest consequence. Meyer and Sherman (1995:71), state “[Aztecs] believed themselves surrounded by strange and harmful forces: as human beings were at one with nature, a person could suddenly be transformed into a hawk, a coyote, a fish, or even a tree or rock.” This perception of transformation would prove prophetic, as dangers did abound—but not from spirits, but from encroachment from a world apart, where the desire to expand brought both European, African, and later Asian peoples to México.

The Spanish arrived, and with this arrival, a new movement towards what would become the ideology of mestizaje. Mestizaje, however, is merely a State ideology designed to eliminate the México Profundo of Batalla (1987)—the indigenous cultural and behavioral core. This is the also the mestizaje of Paz (1950)—of México in earnest and in the Labyrinth of Solitude. Referring to the balkanization of México’s indigenous groups, who were isolated, oppressed
culturally, and expected to imagine the possibility of México in the manner of
México there is not, nor is there a possibility of developing a national spirit, because
there is no national spirit." In many ways, the self-selection of ethnic identity of
Yucatec-Mayans below echoes a similar sentiment today.

As colonialization progressed, this precursor to the globalization of today
developed into a sweatshop system called obrajes. Obrajes were small mills that
produced textile products from which the Spanish profited. Much like contemporary
times, where maquiladoras mark the Mexican landscape, obrajes were the precursor
of things to come. Long hours, forced production, coercive tactics, and hostage-like
conditions were all the beginning of what would become a long history of class
subjugation, and, more significantly, the subordination of indigenous rights and
cultural racism that is still prevalent today (Meyer and Sherman, 1995).

With the intermingling of Spanish men and indigenous women, which likely
occurred more often than indigenous men and Spanish women, new complexions
would emerge that would serve as the social marker of the imagined México. By
1700, the place of the Olmecs and the Aztecs and the Mayans, trampled underfoot of
the campaign of "New Spain," would take on a characteristic of its own and the
Mexican national character would emerge from inter-cultural contact, assimilation,
incorporation, violence, and prejudice (Meyer and Sherman 1995). The peoples of
the sun would be transformed and transform themselves. The changes would be
marked by the use of condescending nomenclature, such as "indio" in the language of
the oppressive Spaniards. The term is brimming with negative connotation that is
rooted in the emergence of rational positivism and as a reflection of cultural contempt and cultural racism against rural, indigenous lifestyles and behavioral ethics.

The most important attack on the Yucatec-Mayan heritage was the attempted elimination of the indigenous framework for usufruct agriculture. The opening salvos of what would be centuries of change in the orientation of land in the rural, agricultural areas would come by way of land ownership and control by a core of moneyed, capitalists. In reference to this, Florescano (2002, p. 132) states, “without community lands, one cannot imagine the basic unit of indigenous society, the Indian village… the Indian village was the land: the land was the foundation that maintained the community, and on it rested the family and the individual. From this change came the latifundio, or large land holdings of the elite that would be cause to the Mexican Revolution in the early 20th century. In other words, as found below, ch'i'ibal (family) and kaaj (community) were the cultural and ethnic underpinnings of indigenous life as related to the shared ownership of the sacred milpa through family lineage and community identity.

By the 1800’s México would be involved with economic markets worldwide and responsible for exporting more cotton to Europe than the U.S. Other products such as tobacco, hemp for rope making, cacao, vanilla, and animal hides also shared the global marketplace. Generally, there were differences between the cultures of the rural landscape as compared to the urban setting, although commonalities did and do exist. Castilian Spanish began to erode local variations and a new dialect of the language, distinct from context to context throughout Latin America, began to take shape (Batalla 1987). The integration of new cultures and economics into a
reciprocal, meaning-making process drove the emerging Mexican character to new nationalistic worldviews.

However, this changing worldview would include something more important for the development of a Mexican character—the wherewithal to push back and find independence from the Spanish Crown (Paz 1950). From north to south, independence from Spain and the hacienda system commenced with the war cry, or *El Grito de Dolores*, of September 16, 1810 made by catholic priest Miguel Hidalgo from the town of Dolores near Guanajuato. Much in the way of agrarian land reform would be reconsidered throughout the years, with event markers such as the agrarian reform that came from the Mexican Revolution and the most recent land agreements of NAFTA in 1994. NAFTA privatized many parcels of communal *ejidos* for agribusiness ventures, especially in the progressive Yucatán peninsula.

What has stood the test of time is an amalgamation of intercultural contact, with conquering oppression being replaced by won autonomy and a national pride distinctly and inexorably Mexican. At the same time, Mexicanidad consists of diverse indigenous community backgrounds that give each region a particular hue and flavor. While México the polity was busy liberalizing its economy, the lives of rural, more subsistent families and communities were not similarly affected. According to Meyer and Sherman (1995, p. 297), “the nineteenth century would vindicate the general apathy of the rural Mexican, for his [sic] life would change little, if at all. The fate of the Mexican Indian continued to rest totally in the hands of others, as it had for the last three hundred years.”
Therefore, much like today, urban-rural differences would continue to serve as a demarcation of culture, language, mindset, political interest, political involvement, economic orientation, and a host of other social profile characteristics. In the broader context of urban and rural and European and indigenous differences, Mariano Otero, an acclaimed liberal of his time, boldly framed the indigenous context. In 1847, Otero stated, “we might calculate the population as reaching seven million, of whom, according to the least exaggerated reports, four million are Indians and three million Europeans, mixed, for the most part, with the indigenous strain” (Joseph and Henderson, 2002).

Nowhere were the politics of difference more intense than between Yucatán and the rest of México, as they sought to isolate and differentiate themselves from the hand of modernization. This cleavage was as much about indigenous cultural lifeways as it was the peculiar, isolated economic history of Yucatán. Joseph and Henderson (2002, p. 225) state, “the remote state of Yucatán, which had always had tenuous relations with México, declared its independence in 1840. It rejoined México in 1843, then separated again in 1845, but reunited with México permanently in 1848, while on the throes of a bloody race war.” This race war would soon be called “La Guerra de las Castas,” or the Caste War and would serve to remind and define the peninsula as a place where the indigenous population would not be eliminated.

As further testament to the peculiar identity of the Yucatán peninsula and early forms of globalization, baseball, not soccer, reigned and still reigns supreme. Joseph and Wells (2002, p. 435) claim, “the sport was rooted in the regional environment. In addition to its incredible popularity among all classes in Mérida and
Progresso, the principal port, campesinos in the larger rural towns had demonstrated a particular fascination with it.” Baseball was also used as a political organizing tactic, as the Socialist Party of the Southeast used baseball leagues as a type of electioneering tactic (Joseph and Wells, 2002). To be sure, Yucatán is an anomaly in México, where soccer or futbol is the religious-like sport of choice. The theme of a regionalized identity is consistent throughout Yucatán’s history.

Modernity was unfolding, and Mexican politics would continue its trajectory towards a globally linked liberal economy that looked outward rather than inward. One of the political and economic turning points is the administration of Porfirio Diaz, or “Porfiriato”, as it is called since it lasted from 1884-1911—a full 27 years. Diaz was stimulated by the Enlightenment and its philosophical premises of reason, rationality, and human progress through the utilization of technology. According to Meyer and Sherman (1995), Diaz was responsible for electric tramways, steam, water and electric power, telephone advancements, telegraph and underwater cables, drainage and sanitation advancements, and a host of public works reflective of rapid, urban modernization. However, the economic advancements would cut both ways. Attached to the rational public infrastructure of the modern world were the burgeoning theories of positivism. These ideas leaked into social thought concerning race, and before long, the “indio” label was becoming more and more justified as a reflection of the inherent incapability of a conquered, irrational, and “uncivilized” people.

México is a country that had been divided with the loss of Texas, Arizona, California, New México, and part of Utah with the signing of the Treaty of
Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 at the culmination of the Mexican American War. It is also divided between the cultures of the urban European and the rural indigenous. As for Yucatán, the Caste War (1847-1901) helped crystallize a regional identity that would extend from the 19th century to today. This crystallization exists today and is evident within the interview data below.

Caribbean trade from Yucatán through the Caribbean allowed for the economic boom of henequen production and trade. Henequen is the plant from which fibers are processed into shipping rope and whose economic prevalence lasted until the invention of synthetic rope during World War II. To fuel this economy, indigenous workers in rural areas were often captured and made into slaves and indentured servants for which there was no escape. The market would consist of maritime networks between Yucatán and the rest of the Caribbean, such as Cuba (González y González, 2002). To be sure, the golden age of henequen represented the worst cultural discrimination and domination that the peninsula would experience. The British writers Channing Arnold and Frederick J. Tabor Frost wrote of the henequen era, “Yucatán is governed by a group of millionaire monopolists whose interests are identical, banded together to deny all justice to the Indians, who, if need be, are treated in a way an Englishman would blush to treat his dog” (Joseph and Henderson, 2002, p. 277).

Mexico: 1900-1964

This section commences just prior to the Mexican Revolution as the next event marker and begins my shift in content to integrate im/migration into the
discussion of the last 100 years. The effects of civil unrest are related to the earliest
im/migrations between the U.S. and México. Using the Mexican Revolution as a
point of departure, integration of economy and labor between the U.S. and México
would have many masks, but the relations would nonetheless be intertwined. To be
sure, the Mexican Revolution was an indigenous response to the latifundio of the
Porfiriato, which allowed the elites of the new nation unfettered access to once
communally used lands, and from which the land reform of the ejidos would emerge.
As Florescano (2002) states above, the inequalities of the latifundio and the hacienda
systems were losing the ideological war with the commoners, the laborers, and the
servants, whose backs were bruised in the building of fortunes, such as with henequen
in Yucatán.

At times, relations between the U.S. and México would be cordial, while at
other times not. Either way, the history of im/migration, both northward and
southward, is rich with conflict, function, and symbol, as both countries engaged in
industrial politics and economic positioning. With the death of the Mexican
Revolutionary War hero Zapata and the emergence of Obregón as the new leader,
México would assumedly emerge from the constant threat of instability and violence
from decades of civil war. Obregón enacted changes in land holdings, which shifted
576) state, “by the time his [Obregón’s] term expired in 1924 he had distributed some
3 million acres to 624 villages. The land went to the [more traditional] communal
ejidos rather than outright to individuals, but the number of villagers directly
benefiting was calculated at 140,000.” It was not until the Cardenas administration that the hacienda system would be eliminated through public policy.

Immigration within and from México has many marked historical moments. Because of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, nearly eighty thousand Mexican people were effectively ceded into la frontera or the borderlands of the southwestern U.S. Regardless of changes in land ownership by the Diaz and Cardenas administrations and the effects of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on the northern rural peasantry, the urban centers were becoming the place to be successful. Between 1920 and 1940 alone, Ciudad de México, or México City, realized a gain of around 1 million people. The changes of modernization could be seen and felt demographically, as México went from 71% rural in 1910 to 50% rural by 1960.

The early forms of immigration were not necessarily from México to the U.S., but the internal evacuation of indigenous pueblos or towns in favor of the massive metropolitan centers such as Puebla, Queretaro, and Ciudad de México (Meyer and Sherman 1995). It should also be noted that this trend still holds throughout the Americas and in México today, as many rural Yucatec-Mayans move to Mérida or Cancún before attempting longer excursions to North America or Central and South America. Because of this more than century long trend, the U.S. and México have shared an overlapping, mutually affecting history that is worthy of address prior to discussion of contemporary immigration realities.

The U.S. and México share many things. The U.S. does not really stop at the Río Grande, but runs like moldy veins through a blue cheese to the southern cone of South America. México and Latin America do not stop at the Río Grande either—
extending in influence to the tips of Canada and Alaska. Boundaries, culture, people, 
industry, resources, sentiment, spite, and indifference are all characteristics of this 
dynamic relationship. However, the political and economic playing field has rarely, 
if ever, been equal. From the beginning of each country’s national history, there has 
been an ebb and flow of capital, interests, and people that have culminated in the 
perspective that colonialism, neo-colonialism, and now the newly termed 
globalization are still real social forces between the two polities. Because of the 
partially shared boundary and history, the relationship and im/migration history is 
distinct between the two countries. However, bilateral cooperation is not without 
economic and political domination. Gonzalez (2006) claims there are three themes to 
be excavated: (1) relations of the U.S. and México are neocolonial; (2) integration of 
Mexican labor within U.S. economy has been persistent; and (3) immigration 
between México and U.S. is distinct because of the neo-colonial framework.

The Bracero Program, which is seen as an example of the legal-rational aspect 
of the U.S.-Mexico relationship, has historical precedents in the nineteenth century, 
as well as World War I as precursors. During the nineteenth century, there was a 
great deal of labor recruitment between the U.S. and México along a border that was 
not heavily guarded and fluid to say the least (Winn 1995). Partially because of this 
precedent, the impact of World War I on the available labor force of the U.S. would 
create a watershed moment in the im/migration of Mexicans. The need for labor 
allowed Mexican im/migrants to be embraced as a symbolic gesture of goodwill 
between the two countries. Without a doubt, Mexican labor was needed and the 
vacuum was filled. However, as will be seen in contemporary accounts of inter-
group contact, when people ask for workers, they often get people, and the people they get are not always interested in leaving after the labor shortage crisis is over. Between 1917 and 1921, the U.S. created a short-term program that would effectively relieve the labor shortage caused by World War I. As an intended consequence of the program, Gonzalez (2006, p. 33) states, "...as soon as jobs became scarce 'many found themselves' stranded without funds and consequently were ordered deported." As an unintended consequence of the program, more than twenty-one thousand workers violated the terms of their contracts and stayed in the U.S. Most settled down by integrating into preexisting Mexican American communities, where they largely went unnoticed by officials (Gonzalez, 2006).

The Bracero Program, however, is the event marker widely studied and cited by academics and politicians alike. The Bracero program allowed nearly 450,000 laborers into the U.S. as temporary workers from 1942 to 1964 (Gonzalez, 2006). When World War II erupted, México would find itself again sharing a common boundary, a common resource, and a common ideological cause—to provide labor in order to demonstrate support for the war effort. The Bracero Program was enacted, and once again, the door was open to Mexican laborers. The conditions were brutal and had the earmarks of indentured servitude. People waiting in holding areas such as the Enpalme Station were inspected like cattle and deloused. Many who waited for weeks on end became ill, ran out of money, and in some cases starved to death or walked into the prairie to die alone. People were locked up in crowded animal-like quarters with their passports removed. The workers were barely fed, worked heavily
with few breaks, and faced unsanitary conditions, which made for a difficult life (Gonzalez 2006).

To add insult to injury, the U.S. government embezzled from the workers by taking money out of their checks to assure a return to México, but did not return the travel money to the worker at the end of their tenure. If a worker questioned a check that appeared “light,” they could expect harassment, violence, suspicion, and disfavor for future assignments and future treatments. The conditions of the Bracero Program were so atrocious that a graduate student by the name of Henry Anderson from the University of California Berkeley wrote a scathing article criticizing the U.S. Department of Labor. Because of this, Anderson was dismissed from Berkeley and the manuscript was burned in an incinerator at Earl Warren Hall on campus (Gonzalez, 2006).

All else aside, the continuity of la frontera, the history of fluid movement across borders, and the institutionalized labor recruitment by the U.S. government created an integrated economic and cultural system, with the full capitulation by the Mexican government—a capitulation that some claim compromises the sovereignty of México within a neo-colonial hegemony still today. It should also be noted that the degree of integration between México and the U.S. is contextual and regionally varied. Durand and Massey (2004) claim that the Tijuana economic corridor along the México-California border has closer economic and social ties to the U.S. than México because most of the workforce living in Tijuana travels across the border every day in a regulated, regional system governed by checkpoints and identification.
México: 1965-Present

Although the Mexican Peso devaluations of 1982 and 1995 may have played a partial role in changes in im/migration between the two countries, as a contemporary watershed mark, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 stands alone. According to Massey, Durand and Malone (2002), the government of the U.S. committed the cardinal sin of modifying a system that it did not comprehend, a system that was far too complex to be framed by the neo-classical economic model of dichotomous labor-capital, supply-demand principles. Due to mounting political and social pressure, IRCA attempted to address if not eliminate the undocumented im/migration that characterized the period after the Bracero Program’s closure in 1964. Nevertheless, changing a system in order to fix a problem that did not actually exist would become, in Merton’s (1968) term, a self-defeating prophesy. In other words, there was a known labor force doing known work from a known sending context, but social suspicions and political pressures would change all of that.

IRCA failed at this task by attempting to satisfy various interest groups. Governmental officials of México and the U.S., the border patrol, coyotes (capitalist smugglers) im/migrants, employers, families, and communities in México and the U.S. all vied for positioning power in the process. The media coverage had a Catch-22 flavor, as im/migrants were contradictorily blamed for being both unemployed welfare abusers and job stealers. According to Massey, Durand and Malone (2002, p. 86), the Reagan administration created a climate of fear based on national security issues by stating that im/migrants were “a tidal wave of refugees—and this time they’ll be ‘feet people’ and not boat people—swarming into our country seeking safe
haven from communist repression to the south.” With obvious stereotypical undertones, im/migrants were demonized and seen as less than human—and more importantly, connected to communism during the most fearful moments of the Cold War.

To be sure, the Cold War was not the only war being used as political justification for stronger im/migration policy. The now infamous “War on Drugs” stands as the pinnacle of conservative policy during the 1980’s. México and the rest of Central and South America were bundled together in the minds of most U.S. citizens as the dark, drug-laden south, fueling communism and leftist politics. Therefore, combating drug trafficking to a market of buyers and users in the U.S. through the “War on Drugs,” while also addressing im/migration control and reform would not be a hard political sell in a social climate of fear and xenophobia.

If you were to give IRCA a sociological name, it would be the “act of unintended dire consequences” (Merton, 1968). To begin, the reform has not resulted in an increase in apprehension rates of im/migrants. On the contrary, IRCA created a militarized border at particular “im/migration hot spots” and forced im/migrants into the more desolate areas of the Sonoran Desert. Because of this, treachery has become a mainstay of the process. Capitalist smugglers called coyotes rob and abandon unsuspecting would-be im/migrants after they have extracted their payment for safe entrance into the U.S. Along with this, solo attempts end in dehydration, making the desert a dangerous place where remnants of deceased Mexican, Central, and South American citizens can be found—after it is too late.
This problem has become so pervasive that the Mexican government and non-governmental, activist organizations such as ethno-political IndeMaya of Yucatán have produced educational literature, such as the "Guide for the Yucatecan Immigrant." The IndeMaya pamphlet attempts to warn people of the inherent dangers such as incarceration, assault and robbery, and death. Along with the human rights issues raised by the militarized border, Massey, Durand, and Malone (2002) have also found that another unintended consequence consists of longer stays in the U.S. because im/migrants who do survive the trek are less likely to attempt the trek back through the gauntlet as often. Therefore, IRCA can be summed up as promoting the underground economy, death, and im/migration that is more permanent by unauthorized im/migrant workers.

Though most of the literature on this topic is rightfully focused on la frontera, this is changing. The destinations of Mexican and Yucatec-Mayan im/migrants in the U.S. are also shifting. The 2000 census was another watershed moment in that it demonstrated that areas such as the Midwest, East, and Southeast U.S. were realizing sizable shifts in demographics. Bean and Stevens (2003) noted that Illinois, Michigan, and Washington reflect at least some of the new locales. It should be noted that when a report in a newspaper claims that the Mexican population has doubled, (at times much to the horror of the locals), this may only mean a change from .5 to 1% of the entire population in question. As an example, Jezierski (2002) states that from the 1990 to 2000 census, the percent increase in of Hispanics in Kalamazoo, Michigan was a shocking 94%. However, this only means a total of
increase to 2.6% of the population from 1.4%. This also masks the makeup of Yucatec-Mayan or other indigenous im/migrants within this population as well.

Regardless of local variation, the census does not lie (though it might not tell the whole truth), the movement is real, and many communities face the task of integration and incorporation of the im/migrants in myriad ways. It is safe to say that the number of ways in which Mexican and Yucatec-Mayan im/migrants become, or do not become, a part of a community is as varied as the number of communities that experience the change. Each community is distinct in the way that it handles the situation, much like the Oaxacan village and its dealings with tequios and cargos above.

Without belaboring the reader with endless anecdotes, it suffices to say that the mood of the community, which is based on economics and social makeup prior to im/migrant arrival, is central to how the process unfolds for all involved. In other instances, minorities such as African Americans felt rightfully threatened by the hiring of newly arrived Mexican-American, Mexican, and Latino im/migrants in an already desperate job market, leading to violent encounters. Nevertheless, to be very clear, in other towns, new im/migrants were able to find common ground and common interest concerning socio-economic status, leading to successful unionization and increases in health benefits and salaries. In a description of one battle in the poultry packing plants of the Delmarva Peninsula on the Eastern shore of the U.S., Zuñiga and Hernandez-Leon (2005, p. 166) state, “the campaign served to unify Latino immigrant and African American workers.” Comparatively, the arrival of Mexican, Burmese, Vietnamese, and Somali meat-packing workers in Garden City,
Kansas, which is situated in a majority-minority county meaning whites are now the minority, appears to be more accepting on the surface. The mayor even offered a positive sound bite, claiming, “it makes it nice to have those different cultures” (Callebs, 2009). Therefore, context matters, and they are all different.

Globalization in Sum

To summarize, I propose that globalization is new in that technology has allowed for the compression and layering of the contexts of time and space. Surely, it can be argued that im/migration, regardless if nomadic, colonial, or postmodern cyberspaced, is “as old as the hills” and that cultural and economic contact between people in different locales is the calling card of a wanderlust human civilization. The story of Yucatán and its link to Africa, Europe, and Asia is as long as it is enigmatic. The story contains pre-Columbian im/migrations, colonial henequen and slavery, revolutions, nation building, maquiladoras, commodification of sacred cornfields and Yucatec-Mayan chat rooms—all representations of different, historically situated modes of globalization.

However, current contexts of cultural and economic contact happen on a global scope and without national borders for many people. Although Friedman’s (2005) “world is flat” pronouncement was charming enough, stark differences exist between the cosmopolitan power brokers, for whom the world is indeed flat, and those still bound to locale and custom, but for whom the world can be less round and cumbersome if needed and desired. To be sure, globalization does not happen in Madrina and the U.S. in a flat world nor a round world, but in a landscape rife with hills, valleys, disparities in thought, action, belonging, and having, and distinct
wrinkles in space and time. It is from this place of ambiguities and complexities that this story begins.
CHAPTER III: SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF YUCATÁN AND MADRÍNA

The Yucatán Peninsula is located in the Gulf of México and the Caribbean Sea, lies in the Tropic of Cancer, and consists of three states; Campeche to the west, Quintana Roo to the east, and the state of Yucatán separating the two (See maps 1 and 2 below). According to INEGI (2005), which is the Mexican federal agency that collects and provides census data, the state of Yucatán contains approximately 1,658,210 inhabitants. Nearly 60% of this population is under 30 years of age, with 32% being under the age of majority, or less than 18 years old. Of this population, 81% live in urban areas, whereas 19% live in rural areas.

According to INEGI (2005), nine of every 100 people in the state of Yucatán speak the indigenous language of the peninsula and the state, Yucatec-Maya, and do not speak Spanish. Historically, though, monolinguals who speak Yucatec-Maya are in decline. However, it should be noted that, according to Batalla (1987), estimates of indigenous-speakers and indigenous culture is subject to underestimation because of procedural class bias as well as an apprehension to claim indigenous background by indigenous-speaking populations due to a strong history of institutional and cultural racism.

In reference to im/migration, 17% of all people from Yucatan State have settled elsewhere, both within and outside of México. In addition, 7% of the current population in Yucatán State is not Yucatán-born. Finally, 4% of all Mexicans settling in the U.S. are from the state of Yucatán. Yucatán, which was a region largely isolated from the rest of México due to the Caste War, in spite of the Mexican Revolution, and due to a lack of connection to the north through railroads until 1962,
now ranks 18th out of 32 states with respect to outward em/migration, with 271,134 reported in the year 2005 (INEGI). According to CONAPO (2008), the Mexican agency that gathers socio-demographic statistics, Yucatán has experienced a decline in numbers of international arrivals compared to em/migrants from the region since 2000. That is to say, the differential between people im/migrating to Yucatán from abroad and people em/migrating out of Yucatán internationally increasingly shows that more people are leaving than arriving. The trend of outward em/migration, which is projected to continue growing, has increased every year since 2000. The following population differentials represent years 1997-2008 and the projected 2009-2010 totals: 1997 (+1335), 1998 (+1338), 1999 (+999), 2000 (-648), 2001 (-159), 2002 (-92), 2003 (-549), 2004 (-990), 2005 (-1636), 2006 (-1628), 2007 (-1653), 2008 (-1670) 2009 (-1708) projected and 2010 (-1733) projected (CONAPO, 2008).

Interestingly, note the sudden slowdown in outward emigration in 2001-2. This is likely a reaction to the insecurities perceived after the hijackings on September 11, 2001, to which at least one interviewee attested during conversation. In some locales, the increases in em/migration have caused near evacuations of small towns similar to Madrina. An article in the Yucatán State capital city of Mérida’s newspaper El Diario de Yucatán reported that nearly 30% of the houses in Cenotillo were empty and that the town, as well as many other small towns, had become virtual “pueblos fantasmas” or “ghost towns” (Casares Cámara, 2006). To add, the outward em/migration from Yucatán State is also comprised of indigenous communities that have settled in the U.S., including Kalamazoo, Michigan and San Francisco, California.
Social and Economic Trends

In the state of Yucatán, the amount of and reasons behind outward em/migration have been changing since the 1970’s. Though the em/migration history from Yucatán State surely pre-dates this marker due to the labor recruitments of World War I and II, large-scale em/migration is relatively new to the area. To be sure, the Caste War and the Mexican Revolution were also events that caused the disruption of settlements and outward em/migration to both the north of México and south into neighboring Central American countries such as Belize and Guatemala.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the production of henequen in the Yucatán peaked-reaching its apogee during the Second World War, as the strong shipping rope was a valuable asset to war-engaged nations. After the war, the demand for henequen began to subside, leaving many to transfer their livelihood back to other forms of agriculture, such as corn, honeybees, mahogany harvesting, fishing along the coasts, gum-tree harvesting, bananas, limes, chiles, naranja agria, or sour orange and a wide variety of other fruits and vegetables native to the peninsula.

According to Baklanoff (2008, p. 9) the change in overall GDP production value of henequen from 1980-2000 went from 21.2% to 2.3%. Although henequen can still be found growing in the henequen zones of the north, its centrality in Yucatán economics has largely subsided. As further reflection of the post-henequen bust, the diversification of the economy shows that for the same years, 1980-2000, poultry’s share of the total economic market went from 10.9% to 26.2% while the market share of pork went from 10.5% to 23.2%. This shift in economics is one of several changes that would ultimately lead to the em/migration from Yucatán state.
experienced today, as local economy and internal migration opportunities would be disrupted.

This new em/migration has occurred on two separate but inter-connected levels. The first level is the trend of em/migration from rural to urban areas. In colonial times, this entailed em/migration from rural towns into the now capital city of Mérida, which was literally built on top of the ancient Yucatec-Mayan city of T'ho. In the 1970's, however, Yucatec from Yucatán State turned their gaze towards the tourist havens of Cancún, Cozumel and the Playa del Carmen Corridor, the so-called Mayan Riviera. Lewin Fischer and Guzman (2004) claim, the Cancún “immigration school,” allows the worker from Yucatán to begin the resocialization of job skills, which promotes im/migration to the U.S. Catering to non-Hispanic white, western cultures, the worker learns the “right” mannerisms, the “right” attitudes, and the “right” language that may lead to lucrative advancement in the U.S. Currently, 25% of all people in the state of Quintana Roo, in which Cancún is located, are from Yucatán state.

In contemporary times, there are two other phenomena to be cited with respect to the em/migration from rural to urban areas and the em/migration to the U.S. NAFTA has caused small farmers to be bought out and undersold by larger farms that have the ability to ship the produce wholesale from agricultural hubs such as Oxkutscab to large chain supermarkets such as Wal-Mart and Super Francisco. These wholesalers have the resources and capital to ship to México City, parts of Central and South America, and the U.S., which has altered the supply chain of food in the region (Biles et al., 2007). This is an indirect, if not direct, effect of the 1994 NAFTA
agreement and the resulting liberalization of commerce between México, the U.S., and Canada. Agricultural workers have adapted to the change by leaving sacred, familial milpas and subsistence economies in search of opportunity through wage labor in the urban areas of Mérida, Cancún, northern México, and the U.S.

Secondly, the beginning of a new partnership between México and its neighbors in all directions would occur in the form of maquiladoras. Maquiladoras are transnationally owned border-manufacturing outfits, which utilize low-wage labor, and are placed in México by companies in order to avoid the trade tariffs in their home countries or in other theatres of operation such as Asia. The first maquiladora appeared in Yucatán in 1982 and by the end of the decade there would be eight (Baklanoff and Moseley, 2008).

As a secondary function, maquiladoras were expected to prevent em/migration by offering work locally. Maquiladoras were first positioned in the Northern regions of Chihuahua, Sonora and Coahuila, but within the last twenty-five years have spread south. Now, the southern state of Yucatán is the new boomtown for factories that receive raw cotton from the U.S. South. Effortlessly and cheaply barged across the Gulf of México, the cotton is transformed into products with banner names such as Lee Jeans and Maidenform (Baklanoff and Moseley, 2008). Biles (2004) identifies three social, political and geographic reasons for Yucatán's appeal as a maquiladora region: 1) low cost, qualified labor, 2) governmental support and access to infrastructure, and 3) proximity to parent companies and markets in the U.S.

Most maquiladora workers will attest that 100% health and dental coverage, double the Mexican minimum wage, and a roof over their heads to block the
oftentimes-nightmarish heat of the Yucatán peninsula are all incentives to leave the
unstable production of the milpa to manufacture clothing for an international market.
had the second fastest growth of any state in both personnel employed and the
number of maquilas in the country. By February 1998, a total of 13,187 persons were
employed in fifty-eight establishments.” The economic results of this can be seen in
the new ability to take part in a level of consumerism not largely known by past
generations of rural, indigenous people of modest economic background.

It is within this context of cultural and economic dynamics that the worker of
Madrina exists. Seeing very little in the way of gainful employment in the areas of
rural Yucatán, and seeing the fruits of im/migration first-hand in the way of wage-
labor and economic remittances, many are willing to im/migrate—and this at the
expense of being in Madrina among family, friends, and community. When the
im/migrant returns, he or she returns as an agent of new patterns or new ideas,
languages, and experiences that will negotiate for a space within the context of the
town identity, the identity of the im/migrant’s family, and the identity of the
im/migrant themselves. The following is one story of incorporation of these new
patterns within the context of one rural, Yucatec-Mayan town.

The Sending Context: Madrina

Madrina is a quiet, rural town, though automobiles, collective taxis, and work
trucks occasionally cut through this quietness of the day. The town is surrounded by
low-lying trees and shrubs emerging from a rocky, limestone shelf that comprises the
geological landscape of the entire peninsula. There is little change in altitude in the land in or around Madrina, with mildly rolling fields being the typical topography. However, the town exists on the periphery of the Puuc (Yucatec-Mayan word for “mountain”) region.

East of Madrina you find the modest Puuc mountain range extending from north to south within an hour’s drive from the town. It is not surprising to see vast expanses of farmland or orchards interpolated with fallow areas of brush, recently burned milpa being prepared for regeneration, and scrubby lowland forest for miles on end—the only relief being the next town or perhaps the eye-catching henequen field, baseball diamond, or futbol pitch. In many places, the stony earth outcrops of limestone jut from the ground in an almost surreal, lunar appearance, making transportation and movement, even in automobiles, quite arduous at times.

Along with this, the ubiquitous cenote or underground cave is a common earthly feature, though there are no rivers or streams in the entire state. The area is home to various birds, deer, small animals, small cats, reptiles, snakes, rodents, and scorpions. Madrina experiences a severely hot and dry period between the months of January and June and slightly less heat but more intense humidity during the rainy season between July and December. The average temperature in the day during my fieldwork in the rainy season was near 100 Fahrenheit, with the evenings settling into an often-chilly and comfortable 65 degrees Fahrenheit.

On any given day, life begins before dawn, as women and men prepare for the day’s economic activities. Women prepare breakfast and lunch in the pre-dawn to dawn hours while the men prepare to tend to corn, burning, planting, and harvesting
crops, feeding and tending to cattle, honeybees, and other various requirements of the milpa and ranch. Work groups can consist of fathers, sons, uncles and any other male figure living at the house who is old enough to be useful, and not a liability in the daily work. The men return from the fields in the late afternoon or early evening, bathe, eat, and prepare for the next day’s activities.

During the time that men are away in the fields, the women are hard at work as well. Duties around the house compound or *solar* consist of food processing and production, child rearing, and tending to the smaller animals typically found near the house such as goats, pigs, turkeys, chickens, which will be used for trade and consumption. Women are also responsible for either making or purchasing the day’s tortillas, which are eaten in enormous amounts. Childcare, housekeeping, dishwashing, and going to the small markets in town or in the larger and more comprehensive market in Ticul round out the day’s activities. The women are typically seen working at all times of the day—rarely if ever stopping for more than a few minutes. Like the men, the women also work as a group, with mothers, daughters, granddaughters, aunts, and any other female living in the household old enough to contribute sharing daily tasks. In town, older women dressed in traditional huipiles and carrying burdens on their heads are seen side by side with younger generations dressed in contemporary, Western styles.

For others in the town who do not work the milpa, Mérida is the day’s destination. A bus circuit cuts through Madrina and relays men and women back and forth to Mérida where women take positions in maquiladoras and men sell the clothing they have made at home with their own sewing machines at the enormous

62
Galvez Market in central Mérida. From 5am to 8am, crowds gather at the bus stops to make the daily run. For those people not going to Mérida, there are a number of *collectivos*, or vans. The vans run people to the Ticul outdoor market for a fee of around $1 USD one-way, as well as connect to other *collectivos* that make the complete run to Mérida. Other trade routes include Oxkutscab, the veritable capital of agricultural sales about 45 minutes away by car.

Though a subsistence form of living is still palpable in Madrina, with the population trading goods and services without the use of money, new consumerism has affected the town both positively and negatively. The positive side to the new, moneyed economy is that new stores have been created, whose principal capital base relies on economic remittances from im/migration. Through this process of remittances, new houses, cars, and animals for husbandry and sale are also purchased. Recently, a new supermarket sized *tienda* opened called the “Little Deer.” This *tienda* is large enough to spare the trip to larger cities for some household items and is financed through im/migration. Other anecdotes about the changing economic landscape of Madrina are entrepreneurial, whereby the im/migrant intends on returning to open up a small business, such as a DJ service for events and parties and a tattoo parlor to name a few.

However, the new money economy has affected the town in more ways than just the positive effect on the consumer economy. One area of concern is the plastic trash piles that exist, due to the introduction of potable water and other food and drink products in disposable, unsustainable packaging. Empty water and pop bottles are sometimes casually discarded in all areas of the town and often concentrated in the
corners of homeowner backyards. People in the town frequently also light the plastic
dpiles on fire as a way of “cleaning up.” The need for clean drinking water and the
desire for sugary drinks by the youth are reasons for concern in a town that is so
remote that governmental trash pickup does not exist as an infrastructure.

To be sure, a more long-term and healthy sustainable form of plastic removal
is needed. As a note, this is not to say that the locals are at fault, but that indigenous
populations are again being victimized by economic processes and a lack of
governmental oversight of the issues of rural health of both body and land. In
reference to the misguided perspective that indigenous locals are to blame for
environmental concerns, Hill (2001, p. 157) states, “this view has provided the
ideological justification for policies that devolve responsibility for environmental
preservation and clean-up onto the already overburdened poor themselves.” In this
case, the continuing liberalization of the economy and the impact of NAFTA have
demonstrated a disregard for healthful sustainability in lieu of profits in the rural,
predominantly Yucatec-Mayan areas of the Yucatán.

Socio-cultural Demographics

In 1980 the population of Madrina was 1,585 (INEGI 1980), and this
increased by 893 to a population of 2,478 in 1990 (INEGI 1990). According to the
2000 census, Madrina increased only by 242 people to a population of 2,720 people
in ten years. All three censuses include inhabitants five years old or more INEGI
in em/migration, the stagnation in growth may be partially due to outward
em/migration. These years also potentially reflect the socio-economic impact of
1994's NAFTA agreement as well as the 1994-5 December Mistake of the Salinas administration, which effectively devalued the Mexican Peso.

If em/migration is considered as a potential source of systematic male departure, the numbers seem to reflect this idea. All of the interviews below are with male respondents for a variety of reasons; one of which being that the citizenry reports that females are generally not em/migrating to the U.S. Informal conversations with the town citizenry maintain that the lack of female im/migration is due to two possible factors. Some claim it is a “lack of enlightenment” on behalf of fathers, in allowing their daughters the freedom to em/migrate. Others claim it is connected to this, but also relates to the lack of formal hometown associations in Madrina that would serve as forms of social control. This claim is unfounded at this point and reflects the fact that surrounding towns that do have hometown associations also have many women em/migrating.

The correlation and causation, though, is not clear. In 1980, 1990, and 2000, the population sex differentials show 823 males and 762 females in 1980, 1,255 males and 1,223 females in 1990, and, 1,346 males and 1,374 females in 2000. Between the years of 1980 and 1990, the male population increased by 66% from 823 to 1,255. However, between the years of 1990 and 2000, the male population increased by only 9% from 1,255 to 1,346 (INEGI, 1980-2000). According to the 2000 census, 10% of the total population over the age of 5 lived in another location in México such as Quintana Roo, home of Cancún, or another country such as the U.S. This would amount to roughly 270 people. Since the 2000 census, casual reports from conversations with the citizenry place this number nearer 400-500 as of 2008.
For this population, the census indicates the presence of 535 houses, making five the mean number of people in each house. There is one preschool, two primary schools, and one secondary school in the town. Though times are changing, Catholicism still reigns, as 2,255 (83%) inhabitants report being Catholic and 170 (6%) report various forms of Protestantism. Employment in Madrina is a diverse mixture, with 46% of employment in agriculture, cattle and livestock husbandry, and hunting and fishing; 31% in commerce, tourism and service industry; and 22% in construction, manufacturing, mining, and petroleum harvesting.

**México Profundo: Daily Language Use**

Most people in Madrina speak Yucatec-Mayan, which is a dialect related to but different from other dialects of Maya, such as Quiche-Mayan of Guatemala. The 2000 census lists 2,112 (78%) self-reporting first-language Yucatec-Mayan speakers. This is not surprising, as Yucatán State also enjoys high percentages of indigenous speaking populations compared to other Mexican states. Figure 5 below shows that Yucatán and southeast México enjoy the highest prevalence of languages and speakers.
In reference to the Spanish language, there is a steadily ascending amount of Spanish known, and if known, spoken between generations. In other words, it is more likely that a thirty-year-old is fluent in both Yucatec-Mayan and Spanish than is an eighty-year-old, who is very likely to be fluent in Yucatec-Mayan but speak little or quite possibly no Spanish. In addition, speaking Yucatec-Mayan is not a guarantee that the person is able to read and write Yucatec-Mayan. This fact comes from years of institutional and cultural racism, where Yucatec-Mayan was not promoted in the educational system—a fact that is changing today thanks to the human rights efforts of ethno-political organizations such as IndeMaya.

For the younger population the Yucatec-Mayan language is still an integral part of informal education in the home. In Madrina, there is only one bilingual primary school out of three primary schools in total. Yucatec-Mayan is only marginally promoted within the educational contexts of secundaria, or middle school,
as Spanish still reigns as the de facto language of formal economy and politics. Finally, there is the emerging acquisition of English through the educational system as well as from tourism work in Mérida, Cancún, and im/migration to the U.S. Within the youth population 7-25 years of age, English use seems to be indicative of a movement and orientation towards more cosmopolitan, urban areas. Interaction with English-speaking tourists, the internet, media, and im/migration allow the youth generation to begin the process of tri-lingualism, and urbanization that returns as im/migrants seek to leave the violent, impoverished, and racialized urban areas such as San Francisco for the tranquility and peaceful calm of Madrina.

The difference between Yucatec-Mayan and Spanish use is between private and public, formal and informal use. To temper this, Kummer (1982) found that Yucatec-Maya is appreciated as the idiom of life at home, while Spanish is valued in official channels of communication and higher education. Kummer also found that people increasingly desired more resources for learning Spanish, as well as increased representation of Yucatec-Mayan in public media.

This increase in interest and awareness comes on the heels of very important legislation, which resulted in indigenous language broadcasting. In 2003, the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples, or Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas replaced the National Indigenist Institute as overseer of indigenous autonomy and development. One branch of the operations that has an impact on Yucatán and Madrina is the Cultural Indigenist Broadcasting System, or Sistema de Radiodifusoras Culturales Indígenistas. From Madrina, one can hear XEPET-AM radio, which is la Voz de los
Mayas or the Voice of the Maya. One can also receive Yucatec-Mayan news alerts and hurricane warnings on the television through local television stations. This new media structure is coupled with daily use of Yucatec-Maya in the home and in public, and is reflected in the respondents overwhelmingly saying that Maya was “closer to their heart,” but that Spanish was needed to secure and retain official employment in Yucatán. To be sure, this is México profundo in action.

México Profundo: The Ejidos

One contested and controversial component of the local agricultural economy in and around Madrina is the presence of ejidos, or communal land. Ejidos are tracts of land allocated for and open to public use (as long as they are local-born) for farming corn for immediate familial consumption and small, local bartering for other goods such as fruits and vegetables. That is to say, people who may have moved to Madrina from México City or other parts of México would not have a right to access the ejido allocated to Madrina’s residents in and around Madrina. Anecdotal information from the citizens of Madrina indicates that nearly 80% of the people in Madrina use the ejidos for corn production.

Contemporary Mexican history has witnessed the erosion of communal lands promised to the citizenry as a feature of the agrarian reform of the Mexican Revolution. This agrarian reform from the Revolution was again a response to the latifundio of the reign of Porfirio Díaz, who liberalized the economy and attempted to bring modernity to the nation. However, the Salinas administration (1988-1994), which co-presided over NAFTA, further allowed ejidos to be bought and sold to private interests for private development by both Mexican and outside companies. If
a piece of ejido lays fallow for more than two years, it is subject to sale to private ownership. If an im/migrant or im/migrant family faithfully uses their particular ejido tract, and does not have someone to make milpa while they are gone, then any movement to the U.S. beyond two years puts the land tract in a precarious position.

In addition to this, the state of Yucatán has been particularly progressive in the sale of once public property to private interests. This is further evidenced by the emergence of Cancún and the maquiladoras, which are held by many trans-national companies from both North America and Europe. Nevertheless, Yucatán State remains rich with ejido and continues to demonstrate that Batalla's (1987) México profundo is still a part of rural social structure. Ejido land is demarcated in blue in figure 6 below.

Figure 6:
Ejido Tracts, Yucatán State, Yucatán Peninsula
Source: www.oeidrus-yucatan-gob.mx
México Profundo: Dwellings and Buildings

With respect to architecture, Madrina is a blend of traditional and contemporary patterns of private housing, business zones, and public spaces. In general, there are three main analytical categories of architecture in Madrina: [Type 1] mostly Yucatec-Mayan traditional, naj de paja; [Type 2] Yucatec-Mayan traditional mixed with European influences; and [Type 3] mostly European, masonry style. Lastly there is [Type 4], a completely Northern, European style. Each style is reflective of both functionality and personal taste combined with social, political, and economic determinants of past and present behavior.

The first pattern of mostly Yucatec-Mayan traditional consists of the compound of najs, or thatched-roofed houses. Each naj has a function, such as cooking, sleeping, or storage for example. Each has walls made of wooden posts and sometimes a mixture of mud and grass, aligned in a tight, fence-like pattern. The solar, or compound, is at times surrounded by a rock wall but is otherwise demarcated by the structures of the household, the neighbors, and possibly a road or forest. Though this style can lack electricity and running water, the naj provides all of the truly necessary components of a rural Yucatec-Mayan lifestyle. Being the most "open" of the three main dwelling spaces, there is typically a space dedicated to cooking with an iron skillet or comale, and food production in general. Space for sleeping in hamacas and space for interaction and entertaining of the family and friends can occur here in an un compartmentalized setting. The spaces are open like a backyard with little in the way of blocked or cornered sight lines (see figures 7 and 8 below).
With this openness in architecture comes the obvious problem of mosquitoes, scorpions, and other various insects and rodents, along with a vulnerability to inclement weather. However, the price of minor discomforts is counterbalanced by a socially oriented patterned *solar* with immediate access to both neighbors and community as the houses face each other in a loosely knit circle. However, this does
not necessarily include being oriented directly to the existing paved and/or dirt roads in the town, as this is a feature more indicative of the second and third dwelling types. It should be noted that some traditional houses do orient the front door towards the paved road. If pens do not exist to keep small livestock such as goats, turkeys, or pigs out of the herbs and fruit, one might encounter a caanche, or raised garden.

Access to fruit-bearing trees, small patches of corn or other herbs and plants, and small livestock such as turkey, chicken, or pig are generally located in and around the house, and often in a yard that is either fenced or blocked in by other houses, creating a somewhat circular or round cluster of houses and work areas or solar. Houses are also likely to have vast herb gardens and chaay trees, which is a spinach-flavored leaf used in traditional Yucatec-Mayan cooking, such as the standard brazo de reina, or arm of the queen. All of these resources, which provide variety to the diet, can be found alongside the various fruits typically found near the house.

The second dwelling pattern is a blend of both traditional and European characteristics. The main differences between the first and second styles are spatial orientation, structural components, and access to governmental infrastructure. This pattern typically retains the thatched-roof style of the traditional Yucatec-Mayan architecture, but with walls made of cement or masonry in a round or mushroom shape. In general, houses with cement walls also have hinged lockable doors and windows and the ability to observe community life is remarkably impeded by broken sight lines to the street. Behind the dwelling, there are areas for animals and gardens in a more private, familial pattern than the more communal pattern above. In the back, one can find traditional structures used for food production the way a suburban
city dweller might have a fire area, a garden, a shed, or utilitarian structure in which to perform the daily tasks of living in a still-rural area in their backyard.

This blended housing pattern generally faces the rational street in a uniform grid-like pattern. This style is also very likely to have access to running water and electricity, though available data claims that these two services are not found in 100% of the homes in Madrina. Because of the running water and electricity, the food production area is likely to have a European-styled sink, faucet, shower, and toilet. As in the more traditional naj, this house also consists of a large living area with ample wall hooks for hamacas, thus reflecting the sensibilities of the more traditional house. Televisions, computers, electric stoves and ovens, refrigerators, stereos, couches, and entertainment centers are all likely to be found in this and the third pattern of dwelling. Ceiling fans combat the oppressive summer heat and keep the mosquitoes at bay (see figure 9 below).

Figure 9
Type Two: Yucatec-Mayan Naj with Masonry
The third and fourth types of structure retain little or no resemblance to Yucatec-Mayan sensibilities. This house is completely cement or masonry in construction and is generally built in a square or rectangular pattern with an obvious proximity and orientation towards the street—a sign of governance and surveillance. The aesthetics are generally Spanish, with rounded entrances, bright colors, and earth tones. Today, one might even find gabled houses in the style of English, not Spanish, North America—an obvious sign of the cultural remittances from im/migration. Obviously opulent and much larger than the aforementioned patterns, this house can have a conspicuous driveway demonstrating the luxury of personal transportation, with the look of a guarded compound of a town official. With marble and rock patios, this house has bright tones of paint that emerge dramatically from the landscape in comparison to the earthy colors of the traditional *naj*. Porches or verandas with ornate adornment, cement, and iron fencing with gates, stone sidewalks, woodcarvings, large wooden doors with rounded tops, and mirrored windows that prevent the intrusion of eyes from passersby are in stark contrast to the more Yucatec-Mayan dwellings.

This house demonstrates a change from patterns that are more traditional and, as outlined below, is indicative of an economic status change among some im/migrants. Often im/migrants will have houses of this style built while they are in the U.S. by sending remittances to friends or family to build, or by building it themselves upon their return. On the inside, the few semblances of more traditional culture may include the ubiquitous *hamaca*, used as necessity against the heat of the Yucatán no matter what the ethnic background of the person. One is still able to find
the living area behind the house, where the aforementioned space for a garden and small livestock is maintained. To be sure, some who live in houses such as these are not im/migrant families; however, the im/migrant is able to achieve a house of this nature in a fraction of the time by working in the U.S. The tiendas, or small businesses, and governmental buildings follow this pattern, as well (see figures 10 and 11 below).

Figure 10
Type Three: Traditional Mexican House of Spanish Influence

Figure 11
Type Four: House of Western, North American Influence
To put the four types on a continuum, there is a movement away from the *naj* and *solar* orientation of the traditional pattern towards an orientation and closeness to the street, as well as an outward looking orientation towards English, U.S. North American styles. One of the determining factors in housing choice is access to money and resources. Typically, if a family has an im/migrant family member, a new hurricane-proof house will be created—that is, types two three or four. Assumedly this is because of the presence of personal transportation and the necessity of that transportation to be close to the house in a personal driveway or parking area. The houses also become more compartmentalized and disconnected from the elements, noise, and interactions with passersby in the community. There is a shift into a more, but not completely, private world of personal material wealth.

Related to this, economic remittances allow the household to rebuild newer, stronger houses made of masonry to withstand the hurricane season every year—and so the necessity and functionality of safety and security requires im/migration remittances to be used to build more European-styled, secure housing. The interviews are very clear about this strategy. In the interviews, family emerges as the main motivation for leaving and returning—and this motivation is directly related to the transformation of the household home from the first style to the second and third style outlined above. It is clear that family safety and well-being through more secure (but non-traditional Yucatec-Mayan) is the ultimate goal.

The highlight of life in Madrina is the August fiesta. It is at this time that the town is transformed into a bustling and exciting array of smells, sights and sounds as the citizenry renew their shared history of Yucatec-Maya, Catholicism, and
Mexicanidad. In lieu of describing the fiesta here, I will wait and address the fiesta and the new cultural practices and additions stemming from im/migration at length in chapter eleven below. Allusions to the changes can also be found interpolated through the data chapters below.

In conclusion, Madrina is a rural town with a mix of traditional lifeways. There are monolinguals and also bilinguals and trilinguals. Architecture is also a blend of traditional and modern, as the hurricane zone necessitates shifts in priorities from cultural heritage to familial security. Economic orientation consists of hacer milpa as well as urban work in Mérida and the U.S. Most families have a solar and animals, fruits, vegetables, and a wide array of other cultural material cultures at their disposal, all of which are confronted by, and confront the cultural remittances of the returned im/migrants from the U.S.
CHAPTER IV: THEORY: IDENTITY, ETHNICITY, AND RACE IN MÉXICO AND THE U.S.

Identity

This chapter seeks to unpack the nuances of identity and ethnic identity before examining the context of im/migrant ethnic identity as it is expressed in the interview conversations below. It is important to address the literature on identity and ethnic identity in general before turning focus on indigenous ethnic identity of the Yucatán Peninsula, México, the U.S., and Yucatec-Mayan im/migrants that exist between both the U.S. and México in body and mind. Each of these geographic designations above represents real and perceived, past and present, profound and superficial, emergent and withdrawing, shared and idiosyncratic components of lived experience. To this end, each of the layers and subtleties are addressed below.

Identity as a concept has proven to be difficult to pin down. This results in shared, similar, but not all encompassing definitions. Identity is not subject to empirical observation, as it ultimately resides in the mind of the individual or minds of the group. Nevertheless, there are residues, reflections, signals, and symbols that theoretically represent identity as a phenomenon. These shared social indicators can be observed as individual and group behavioral choices, sentiments, and verbal descriptions that are presented across contexts and situations. This means divergent and contradictory identity phenomena from the individual or group can also be observed from one context and situation to another. In other words, identity is tenuous and contingent, with varying degrees of saliency in different contexts and situations when different observers and reference groups are present.
According to dramaturgical theory, identity is partially a function of context as well as roles within those contexts. Goffman (1959) describes the presentation of self as integral to the structural maintenance of roles and statuses within situations, contexts, institutions, and the cultural superstructure. The importance of Goffman’s theory is that it lays the groundwork for the idea that people present their identity in a manner that is satisfactory to role requirements and group membership. This also means the individual presents their ethnic identity as a similar situational and contextual display to satisfy role and group membership requirements as well.

Goffman ultimately maintains that structure exists a priori and is the maker of people’s identities, statuses, and roles. Continuing this line of thought, Goffman shapes the ethnomethodological approach to individual social action in society. Goffman (1959, p. 3) states, “it is important to realize that we do not lead our lives, make our decisions, and reach our goals in everyday life either statistically or scientifically. We live by inference.” Epistemologically, the individual makes use of what is perceived in a situational context and acts upon that inference in a reflective manner—in other words, they produce social action based largely on available social structural demands and requirements both formal and informal.

From a postmodern point of view, situational identity, which claims that identity is as varied as situations that arise, is the most fragmented approach to the concept of self—if not a negation of the idea of a stable self altogether. With respect to situational identity, Hall (1999) uses the metaphor of layers of identity, which continue the trajectory of identity being fragmented and partial. Hall (1999, p. 145) states, “[identity] contains the notion of the true self, some real self inside there,
hiding inside the husks of all the false selves that we present to the rest of the world.” This viewpoint is likely the most pragmatic of all offered here. Grossberg (1996) agrees, and seeks to demonstrate that, in a postmodern, industrial world, identities are baseless and meaningless, and their validity should be questioned altogether. He ultimately describes identity as living in a borderland of subjectivity, which straddles a baseless, unnatural boundary of social construction.

To extend beyond the particular situation, it is likewise useful to consider identity as a component of group membership. Tajfel (1981, p. 255) states that identity is “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his [sic] knowledge of his [sic] membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.” Like Goffman, Tajfel sees identity as more fused with a group identity, as the group would contain the a priori social structure that the individual would be subject to, such as positive and negative sanctions. To be clear, positive sanctions would be rewards for behavior, while negative sanctions would be punishment for behavior.

Since there are multiple factors in identity formation, the best a researcher can do, other than participant observation, is to dialogue with the individual in a narrative or interview. Drawing on the group perspectives above, De Fina (2003, p. 29) states, “the analysis of group identity in stories [narratives] cannot rely exclusively on the local context, but needs to take into account its complex relationships with the wider context of social and discursive practices and their dynamic connections with the discourse of specific actors.”
Focusing on narrative is not only useful in distinguishing between different identities presented in different contexts, but the multiple kinds of identities that can simultaneously exist, which compete as the primary agents of reality in any one context. Davis (2009) claims that there are three separate forms of identities each existing within all contexts to a varied degree of saliency. According to Davis (2009), there are personal identities, individual identities and social identities. Whereas a personal identity is perceived by the self towards the self, the individual identity is the personal identity as it is perceived by others. Because of this potential for disparity, there can be conflict between personal and individual identity. Ultimately, then, the social identity acts as a symbolic link between the personal identity and individual identity.

Based on what the available literature indicates, I claim it may be impossible to find and understand the core self to which identity and ethnic identity may append. The information found in the interviews below is probably momentary, contextual, situational, contingent, and unfolding and emerging, eroding and prone to extinction. Along with this, reactivity may obfuscate the presentation of self towards a type of socially expected identity that reflects what the respondents think I want them to say. In other words, the respondents “might not be what they think they are, they might not be what I think they are, they might be what they think I think they are.”

Hence, to make the terminology operational I define identity as “the characteristics of an individual, which the individual feels to be an element of self-definition, with varying saliency in particular contexts or situations.” Clearly, as research such as Goffman, (1959), De Fina (2003), Beserra (2005) and the work
below indicates, identity can be contingent upon a wide range of factors that affect saliency and presentation. This process is reflective of a pragmatic strategy that takes situational changes into account, as well as the needs of the actor or actors.

To connect to the section on ethnic and racial identity below, Goffman claims that an integral aspect of this process of negotiation is the ascribed characteristics and statuses that are socially perceived within the interactive package. Goffman (1959, p. 1) states, “information about the individual helps to define the situation, enabling others to know in advance, what he [sic] will expect of them and what they may expect of him.” Therefore, identity is, at times, beyond the immediate wishes of the individual and incorporated into a group membership through perceived ascribed statuses.

Ethnic Identity in Yucatán, México: A Regional and Culturally Racialized Identity

Layers of ethnic identity exist in this analysis. Mayan, Yucatec-Mayan, Mexican, Latino, Chicano, and Hispanic all compete for prominence and saliency as real types. The layers of terminology effectively represent and potentially obscure the myriad ethnic identities as they relate toward the two nations of interaction of the U.S. and México. Like identity, each of these types of political and ethnic identity can be hidden and adaptive by situational and contextual change, as well as socially real in their effect. Since there is no referent term that unifies all of these interviewee options, it is useful to look at the complexities of all of these terms as related to Mexican and Yucatecan history.
Early Colonial Structures and Indigenous Identity

Indigenous beliefs and customs are in existence beneath, above, and side-by-side with western forms. Bleeding through the canvas, the palimpsest of ethnic identity and indigenous lifeways manifests itself in subtle and non-subtle ways. Batalla (1987) argues that there is a profound indigenous core below the European cultural superstructure of México. Davidson (2001) also argues that there is a profound African core within the European cultural superstructure of the U.S. To integrate both approaches México represents both historical characteristics of indigenous and African—both the profound, non-western, symbolic, and cultural structures within and without western social structure.

In both Yucatán and México in general, the indigenous and African core has been salient politically. Since mestizaje as a political ideology is a principal frame of ethnic identity, politicians notably represent this assumed and embraced complexity. As example, Benito Juárez is widely known as the first indigenous president of México, hailing from the Zapotec groups near and around the state of Oaxaca. In Yucatán, Bartolomé García Correa was the first governor of Afro-Mestizo descent, taking his position shortly after the Mexican Revolution of the early 20th century (Fallaw, 2008). To continue with a note on the interplay of academia, politics, and ethnic identity between the U.S. and México, Dr. Matthew Restall has been funded to produce a book on the African middle classes of colonial Yucatán. The book is tentatively titled *The Black Middle* and is due in late 2009 with well-deserved anticipation and excitement.
According to Batalla's (1987) "profound México," indigenous lifeways manifest themselves in the mindsets and behavioral choices of the individual—and oftentimes on a subconscious level. The point is that the politically imagined community of Anderson (1982) is distinctly non-indigenous due to cultural suppression and the ideology of the "imagined México," or mestizaje. Davidson (2001) makes a similar assertion in the "ethcaste" frame of analysis, which argues for the continuing resilience of profound and valuable African cultures in the African-American community, which are either not understood, or misunderstood.

It is clear that "Mayan" or the more regionally specific "Yucatec-Mayan" is something that has been constructed through the distinct history of Yucatán. There is reason to believe that Spanish contact, the Caste War, Mexican Revolution, contemporary ethno-political organizations such as the Zapatistas, IndeMaya, Asociacion Mayab, and academic discussion construct the idea of what "Yucatec-Maya" might be. So truly knowing the origin of "Yucatec-Maya" as a working term is questionable at best. Hostettler (2004, p. 188) states, "...the emergence of ethnic identities may be highly influenced by sources external to the local context and may include the scholarly discourse on ethnicity."

Other literature claims that a regional identity is not traditional, but rather a product of colonizing forces. Restall (2004) disputes that the people now living in Yucatán ever called themselves Maya, but rather that there was an 'ethnogenesis of Maya' that emerged from various historical factors. Restall (2004) argues that *kaaj*, which is Yucatec-Mayan for village or town, and *ch'i'ibal*, which is Yucatec-Mayan for extended family, were likely ethnic designations prior to contact, not "Yucatec-
Mayan’ The nomenclature is believed to be derived from the town of Mayapan in the western region and, incidentally, near Madrina. This is important to understand, as a main theme of the interviews is that of leaving and returning for family and land. As precursors to the emergence of “Maya,” Restall (2004, p. 82) assigns culpability to “Spanish ethnoracial concepts that developed in the 16th century, the rhetoric and polarizing violence of the Caste War, and the 20th century ethnopolitics.” Peniche Moreno (2003) also argues that during the 18th century, ch’i’ibal and kaaj remained and were possibly reinforced by colonial movements from ancestral, rural lands to the developing colonial farming estates, or fincas. Therefore, research suggests that this structure is still maintained as a social and cultural organizing framework for the people who are now considered, through various, historically specific reasons, to be Yucatec-Mayans.

The Caste War and Ethnic Identity

The next significant event in the process of constructing the modern Yucatec-Mayan is the Caste War of Yucatán, which lasted from 1847-1901. Moreover, for the Cruzob in eastern Yucatan Peninsula, the Caste War continues today! In the mid 19th century, a Mayan revolt turned into a genocidal war as a reaction to persistent Spanish domination and henequen-based slavery. More importantly, the people of Yucatán protested the profane commodification of sacred corn fields—cornfields that are directly connected to the creation myth and Yucatec-Mayan spirituality (Reed, 2001).

Part of this conflict also revolved around the privatization of the ejidos, which are set aside for agriculture and drinking sources for animal husbandry from the many
underground caverns, or cenotes. In many ways, the unsustainable plastic water bottles that arrive in the rural areas of Yucatán today have a longer history, as water in a river-less region was and still is a yearly concern, and of the utmost importance for rural survival. Nevertheless, the war ultimately became racialized, and the Yucatec-Mayan identity crystallized militarily and politically along linguistic and lifestyle lines. That is to say, it was a war between urban Spaniards and rural Yucatec-Mayans. The Maya Cruzob of Quintana Roo created and maintained solidarity through the ideology of a miraculous talking cross, *el Cruz Parlante*, which pronounced prophesy, in-group virtue and victory, as well as created clearly demarcated in-group and out-group boundaries based on class, race, and rural Yucatec-Mayan culture as a signifier. Today, the sanctuary of the talking cross still exists in the town of Felipe Carrillo Puerto, south of what is now Cancún (see figure 12 below).

Figure 12
*El Cruzob: El Santuario de la Cruz Parlante* (The Sanctuary of the Talking Cross)
The Caste War and the newly coalesced regional ideology of Yucatec-Mayan identity emerged with pride and called the colonial economic and cultural hegemony of the peninsula to question, as it still does in various ways today. Not only did the Yucatec-Maya nearly win the war, but also, a precedent of detachment was set from the imagined, national Mexican identity. This detachment still exists today, as evidenced in the findings below. To be sure, distrust existed on both sides, as tales of inhuman and barbaric behavior emerged. Rape, psychological warfare such as faked cannibalism, and biological warfare were all part of the conflict from the Yucatec-Mayan side.

The Mexican Revolution and Ethnic Identity

The Mexican Revolution promoted a return to communal lands, which would be in line with Yucatec-Mayan worldview. However, it did not completely bring the Yucatán into the fold of the imagined México, as distrust and the relatively short period since the Caste War still played upon the perception and politics of the Yucatec-Maya and the *dzul*, or white, foreign invaders and occupiers. After the Mexican Revolution, separation and distrust were still evident, and as Carey (1984, p. 213) strikingly points out, when officials from Yucatán were asked to meet in México City for discussion, people would humorously ask if the Yucatecos had their immigration papers together before arriving. The ideology of mestizaje, though promising the liberalization of the economy and progress towards a modern society, especially under certain leaders such as Porfirio Días, worked on certain levels. In reference to the overall impact of the Revolution in Yucatán, Carey (1984, p. 216-7) states,
As the Revolution came to Yucatán, it was not any one thing in itself that made a tremendous impact; but taken together various developments functioned to build a better state of mind and an improved human climate. The organization of labor, public education, cooperatives, restored ejidos in some cases, more equitable taxation, more honest courts, and even the basic land reforms when taken singly did not provide startling results.

As further support for the idea that Yucatán was “different” as the political slogan of today espouses through radio and billboard, Yucatán’s first Afro-mestizo Governor Bartolomé García Correa ascended to this position shortly after the Mexican Revolution, when México was supposedly reunifying under the auspices of the ideology of modern mestizaje (Fallaw, 2008).

To say that the Yucatec-Maya and especially the Cruzob were convinced that the dzul could be trusted, and that a new form of nationalism could take the place of an identifiably indigenous background, would be a mistake. Hostettler (2004, p. 192) quotes former Mexican president Cárdenas, who stated, “our problem with indigenous people does not consist in keeping the Indian ‘Indian’ nor in making México indigenous, but in Mexicanizing the Indian.” This is a clear example of ideology transformed into political and public policy, and it is yet to crystallize in Yucatán.

**Henequen: A Regional Economy and a Regional Ethnic Identity**

Next, the henequen boom in Yucatán largely contained the economy to a local area within the peninsula. This prevented need and necessity from dictating an outward em/migration to central México or the U.S. Since henequen was largely produced for shipping cordage, traditional lines of communication and transport were overseas, which maintained a regional Yucatecan identity more related to the Caribbean through overseas transport than overland to the political capital of México.
City. Once the henequen-based economy collapsed from the invention of synthetic fibers, contemporary historical peculiarities would continue to regionalize the ethnic identity seen today. As either a cause or an effect of this historical regionalism, railroad infrastructure did not connect Mérida, the capital city of Yucatán State, with México City until the 1960’s.

Cancún

The liberalization of the far eastern shore of Quintana Roo through the advent and development of Cancún in the 1970’s would prove disastrous for rural, ethnically Yucatec-Mayan lifeways. As a tourist haven, Cancún would, however, continue to promote a regional economy and identity, as im/migrants from the peninsula opt for a comparatively short im/migration circuit by bus or car to Cancún in preference to the more arduous and dangerous trip to the U.S. Yucatán would hence continue an isolation and insulation from the potential cultural discontinuities associated with large-scale outward em/migration to the U.S.

Today, men and women, if not entire households, are pulled into the orbit of the economic behemoth that is Cancún. Migration circuits exist and reach as far as México City, as young and old look for gainful employment in the tourist area—even if temporarily. Tourism and the service industry is one area of work that draws both men and women. From bartenders, servers, cooks, busboys, and hotel housekeepers to time-share condo street-touts, people come from near and far to get a piece of the economic action.

The economic base to this superstructure of opulent culture and enchantment is a construction industry that rivals Las Vegas in perpetual development.
Construction workers, masons, electricians, pipe fitters, painters, and a host of other strong-backed positions abound. Itinerant laborers fuel and feed on work circuits, and move back and forth through use of the inter-peninsular bus lines. Many people from rural areas as far away as Madrina (a 5-hour drive) are inhaled and exhaled from the context.

The rub in all of this is the commodification and repackaging of the enchanting “Mayan,” which is produced for and fed to the tourists, who consume, create, perpetuate, and set in stone a mythical, much caricatured, very haphazard representation of the Yucatec-Maya. In all, the symbolic representations typically imply that Yucatec-Mayans are dead and a thing of the “dark past,” when savagery and sacrifice encompassed their character like Ortner's (1973) key symbols. To be sure, Gibson’s movie *Apocalypto* only added more fuel to the fire, though the locals in Madrina appreciate the movie being in Yucatec-Mayan and are generally proud of it as a treatment of their history by Hollywood.

**Contemporary Ethno-politics**

As part of the broader hemispheric context of the 1950’s through the 1970’s, ethnic identity and politics became increasingly contentious. Ethno-political groups responded to academic and economic incursion, and a neo-Marxist movement emerged that commented on colonial hegemony both internal and external to national contexts. This process emerged throughout the twentieth century, blossoming worldwide. The goals of these ethno-political organizations were complex and varied as much within as between groups, but ultimately took on the fight of the colonized,
the enslaved, and the exploited, with identity and ethnic identity becoming the battle line of political contestation—this was the Caste War gone global.

Ethno-politicalization in the U.S., which included Black Power, Red Power, and Brown Power, were mutually affected by the ethno-political context found in México then, and are continued in Yucatán today. Cesar Chavez, Malcolm X, and Dr. Martin Luther King emerged as the leadership of awakenings. Not that the oppressed individual was not conscious of their ascribed position, but that the awakening came from a criss-crossing of subversive images and action through the mainstream media that was rudely and rightfully placed in the laps of the white male establishment under the glow of color television. Organizations such as IndeMaya in the Yucatán state capital city of Mérida continue the creation, recreation, and social contestation of ethnic identity, as well as its development and preservation.

**NAFTA and Contemporary Ethnopolitics**

This process continued well into the 1990’s, when another economic change again would reignite the threat to local ethnic identity. Through neo-colonial liberal economic policies such as NAFTA, the rural areas would be disturbed. However, with the emergence of NAFTA came the broader, regional countermovement of the Zapatistas in the nearby southern state of Chiapas. Named after the Mexican war hero Emiliano Zapata, the Zapatistas protested the continuing commodification of the environment and the resulting increases in indigenous poverty as a result. Somewhat postmodern in its structure, the Zapatistas argue for local autonomy from national and international interests, yet use the internet and satellite phone to communicate with the outside world. Protests, violence, allegiance with other indigenous groups in and
outside of México, such as COCEI, the Zapotec human rights organization in nearby Oaxaca, and ETA in the Basque region of Spain, have made the Zapatista leader subcomandante Marcos and the organization very controversial.

The Zapatista organization continues to be active in their efforts to organize within and outside the region’s perimeter. I personally receive an average of three communiqués from the organization’s email list-serve per week. Aligning with leftist struggles, the Zapatistas continue the tradition of distrust and isolation on the periphery of the Yucatán peninsula. The extent of their effectiveness in Yucatán State, however, is open to debate. Either way, the Zapatistas have attempted to find a complex blend of the local and the global. Rabasa (2004) claims that one example of blended co-essences within the ideological framework of the Zapatistas is healthcare, which can be either modern or traditional in the way of the curandera. Acceptance of both of these as legitimate demonstrates the Zapatista ability to transcend boundaries between seemingly dialectic contradictions.

The Social, Political, and Academic Construction of Maya

One issue with an ethnic identity is the historical nature of its creation, change, existence, persistence, and destruction. Wars, unrest, migration, intercultural contact, and population instability from drought or famine all contribute to a referent that is one and many things at each point in history. Terms that have been used to refer to indigenous peoples in the Americas have been highly transferable as well. Terms such as Indian, Indio, and indigenous do not have any stable meaning across space and time, but they do represent varying levels of political correctness and biased cultural assumptions about the Yucatec-Maya and all other indigenous groups
in north and Central America. Cocom (2004, p. 182) states “...the term ‘Maya’ was and is a political strategy...these people were historically relentless in politically negotiating and renegotiating their identities in relation to those with whom they interacted. By doing so, they unveiled their multiple identities.”

More closely, the term Maya is somewhat of an enigma, as its modern usage by the Maya has been cultivated from the seedbed of civil unrest and the political movement towards group naming rights and autonomy. However, as Castañeda (2004) states, the referent term “Maya” is as much a social construction as “Hispanic.” In an effort to control identity politics as indigenous groups threatened to widen regional civil unrest, the longstanding political party PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) created a bifurcated system of identity politics that attempted to contain the process as a regional, rather than national, problem. The PRI has not been the only party to resort to “dealing with” the Maya problem. Castillo Cocom (2005, p. 147) states, “for the PRI, the Maya were a ‘problem’, for the PAN [National Action Party] they are an ‘issue.’ They were a ‘problem’ for the PRI, that is, understood as something that eventually would be concluded or solved ‘properly’; while for the PAN they were an ‘issue’ because it is a final outcome that constitutes a solution (as of a problem) or resolution (as of a difficulty).”

At the microsociological level, where the individual feels the forces of this political history, ethnic identity, especially concerning the identity of Maya, a contextually salient and non-discrete location of perception might exist. Tolen (1998, p. 644) states, “Yucatecan society lacks the sharply-defined ethnic distinctions characteristic of other regions, and suggests that there is great ambivalence about
claiming or acknowledging Maya identity; the presumption of Maya heritage may be a basis for discrimination even when Maya identity is not claimed.” This is but one component of the formation of ethnic identity for Yucatec-Mayans of the past and present and demonstrates that the values assumed by being Maya may be positive or negative depending on the context.

Contemporary researchers, regardless of background, must consider that, as espousers of ideas, we often cannot account for all intricacies of reality and must take care to understand our own human and academic limitations. An indigenous Yucatec-Mayan intellectual, Castillo Cocom (2005, p. 137) also recognizes this fact, saying,

Sometimes we [academics] see ourselves as a sort of cultural ‘guide’, taking on the mission of giving ‘tours’ in the social and cultural realms. We become like tourist guides...who always have the ‘correct’ answer to any question and, when they do not, they invent one. To have ‘the’ answers is an inherent part of our profession. Yet, as time passed, I have come to understand that lack of answers helps to establish, re-establish, and continue dialogue.

On various levels, the Maya are aware of the ancient Maya in that they are keenly aware that the people who created Chichén Itzá and Uxmal are essentially relatives. Pre-Columbian Maya is then bridged to today’s Maya through contact with the Spaniards as well as numerous other Asian, African, European, and South American groups. In many ways, what existed before the colonial period is largely untenable by the Maya and outside scholars alike, as the political ideology of Mexican nationalism and mestizaje of the Revolution were the final additions on years of hyper-localizing indigenous ethnic identity through political and cultural coercion. Borrowing from Raymond Williams, Lewin (2005) maintains that there are three types of Mayan culture at work today: (1) Archaic, which is no longer affective,
but rooted in material symbols and archeological inferences; (2) residual, which is rooted in the past, but is still influential today; and (3) emergent, which is present, future, and continuously created. The second and third types are the focus in this project. The findings below heavily favor conceptions of the recent past, as language, myths, histories, and worldviews collide with and incorporate the cultures of the world through the process of im/migration.

As supported in the findings here, Yucatec-Mayan culture has been malleable in that they have generally been open to incorporating new ethnic ideas or behaviors into their mindset without feeling as if the core of Yucatec-Mayanidad had been corrupted. As long as the Yucatec-Maya are free to practice whatever the Yucatec-Maya feel is Yucatec-Mayanidad, then autonomy exists as an internal group naming right. Jimenez-Castillo (1992, p. 198) references the incorporated overlay of Catholicism on top of Mayan agricultural and religious cycles, saying, “the native religious and Catholic calendars function in synchronized form, always complying with the growing and developing of corn, [the] essential foundation of the local economy and the superstructural forms of the ethnic group” [my translation]. Everton (1991) also points out that the Yucatec-Maya easily incorporate what is useful into their mindsets. This means that television and internet can be Yucatec-Mayan just as much as eating salbutes avispas, or wasp larvae tacos which are cooked wasp worms that are fried in a wok-style comale and eaten with various condiments, and drinking xtabentun, honey-based liquor.

The question of what constitutes the traditional and what constitutes the modern continues to be difficult to define. However, the question is not without its
partial answers. Pérez Taylor (1996) approaches this possibility by way of dialectics, claiming that Yucatec-Mayans live in a world existing between the demarcation of public, private, rural, and urban life. Pace of life, conceptions of time, taught knowledge of the selva or forest, approaches to healing, hunting, clothing, and culinary choice all define the traditional in a way that is oriented towards the natural environment. In many ways, the men of Madrina speak to these issues, as orientations continue to gaze towards Mérida, Cancún, and the U.S.

Conversely, the Yucatec-Mayan culture in the urban areas such as the capital of Mérida has less orientation towards the seasonal patterns of living, as they are largely removed within the technological context of the city. However, Pérez Taylor (1996) is committed to using empirical behaviors, rather than the perceptions of the Yucatec-Maya, for analytical constructs. Pérez Taylor (1996. p. 141-2), states,

Quiero decir que es en la vida privada donde la identidad étnica encuentra otra de las representaciones de la cultura material, porque se da en el conocimiento y saber del territorio en que se vive, el conocer las ciudades, los pueblos y las rancherías, el saber la localización de los cenotes, el estar en la selva y reconocer los olores, su vegetación y su fauna.

I mean to say that the private life is where the ethnic identity other than material culture is encountered, because the intimate understanding and knowledge of the territory that one lives is passed on; the cities, towns, settlements, the location of underground caves, the smells, and the vegetation and fauna of the forest.

Today, Yucatec-Mayan as an ethnic identity is still being negotiated by the Yucatec-Maya themselves, as well as through pro-indigenous ethno-political organizations, the Mexican government, and social researchers both within and beyond the borders of México. Most important, however, is the process by which the Yucatec-Mayans of today decides what Yucatec-Mayan actually is and what it is not.
Another indigenous intellectual, Mijangos Noh (2001, p.115) found that people in the town of Chacsinkín, which is just south of the capital city of Mérida, most often answered the question “who are the Maya-Yucateco?” with the answer “nosotros” [us] followed by “Nosotros, los que hablan Maya” [Us, those that speak Maya]. This was followed quantitatively by the answer, “Los de Chacsinkín. Los de aquí del pueblo” [Those of Chacsinkín. Those here from the town]. Therefore, the Yucatec-Mayan language, followed by community or kaaj, is of greatest importance to at least one subset of the population. Interestingly enough, the numbers decrease as the respondent increases in age, which may demonstrate a contemporary increase in the political saliency of Yucatec-Mayan identity.

Apart from governments and ethno-political organizations, inside and outside social scientists have also attempted to make sense of the possible social categories in Yucatán and have, with varying success, been able to argue for tenuous categories of Yucatec-Mayan along a continuum of cultural, behavioral, linguistic, and economic factors. Describing the town of Oxkutsucab, which is relatively near the town of my research, Hervik (1999, p.35) found that “the [ethnic] continuum was [from more to less Mayan] Older Mestizos → Mestizo → catrines → J-waach → Güero/Gringo.” What is interesting is that mestizo, or mixed ethnicity, is the first term on the list, which means it is deemed as “most Yucatec-Mayan” as the list shifts to non-Yucatec-Mayan from left to right. This is in apparent contradiction to my work and the work of others such as Lyman, Cen Montuy, and Tejada Sandoval (2007) who also found that ethnic identity in the Yucatecan village of Tunkás had a strong “Yucatec-Mayan-centered” designation.
Racialization in México

Racialization is a component of México, leading to a dualistically racialized potential for the transnational im/migrant. Concerning im/migrants from the state of Oaxaca, which has a history of resistance to mestizaje as an ideology, Fox (2006, p. 53) states, “for indigenous Mexicans, racialization begins at home—that is, in México and among other Mexicans in the U.S.” This means that social and political ideas concerning race and ethnicity may actually hold master-status over individual preferences of ethnic identity. Since Yucatec-Mayan rural, cultural lifeways, language, and orientation towards agriculture have been master-statues in the Yucatan, they too, like Oaxaca above, have been, and are subject to a racialized structure and racialization.

This process is evident and pervasive in various ways in Yucatán. This relates directly to the perceived changes in the town from a rural to an urban normative ethic and ethnic arrangement. Billboards show overtly white, European faces and movies such as the bungling “India Maria” portray the indigenous person as small in stature, a “hayseed” and easily duped by their urban contemporaries. Puns and jokes also protrude through the culture. One construction company in Mérida has a caricatured mascot named “Boxito” which is a play on the word “Bo’ox” which is “black” in Yucatec-Mayan, in effect having a mascot named “Little Blacky.” As discussed below and in line with Beserra (2005), the racial position and placement of newcomers in the U.S. can depend, in part, on their placement within the racial or ethnic structure within their sending country. Institutionally, Batalla (1987) states that indigenous culture is undercounted because the census is class biased and
indigenous people will often not claim this cultural background due to a history of institutional, cultural racism.

There is significant reason to believe that Yucatan experiences a type of racializing that began with the Caste War of the 19th century. However, it should not be construed to be exactly like the type of racialized structure of the U.S. To be sure, Batalla (1987) and Bonilla-Silva’s (2003) cultural racism is the main variety experienced by the Yucatec-Mayan speaking population in the context of Yucatán. That is to say, discrimination in Yucatán is not a matter of difference between Black and White, but of lifestyle connected to rural, indigenous culture and normative ethics compared to the racialized, urban culture of México and the U.S. This necessarily includes ethnic indicators such as speaking Yucatec-Mayan and tending to one’s cornfields or hacer milpa. To be sure, Batalla (1987) claims indigenous culture is underestimated due to class bias and fear to claim indigenous background by indigenous-speaking populations from a history of institutional, cultural racism.

**Ethnicity and Race in the U.S.**

There is debate over the process by which different racial and ethnic groups experience intergenerational assimilation into the U.S. mainstream culture. Assimilation is typically measured through 1) socioeconomic status, 2) spatial concentration, 3) language attainment (for im/migrants or settled groups from non English-speaking backgrounds), and 4) intermarriage. Farley and Neidert (1985) debate the existence of a “melting pot” society versus a society that is divided by race and or ethnicity. Using census data from 1970 and 1980 they reported on the
progress of various ethnic groups across generations on social indicators of assimilation such as education, occupational advancement, and income. In sum, they found that: (1) in general, immigrants and their children in 1979 were not at a great disadvantage compared to established families in social or economic status. (2) There were significant ethnic differences in education, occupational rankings, and per capita income in all generations. (3) In the process of occupational achievement, European-origin groups were not at a disadvantage compared to those of English ancestry. (4) Several groups stand out for their low levels of achievement in the third generation: Mexicans, African-Americans, and [indigenous] American Indians. (5) At least in the third generation, Russians and east Europeans were significantly more successful than the English ancestry cohort in using their educational credentials to obtain prestigious jobs. Therefore, what this implies is that im/migrant families do not necessarily remain impoverished and lack success in mainstream society through successive generations.

Differences in experiences of and degrees of racialization exist between urban and rural contexts. Concerning urban areas, Alba et al. (2000) describe data from the 1980 and 1990 censuses with respect to changes in non-white Hispanic immigrant economic incorporation in 17 metropolitan regions. Alba et al. (2000, p.113) state, “the outstanding characteristic of change in ethnic economies between 1980 and 1990 has been the increasing disparity between those groups that were mainly concentrated in employment niches and those groups that could sustain and expand enclave and entrepreneurial economies. Seen in these terms, ethnic boundaries in metropolitan economies were reinforced during the 1980’s.” As a result, the de facto segregated
“tossed salad,” rather than the “melting pot” exists and thrives. Because of this finding, Alba et al. (2000, p. 112) claim that “human capital (such as educational background) surely is relevant and helps to explain the poor performance of relatively unskilled ‘labor migrants.’”

Work done on the ethnic identity of “white ethnics,” that is, whites of largely European origin, who are defined as “white/non-Hispanic” in contemporary terms, demonstrates an enormous amount of variation in perceptions of ethnic identity and overall experiences in the U.S. Alba (1990) concludes that symbolic ethnicity and situational identity, which is fragmented and contingent upon context, are two valid components of ethnic identity. Alba (1990) summarizes the experiences of white ethnics in a particular region with the following four features: (1) Salience or intensity of ethnic identities varies widely. (2) Ethnic identities have a propensity to be reflected in some experiences that are seen as ethnic, but the varieties and qualities of these experiences vary quite dramatically. (3) Ethnic identities tend to be bound up in the minds of many with their family history. (4) Ethnic identities are not typically nor necessarily lodged in strong, ethnic social structures.

Though ethnic identity is changing for the white ethnic mainstream, there appears to be resiliency and persistence. Alba (1990) also claims that ethnic identities are not about to disappear, although they are more and more becoming detached from ethnic structures. So ethnic identity will become increasingly individualistic, which reflects the ideology of American individualism. Because of this, there may be increases in ethnic identity being used as a strategy to create a self-concept of American. The idea of ethnic identity as a new form of individualism reflects the
subjective, socially constructed formation of ideas and knowledge. Current research also shows that newly arrived im/migrants are individualistically exercising “ethnic options” that actively challenge and defy politically situated conceptions about ethnic and racial groupings in the U.S. social landscape (Aoki, Alex-Assensoh, Hero, and Schmidt, 2004).

**Pan-ethnicization in the U.S.**

When looking at the politics of ethnic identity in the U.S., it is clear that there is a distinct history of pan-ethnicization. The classic example here is the hyphenated label that traverses across subcategories. Grossberg (1996) argues that the very idea of identity has, in the past, served as a vehicle of domination of one group over another. This was historically followed by reactionary measures, which allowed ethnic identity to be used as a source of organizational symbolism for the political power of oppressed groups. For example, the political power of oppressed groups has generally been in the formation of larger and more numerically powerful pan-ethnic groups such as “Hispanic-American” which necessarily loses cultural specificity in aggregate translation. Conversely, Schaeffer (2002) describes the positive ramifications of a pan-ethnic grouping such as Hispanic-American for Mexican-American political power, but also describes the cultural drawbacks of combining many ethnic groups under one definitional umbrella. This leads to arguments over the political purpose of ethnic identity and whether or not the individual has, or should have, control over the process.
Nationality and Nationalism in the U.S.

Another approach is to look at nationalistic conceptions although globalization threatens to alter or diminish singular nationalistic definitions. Berking (2003) describes the process whereby national identity based on nation-state affiliation is losing its significance as the main theoretical framework for collective identities. New modes of technology and communication and the following three integrated processes fundamentally drive this loss of nation-state meaning: the globalization of the economy, the institutionalization of new transnational legal regimes, and the globalization of media. Berking (2003, p. 255) goes on to claim that the “ethnicizations of conflicts are related to the larger trend of cultural globalization as a process, which encourages the ethnicization of cultural identities.”

Nation building under the auspices of defining or redefining a cultural identity can be a powerful tool for population management. With ethno-political organizations being evident today, more than ever, Anderson’s (1982) thesis of the nation-state as an imagined community is evident. However, today, the imagined community has been politically constructed within a smaller venue of representation and symbolic structure. Group definition can be as specific or as pan-ethnicized as is deemed fit for the political interests of those involved—usually with the desired intent of cultural and historical preservation, maintenance, and development.

Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, and Yucatec-Mayans in the Racial U.S.

Without hesitation, there are historical congruencies between the U.S. and México. Outlined in chapter 2, colonization, nation building, racializing, and
marginalization of non-European cultures are clearly a formulaic attribute of the Americas. This does, however, require examination of particular regions within political boundaries, as im/migration to the traditional, urban destinations of the southwest create a set of experiences that are distinct from the more recent rural destination areas of the Midwest, south, and southeast. The southwest is a traditional arrival destination for a subset of im/migrants in this project.

Racial History of the Southwest

The presence of Mexicans in the U.S. is as long as the history of the U.S. The end of the Mexican-American War resulted in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. This effectively annexed former areas of México to the U.S. This comprises what are now California, Arizona, New México, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, and the remaining disputed territory of Texas. Conditions of the treaty required that any former Mexican citizen on the U.S. side would be U.S. citizens and would be allowed to practice their culture, such as speaking in Spanish and any indigenous languages that might also be recognized. They were also free to leave and return to México—most stayed. This shift in national boundaries marks the official beginning of im/migration between the two recognized nations, as they largely exist today. De Fina (2003, p. 31) states, “Mexican workers started migrating to the U.S. to work in the agricultural sector in the 19th century, shortly after the signing of the Hidalgo Treaty.”

During and after World War II, when Mexican contract labor was graciously received by the U.S. to alleviate worker shortages, a continuance of economic and cultural integration took place. García y Griego (1996) maintains that the “Bracero
Program" (1942 to 1964), also known as the Mexican Contract-labor Program, helped maintain the movement of Mexicans to the U.S. Along with this, García y Griego (1996) states that the program was integral to creating contemporary economic, political, and cultural issues that dominate immigration policy. As a result, the widespread use of Mexican labor has had profound consequences for both México and the U.S. due to the movement of authorized and unauthorized immigrants and the founding of large temporary, immigration circuits. To this day, people of Mexican heritage comprise 74% of the Latino population in Los Angeles (Beserra, 2005).

The heaviest concentration of worker immigrations is in the borderland southwest. Schaeffer (2002) describes the cultural continuity of the borderlands and the political and economic parallels between maquiladoras (multinational industries on the southwest border in México) and migra-dollar remittances (money sent back to México by Mexican and Mexican-American workers). The movement of capital, resources, and labor reflects the geographic proximity of the two countries, which is used to exploit people, markets, and currency rates. The process benefits large corporations, who save billions by operating in México, while Mexican and Mexican-American immigrant workers in the U.S. send money back to family in México in order to develop their household economic portfolio. Migra-dollar levels are susceptible to economic downturns. Tanger (2008) reports that Mexican banks reported a 2.6 percent decrease in remittances during five months of the U.S. economic slowdown at the end of 2008 and first quarter of 2009. Workers are also
sending less money back to México due to the recent rise in gas prices, which are affecting the price of nearly all goods and services (Stevenson, 2008).

**Political Pan-ethnicization**

Literature supports the idea that ethnic identity in the southwest U.S. is far too homogenously defined by past researchers. This overly homogenous labeling of ethnic identity fails to understand contextual differences, differences among and between groups and communities, variation in marital patterns, variation in neighborhood make up, and a host of other factors. This overly homogenous categorization of ethnic identity has been applied to Mexican-American culture in the *la frontera* in the southwest U.S. In reference to the literature’s homogenized view, Vila (2003, p. 608) states, “[the literature] fails to take into account the variation in identity, border culture, and hybridization that exists.” This is in line with the concepts of multiple, situational selves and the expression of ethnic identity as discussed by Goffman (1959). Vila (2003, p. 611) continues, “past theorists confused the sharing of a culture with the sharing of an identity. Rather, the boundaries of identity and the boundaries of culture are not necessarily the same thing.”

The hearts and minds of Mexican and Mexican-American ethnic identity are competed for by ethno-political organizations. For indigenous people, however, this entails a triple-colonization from Spain, México, and the U.S. Octavio Paz (1950) sorts through this ethnic puzzle and describes this condition as the “labyrinth of solitude.” The labyrinth of solitude is an ethnic purgatory that is “neither here nor there,” but in the borderlands of culture and the hinterlands of the mind. In this limbo resides the *pachuco*, the conflicted Mexican-American, who does not know how to be
Mexican and despises the idea of being a pocho, which is an assimilated, cultural sellout. Hence, the pachuco presents a parody of the self through exaggerated and caricaturized expressions of individualized identity—a denial of both cultural terms “Mexican” and “American”, yet affected and driven by partial identification with each. Paz (1950) continues to outline the ethos of the “bastardized,”—which is a denial of Mexican mestizaje. The Pachuco closes off from this unimaginable world of mestizaje—a world that for many others will be imagined and acted upon in the form of Mexican nationalism.

Although Paz’s (1950) masterpiece is widely acclaimed and a literary work to be studied meta-sociologically in its own right, there are some drawbacks to the analysis. Similar to Blauner and Wellman’s (1973) critique of the white establishment’s attempt to analyze the subaltern, Paz (1950) can be criticized for applying an extreme approach to existential analysis of self-actualization and self-denial, alienation, fatalism, fascination with death, and self-loathing among Mexicans in general. Nevertheless, the point is generally well taken and is now a reoccurring theme in literary approaches to Méxican and Mexican-American society.

Indigenous Ethnic Identity in the U.S.

I now turn my focus to the referent existing side-by-side with Mexican-American as a parallel universe of ethnic identity—that of the indigenous. Barring Native Americans in the U.S., Canada, and the rest of central and South America, to whom Mexicans and Yucatec-Mayans are distantly related anthropologically, all other peoples in the Americas are true im/migrants and have been subject to incorporation of cultural and ethnic attributes in the U.S. In the U.S., the increase in indigenous
immigrants has finally been recognized by the census. The 2000 census allowed people to check Hispanic and American Indian, which resulted in a new indigenous referent category for Mexican, Central and South American indigenous peoples. Most importantly, the new term is exclusive of "Hispanic" and "White, non-Hispanic" social markers.

With this change in the census, Michigan emerged as the second largest destination for indigenous Hispanics in the Midwest behind only Illinois, where Chicago reigns as the top destination (Murillo, 2004). What this implies is that the population was here but unseen for many years. The politics of ethnic identity that are reflected in the census created a "new ethnic relief" in the landscape from which a population emerged. Whenever there is a change in political language, a change in demographics that reflect that shift in language always emerges. With this emergence comes a (hopefully) more accurate representation of the previously hidden racial and ethnic realities of immigration. As always, you can expect some voices to be purposely silenced or accidentally hidden at every point in history, as changing political ideal types of race and ethnicity change the known social landscape through the statistical reductionism of the census.

The argument over "best designations" of Yucatec-Mayans in the U.S. is complex due to the racialization of the U.S. Amit-Talai and Knowles (1996, p. 10) state, "[the ethnic] landscape is increasingly being reshaped by identity politics that draw upon a conceptual convergence between cultural studies, multiculturalism, and political correctness." In line with Batalla (1987) and Bonilla-Silva (2003), Yucatán represents a departure context where Yucatec-Mayan as a group is culturally
racialized and discriminated against as part of a rural versus urban lifestyle
difference. Therefore, speaking Yucatec-Mayan and tending to cornfields are sources
of cultural racism in Yucatán, but this does not transfer unchanged to the U.S.
context. However, since the U.S. is a racialized society, im/migrants from Latin
America and other nations are likely to be categorized in a way that reflects this U.S.
systemic tendency. Although Mexicans in the U.S. may be victims of racialized
treatment, the moniker “Mexican” or the broader pan-ethnic term “Hispanic” are
distinctly ethnic, not racial, designations.

In the U.S., there are distinct differences between indigenous political
organizations and organizations that promote mestizaje or possibly Hispanic as a
designation. As example, in Kalamazoo, Michigan the ethno-political organization
Hispanic American Council (HAC) uses the broadest concept possible, that of
“Hispanic.” This organization attempts to speak for all Spanish-speaking peoples.
However, in San Francisco, La Asociacion Mayab, or Mayan Association, clearly
casts a much smaller ethnic net and speaks only on behalf of Yucatec-Mayan-
speaking populations. This difference may allow a strengthened indigenous identity
to emerge, but likely at the cost of political power. Rivera-Salgado and Rabadán
(2004, p. 146) state, “there are differences in identity discourse between mestizo and
indigenous hometown associations, and at the federal level. Indigenous hometown
organizations consolidate ethnic identity in both locations.” In other words,
indigenous political organizations have a stronger ethnic content to their
organizational referents than regional mestizo organizations and work more closely
with departure towns and regions in México.
Conversely, Fox and Rivera-Salgado (2004) found that the incorporation of indigenous cultures into a racialized society such as the U.S. has created new pan-ethnic identities that are broader and bring together communities that would not normally share an ethnic identity due to the hyper-localizing policies of colonial Spain and contemporary México. To reiterate the historical significance of this process, past attempts to limit indigenous identity to the local and community level in México are now being dismantled by the collective political push of indigenous im/migrants traveling to and from the U.S. Rural lifestyles in Yucatán are now influenced and affected by the economic situation in the U.S.

Different regions of México are home to different indigenous groups, with estimates of indigenous languages ranging from 50-300 depending upon the linguistic frame. Each of these shared languages defines group solidarity. Like my work, Farriss, (1987) and Burke (2004), also demonstrated a strong ethnic sentiment among Yucatec-Mayans in the U.S. through their interviews. In Burke (2004, p. 346) an interviewee states, “Maya-Yucatecan culture is the most beautiful thing we have.” Another interviewee feels that the sentiment to return to Yucatán is too strong to stay in the U.S. She states, “I don’t see Yucatecos who want to stay here forever—they want to go back.” Similar to my findings, the sentiment among Yucatec-Mayans in San Francisco is that im/migrating is reflective of a sincere hope to improve the lives of their families and returning to live with those families in Madrina.

Another Yucatec-Mayan displayed satirical contempt for what was seen as the pinnacle of selling out—that of not speaking Yucatec-Mayan anymore, stating, “Yucatecos don’t need to speak Maya-Yucateco anymore—they’re more civilized.”
Also congruent with my own findings, Burke (2004, p. 352) finds a Yucatec-Mayan who presents at least one strategy for success, though not necessarily a referent to an internalization of mestizaje ideology. The im/migrant bluntly demonstrates Goffman's (1959) presentation of self, saying, "most people don’t say they’re Maya-Yucatecan when they arrive [in the U.S.]—they say they are Mexicanos."

**Ethnic and Racial Assimilation of Spanish-speakers in the U.S.**

The concepts of assimilation, ethnic identity, and language are prominent in research concerning Mexican-Americans. Again, assimilation is typically measured through 1) socioeconomic status, 2) spatial concentration, 3) language attainment (for im/migrants or settled groups from non English-speaking backgrounds), and 4) intermarriage. Since one of the keys to Yucatec-Mayan ethnic identity is language, it is useful to discuss the treatment of language and ethnic identity of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the U.S., since Yucatec-Mayans and Yucatec-Mayan-Americans were previously obscured by, and pigeonholed through these definitions.

It is important to understand that the languages of newcomers to the U.S. largely erode over time as part of formal and informal assimilation requirements towards English institutionally, such as in the educational system. Stevens and Swicegood (1987, p. 81) citing the 1980 U.S. census state, "while the U.S. remains a multilingual society, the cumulative effects of linguistic assimilation have eroded the overall presence of non-English languages." In interviews, it has been found that the question of learning English is pervasive in the minds of im/migrants. An interviewee in De Fina (2003, p. 40-1) states,
"Some of them told me that they managed to communicate although they did not consider themselves fluent in English. Ciro, for example, had learned some English, since he had been in the country longer than the others, but the anxiety related to the lack of competence in this language was one of the topics that came out more often in our conversations. When I asked why they did not learn English, most people told me that they had neither time nor money to study."

Assimilation and acculturation are affected by many different factors from the interpersonal to the meso and macro-level of society. Research by Chiraboga (2004) examines acculturation as it is connected to language fluency and use in interpersonal relationships. Nearly 3,050 Mexican American elders aged 65 to 99 were randomly sampled from five states in the southwestern U.S. An acculturation inventory was used as the source for the two factors of language and social acculturation. Language, social bi-culturalism, and an index of neighborhood acculturation were also used to estimate individual acculturation. Chiraboga (2004) found that acculturation is indeed affected by the variables of language, social biculturalism, and makeup of neighborhood. When a person lives in a neighborhood that is high in ethnic variation, multiculturalism, or level of assimilation, the impacts on the individual are qualitatively different. Generally, the more homogenous a neighborhood, the less the individual experiences social cues of assimilation such as bilingualism or dual national allegiances. Alba et al. (2002, p. 480) also state, "the communal context is also important, and bilingualism is substantially higher among children living in ethnic neighborhoods in regions where a biethnic culture has emerged."

At the institutional level, variation in family is another factor in the investigation of assimilative powers of the receiving country. Intra-ethnic marriage patterns seem to influence the language acquisition and retention of children of non-
English mother-tongue families who have migrated to the U.S. Stevens and Swicegood (1987, p. 73) state “unlike other marriage patterns, ethnic endogamy (within group) perpetuates ethnic descent groups as viable social entities by allowing the intergenerational transmission of unique cultural attributes and the re-creation and solidification of bonds of ethnic group identification and affiliation.” Therefore, marriage is a factor in cultural transmission and trajectories of assimilation.

Mixed-status families contribute to the complexity of this contemporary process. Like an inter-racial family, the conflict of mixed status is felt today as children face an unauthorized worker parent’s deportation. Chideya (2002) utilizes an ethnographic description of a girl who immigrated without authorization to the U.S. with her family while she was young. In this account, a vivid description of the problems surrounding “mixed status” citizenship is offered. Chideya (2002, p. 363) states, “in California alone there are hundreds of thousands of [Mexican immigrant] families with mixed legal status (where some family members have green cards or citizenship and others have neither).” This certainly raises the question of how an individual might balance the two contradictory loyalties. Certainly, families with mixed status lend more weight to the idea that the question of Mexican-American ethnic identity is a heterogeneous one to say the least.

Religion also plays a part in how a newcomer group is seen and chooses to be seen and defined between racial and ethnic groups. Millard and Chapa (2004) clearly explain that for newcomers in the Midwest, there are animosities between white and Mexican congregations in the same church. When Mexican newcomers attempted to have the Virgin of Guadalupe placed in a predominantly white Catholic church,
parishioners and even Catholic pastors were convinced that the Mexican im/migrants should “go back to México,” although many were Mexican American citizens from Texas. The darker skinned Virgin of Guadalupe was, in fact, racialized. This process results in “the most segregated day of the week” and as Millard and Chapa (2004) point out, it reflects the continuance of the church acting as an ethnic safe haven for racialized minority groups in the U.S. Such divisions help maintain African-American communities throughout their histories in the Americas as well. In line with this, Kalamazoo’s Hispanic American Council is in a Catholic church, while the Asociacion de Mayab of San Francisco is situated in a Presbyterian church.

Institutional racism hinders the process of incorporation into mainstream U.S. society. Telles and Ortiz (2008) performed a 35-year longitudinal study between 1965 and 2000 on components of assimilation of Mexican-American into the U.S. Telles and Ortiz (2008) found that, concerning acquisition and mastery of English, Mexican-Americans assimilate into mainstream society very well. Conversely, however, the institutional racial structure of the U.S. creates inter-generational trajectories that result in Mexican-Americans tending to live in Spanish-speaking neighborhoods, marrying other Spanish-speaking people, failing to advance economically after the second generation, and continuing to experience barriers to educational advancement. Finally, and of greatest importance here, Mexican-Americans still, after thirty-five years of assimilation, tend to see themselves as being Mexican.

Socioeconomic factors affect ethnic identity. Macias (2003) studied ethnic identity professional organizations and how they facilitate networking for third
generation Mexican-American professionals. In total, 25 face-to-face interviews were conducted in the San Jose, California area with members of two different professional organizations that cater to Mexican-Americans. Macias (2003) found that many of the interviewees described feeling disenfranchised from prevailing cultural expectations in the workplace and a pressure to conform and become socially incorporated. This seemed to be centered in a lack of experience with typical extracurricular activities (golf, boating, etc.) of non-Mexican, white-collar coworkers and served as a cleavage of discomfort in the workplace because of their lack of common interests. Therefore, although Mexican-Americans continue to seek to and become upwardly mobile, culturally distinct behaviors still drive individuals toward more culturally connective organizational relationships.

Ultimately, groups settle and second and third generations negotiate transitions into mainstream institutional structures. Benmayor (2002) studied childhood and school-aged children and distinguishes between cultural citizenship and national citizenship as an identity of first-generation college students of Mexican origin. She contends that cultural citizenship is based on values, beliefs about rights, and cultural practices that foster a sense of belonging. Students volunteered to be interviewed on the topic of being the first generation in their family to be college educated. Benmayor (2002) proposed the idea that, contrary to Huntington’s position below, first generation U.S. citizens of Mexican origin “look backward and forward” by describing an emphasis on helping la familia (looking backward) along with an expectancy of upwardly mobile movement (looking forward) within narrative discussion.
Multilingualism may be more beneficial to the individual’s socio-economic aspirations than assimilating completely to English. Quoted in Portes and Hao (2002, p. 891), Peal and Lambert (1962) find that “bilinguals outperformed monolingual students on almost all cognitive tests.” Also, describing acculturation among the second-generation, Portes and Hao (2002, p. 901) state “the key finding is that the coefficients for fluent bilinguals are still stronger, suggesting that these children have greater solidarity (.223) and experience less conflict (-.171), net of all other predictors.” Both of these findings together indicate that the ability to understand and utilize many different cultural symbols is an important mediator in certain families, while allowing for upward mobility in socioeconomic class. Portes & Hao (2002, p. 907-8) conclude:

...a complete transition towards English monolingualism does not represent the most desirable outcome for immigrant families or their offspring...[and] it is not the ability to communicate in English across generations, but the possibility of learning that language while maintaining a cultural anchor in the family’s own past that leads to the most desirous results.

Research also suggests that the ability to learn English is dependent upon various other factors. Carliner (2000, p. 158) found that “education, age of entry [into the U.S.], and years since entry have large effects in these skills.” Johnson, Stein, and Wrinkle (2003) explain that language can have an effect on participation in politics by Mexican-Americans and that this effect may be rooted in identity and the awareness of one’s interest within a political interest group. This is important, as being aware of one’s interests reflects an ethnic identity saliency through social action such as voting. They also found that choice of language operates as a social cue that either encourages or hinders an individual’s propensity to vote. By observing voting
behaviors of other Latinos, the majority of whom are Mexican and living on the U.S.-México border in Texas, many would take their perceived cue. The research indicates that asking the survey respondent which language they prefer is a good indicator of strength of non-English language usage and preference. In addition, the results demonstrate that, surprisingly enough, non-English speaking Mexicans were more likely to vote than English speaking Mexicans were. The results seem to promote the idea that Spanish-speaking Mexican-Americans think more like a well-defined minority-group, which makes its constituents more politically active. This results in higher turnouts for Spanish-speaking Mexican-Americans than English speaking Mexican-Americans. Therefore, it appears that assimilating into U.S. social structure means following the largely apathetic voting trajectories of the mainstream citizenry!

Differences between the private context of the house and the public context of society also exist. The home is where the informal language of origin is spoken, but the formal language of economy, in this case English in most areas, is presented when in a formal economic sphere of activity. The choice inside the home is sentimental, whereas the choice outside of the home is economically based, with certain culturally homogenous areas such as the barrio Little Village or La Villita, in Chicago as a notable exception. Stevens (1985, p. 75) researched the shift from non-English language to English as mother tongue, and found “relatively high rates of both mother-tongue retention and shift, however, may lead to the formation of an internal language boundary, with possible consequences for intra-group communication.”
Again, we see the non-homogeneity of Mexican-American culture and experiences for im/migrants in the U.S.

Racial discrimination and social placement in the U.S. becomes yet more complex when primary indigenous language speakers are examined. The larger ethnic group of “Mexican-American” has collapsed the Yucatec-Mayan population into a hidden dimension within the referent group. Therefore, the history of Mexican-Americans is a shared history with Yucatec-Mayans. Because of this, the layers of complexity in Yucatec-Mayan ethnic identity need to be examined. Mexican-American ethnic identity, which necessarily contains the Yucatec-Mayan-American referent, is very complex within and between individuals, families, neighborhoods, and geographic locations. Mexican-American ethnic identity and the use and social meanings of indigenous languages are, at the least, intricate and must be looked at as such. Stevens and Swicegood (1987, p. 73) claim, “a unique language can symbolize a cultural heritage even if not spoken by all group members and thus provide a basis for intra-group solidarity. Individuals who can speak the unique language have greater access to that cultural heritage and probably have a stronger identification with the group as well.” Also, De Fina (2003, p. 140) states, “the role of language in these processes of categorization is crucial in that it is through language that membership categories are constructed and negotiated.”

Racism, Racialization, and Nativist Backlash

The concepts of ethnicity and ethnic identity is related to modern sociology’s history of analyzing non-colonized European groups for which race has not been a central concern. Since the U.S. is a racialized society, the experiences of Mexicans,
Mexican-Americans, and Yucatec-Mayans in the U.S. may have a stronger racial rather than ethnic overtone. The Yucatec-Mayan im/migrant may likely be, and likewise feel, racialized in the U.S. Nevertheless, the term “Hispanic” is an ethnic and behavioral term, not a racial term. It describes a vast variation of ethno-behaviors as well. Negative experiences such as prejudice, discrimination, and marginalization in the U.S. may serve to racialize, not ethnicize, the identity of Yucatec-Mayans in both the U.S. and in Yucatán upon return.

Discrimination and racism against “newly-minted” Mexican-American citizens and the descendants of Mexicans who chose to stay in annexed areas in the U.S. is commonplace. Whenever economic calamity struck in the U.S, the “othered” Mexican-American citizens were the first to have fingers pointed at them. This, however, was not solely indicative of the southwest. Millard and Chapa (2004, p. 31) state, “Mexicans were compelled to leave the Midwest again after the Great Depression began in 1929, because they were blamed for the terrible economic conditions and rampant unemployment.” As it is today, economic downturns are often the impetus for increases in anti-im/migrant sentiment across the nation. The anti-Mexican sentiment was so intense in the Midwest during the Great Depression that many people who racially “looked the part” were repatriated to México through rail transportation, with little distinguishing between Mexican-American citizens and Mexican nationals. Often under coercion, if not forcibly made to leave, countless people were sent back to their “motherland country” and this would be, for many, the first time they had ever laid eyes on or set foot in México. One can only imagine the
xenophobic parallels between this and the Japanese, German, and Italian internment camps of World War II.

Being in the U.S. as an authorized im/migrant versus an unauthorized im/migrant has a direct impact on experiences, discrimination, access to resources, and overall trajectories of success. Takei, Saenz, and Li (2009) found that in the cases of California and Texas, whether or not one was an authorized Spanish-speaking im/migrant was cause for variation in economic outcomes. They found that being an im/migrant, especially a non-citizen im/migrant, is related to lower wages in California than Texas. Their findings also indicate that the discrimination is far greater for newcomers after 1990, particularly in California. These results suggest that Mexican im/migrants face a more racially discriminating social context in California after the passing of IRCA in 1986, which was an obvious representation of anti-im/migrant sentiment.

Ethnic identity in the U.S. has to be situated in the fact that U.S. social structure constitutes a type of racialized structure. Omi and Winant (1994) claim that early European theorists were errant in their assumption that racial ideology would not be persistent in modern social structures. Omi and Winant (1994, p. 55) maintain that structural barriers prevent Blacks from following an "ethnic paradigm" of incorporation into national U.S. social structure. In their theory, U.S. social structure represents a racial formation, which is defined as a "sociohistorical process, by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed." To this end, ethnicity, class, and nation as conceptual frameworks of social structure are lacking as meaningful structures of conduct. Omi and Winant (1994, p. 55) claim race is an
“unstable and de-centered complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle, [and] a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of bodies.” Omi and Winant (1994) continue that the racialization of Mexican-Americans is based on issues of nationalism, revolutionary traditions, land struggles, agrarian reforms, and lost land to the U.S.

Racialization is certain to be part of the experience of the newcomer Spanish-speaking im/migrant to the U.S. who also does not exhibit “whiteness.” Beserra (2005) found that Brazilian newcomers actively perceived and contested the social racializing of their identities as Latino or Hispanic upon arrival, resulting in “being Brazilian” or “not being Brazilian” being manufactured as a contextual and situational contingency plan. Taking a micro-contextualizing approach to presentation and representation of race, Beserra (2005, p. 70-71) states, “thus, whether Brazilians are Brazilians [in the U.S.] will depend on what they are called upon to be in each situation.”

Yucatec-Mayans, however, decide between “being Yucatec-Mayan” or “not being Yucatec-Mayan,” with the latter signifying a shift towards the racial (although really ethnic) moniker “Mexican” or “Hispanic.” Within the context of the U.S., it is clear that marginalization along a racialized continuum of status groups is evident situationally, contextually and socio-economically. Political constructions negate a truly racialized approach to studying Yucatec-Mayans, as they ultimately are collapsed under the ethnic category of “Hispanic” or “Mexican” when in the U.S. This is certainly attested to by the interviewees below, who find that they are by-
default labeled with the marginalized ethnic status of "Mexican" in the U.S., though they self identify as "Yucatec-Mayan." Conversely, in Yucatán, a rural Yucatec-Mayan lifestyle paradoxically denies the privileged ethnic statuses of "Mexican" or "Hispanic."

Racialization happens as a confrontation of ethnic terms, but the effect of being an "ethnic other" is similar to the racial marginalization experienced by other minority groups such as African-Americans. Although it is an errant designation, being seen as a Mexican is a racial identity marker. As bell hooks (1999) asserts, looking a certain way in the U.S. social structure is enough to be placed within a racial hierarchy, even if the moniker applied is ethnic in description. Much like the pachucos and their zoot suits of the 1930's and 40's, the cholos of Madrina act, dress, and behave in a new, urban, racially normative ethnic experience. In the U.S., all people are seen and acted upon differently, with race being the default setting (simultaneously with gender) that people turn to in order to signify different types of bodies.

Apart from social and governmental ethno-political arrangements and contextual racialization, employers of im/migrants are certain to be involved in the process as assemblages of economic structure. Maldonado (2006) found that in interviews in the northwest U.S., employers of agricultural workers valorized and racialized Mexican im/migrant workers in contrast to whites and other native-born minorities. The claim is that newly arrived Mexicans represent an overtly ethical worker who has not yet been sullied into the lazy and entitlement attitudes of their racialized opposites. Finding a similar racial dynamic as the impetus for the 2006
im/migrant protests in the U.S., Sandoval (2008, p. 587) states, "commodified for their labor, Mexican immigrants [are] constructed as an economic object, one required to ensure productivity and rationalized as biologically suited to do the kinds of work that capitalists [need]." Conversely, however, Metz, (1990) found that in Michigan, the mainstream society beyond the closed context of im/migrant agriculture is much more willing to see im/migrants as "lazy," "dirty," "stupid," and "thievish," all while neglecting to acknowledge the economic insecurity and lack of legal power needed to battle against structural and institutional racism.

Although racism and racialized structures are evident, the problem of differential experience manufactures disparate social perceptions and relations between whites and minorities due to the "color-blindness" of institutional racism. In Bonilla-Silva's (2003) approach, there is a disparity between ideology and practice, as whites largely agree with ideology of civil rights, but not with the policies to make those goals a reality. Bonilla-Silva (2003, p. 2) asserts "shielded by color-blindness, whites can express resentment towards minorities; criticize their morality, values, and work ethic, and even claim to be victims of reverse racism." Bonilla-Silva (2003) outlines four types of racism at play in the contemporary U.S. First, there is an orientation towards abstract liberalism. This errantly assumes liberty and equality for all citizens. Second is the notion that people self-segregate naturally. Third is a tendency to be culturally racist by claiming that the people of certain groups are lazy. Lastly is the downplaying of racism by focusing on class and class analysis. Ultimately, Bonilla-Silva (2003) foresees the future of race relations to be Latin-
Americanized, where a "pigmentocracy" crystallizes into a continuum of racial structure.

One of the consequences of a racialized society is that ethnic groups lose conscious social anchoring to an ethnic identity and culture template. Davidson (2001) states that the Black middle-class falls into this situation by being continually defined as a racial, not ethnic, group. This means race trumps culture and that cultural continuities are oppressed, hidden, unacknowledged, downplayed, misunderstood, or unknown to both insiders and outsiders. Davidson (2001) maintains that individualism is not within the pan-African communalistic worldview. Comparatively, this is in line with the data for Yucatec-Mayans below. That is to say, family and community appear to be the underlying motivating factor for social action such as im/migration. As Davidson (2001) asserts, Marxism is a reasonable approach to exposing class exploitation, but culturally inadequate, as false consciousness is not an all-or-nothing proposition, but rather a degree of social reality. This necessarily means you cannot place race inside of class as commensurate dimensions of group treatment. Consequently, minority cultures are not actually emergent as part of a new ethno-politics in the U.S.; they arrived with the cultures of Europeans and have been maintained in various types of social action and beliefs ever since. Cultural continuity, then, is resilient. This is congruent with my findings below.

There is always social resistance to new im/migrants retaining and maintaining an ethnic identity that reflects the sending rather than the receiving country. Huntington (2004) frames U.S. identity as coming under attack and explains that ethnic identity groups, cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, and globalism are
eroding the historical creed of the U.S. In a shockingly simplistic trope, Huntington claims the lack of assimilation to U.S. culture by all Hispanics can be generalized through the observation of the idiosyncrasies of Mexican imm/migrants and the purported lack of assimilation of Mexican-Americans mainstream society.

Ultimately using one group as the ideal type in which to generalize all Spanish-speaking Hispanic-Americans is problematic. Based on geographic proximity to México and segregated living and working conditions where the need to speak English is diminished, Huntington unapologetically foresees a clash of cultures that can only be avoided by the U.S. returning to the “creed of the founding fathers” and their white Anglo-Saxon Protestant tradition.

Huntington also accuses Mexican-Americans of “looking back in time” for identity rather than “looking forward.” Huntington (2004, p. 256) says, “if Mexican immigrants want to live the American dream, they had better dream in English.” Huntington’s perspective reinforces the violent, reactionary social attitude always appended to im/migration. An obvious man of the past, Huntington shares the sentiment of President Roosevelt. Portes and Hao (2002, p. 889) quote the President on the eve of World War I stating, “we have room for one language here, and that is the English language. We intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, not as dwellers of a polyglot boarding house.”

A brief history of U.S. im/migration policy clearly shows “othered” groups such as Africans and African Americans, Catholics, Chinese, Irish, Italians, and Latin-Americans have been arbitrarily demonized, to name a few. However, below the rhetoric of assimilation are clear conflicts between settled and newcomer
migrants over access to institutional resources such as health care, housing, employment, and education. The result is institutional discrimination, but also in interpersonal violence. The two contexts of San Francisco and the Michigan are no exceptions. In reference to Michigan, Millard and Chapa (2004, p. 113) state, "in our study, some Latino boys reported that once when they were driving down a country road, a car of Americanos (Anglos) passed them, while another car of Americanos stayed behind them. The lead car slowed, forcing the Latino car to stop...then the Americanos beat up the Latinos."

Though racialization in México and the U.S. is clear, the ultimate terms used for Yucatec-Mayans are ethnic designations such as Hispanic, Mexican, and Yucatec-Mayan. Therefore, Yucatec-Mayans are subject to cultural racism as an ethnic group, which is more useful as an approach in this project than only using racial terms. This cultural racism in México and racialization in U.S. is evident, as Yucatec-Mayans have continually been categorized and re-categorized by both internal and external group forces. Batalla (1987) and Bonilla-Silva’s (2003) concept of cultural racism continues in the sending region of Yucatán, with the representation of “boxito.” In Yucatán, the distinction between Europeans and the Yucatec-Mayans was and is more about ethnic differences between rural and urban culture, lifestyle, and language. Without hesitation, boxito represents differences in access to wealth, power, and prestige as connected to rural Yucatec-Mayan lifeways as the “othered group lifestyle” in the urban dominated economy of the peninsula.

In the U.S., the Yucatec-Mayan is categorized and racialized into the ethnon-racial pejorative “wetback Mexican” then marginalized and segregated into the
racialized urban settings such as the Mission neighborhood in San Francisco.

Racializing Yucatec-Mayans into these broader (but errant) ethnic categories of Mexican, Latino, or even Hispanic are part of the racializing structure of the U.S. The key idea is that color signifies difference in a racialized structure. All ethnic behaviors aside, race matters. In Yucatán, this is also true, but cultural racism demarcated by distinct rural urban differences is also a way to signify difference when color alone fails to define.

In sum, the self-designations given by the interviewees below seem to indicate that pragmatic and contextual re-categorization in the U.S. by Yucatec-Mayans does not typically take permanent root in the U.S., nor does it follow the im/migrant back to Madrina (see summary below). Though racialized within the U.S. and Mexican structure, the self-designation is still ethnic, linguistic, and rural—as a type of lifestyle along the lines of Batalla's (1987) indigenous profundo. Being Yucatec-Mayan in contemporary terms exist on an ethnic, rather than a racial, continuum. Self-designation in the interviews below is reflective of the symbolage of the Asociacion Mayab of San Francisco, not the symbolage of the Hispanic American Council in Kalamazoo. Consequently, to make the terminology operational I define ethnic identity as “a perceived affiliation, association, or commitment to a familial-based ethnic origin that is reflective of an identifiably shared culture.”
My Position and My Agenda

I am a 36-year-old married heterosexual, agnostic, white male of Italian, English, Scottish, and German descent. I was born in Kankakee, Illinois in 1973 and I am the youngest of four. Kankakee is a town of 30,000, 45 miles south of Chicago, Illinois. Though I can account for at least four separate ethnicities, I only readily identify with Italian in the sense of being Italian-American. You could say that my father’s surname is responsible for the Italian identification, but it is actually a reflection of the strength of assimilation of the other three ethnicities. My Scottish, English, and German ancestors and relatives do not openly identify with anything other than “White” or “American,” and therefore have never consciously transmitted anything identifiably cultural to me (though this may mean I am just not conscious of it). Thus, three quarters of my identity and history is somewhat insignificant to me as such.

I account for my interest in im/migration in the following ways. My hometown of Kankakee has a long history of Hispanic im/migration due, in part, to local tree nurseries and im/migrant labor in agriculture. Kankakee County is home to the largest nursery in North America. Consequently, from a very young age I was conscious of people from México living in and around town and can remember Mexican restaurants in Kankakee long before it became fashionable in many towns as it is now. In high school, I worked in a lamp factory with mostly Mexican workers who lived together and sent money back to other family members at home. We
shared stories on break and they shared the food they were eating—it was here that I would encounter my future love affair with—tamales. My grandfather also played accordion in México and thought very highly of México and the Mexican people he encountered there on his yearly visits. He often equated their simpatico social character to Italians. His stories fueled my desire to vicariously understand my own past through the past of México—I now understand this shamelessly and realize that there is a fine line between facts and fantasy.

I am humanistic concerning im/migration. My desire for justice and the social embrace of im/migrant cultures is at the forefront of my critical agenda. As a reflection of this worldview, I volunteer at the Hispanic American Council in an effort to promote bilingualism, im/migrant rights, economic advancement, and cultural retention within the Hispanic community and as part of the larger community of Kalamazoo and Michigan. I believe the de-Anglicizing of mainstream culture in the U.S. is healthy. To be sure, it is no great feat of any modern civilization such as the U.S. to be multilingual. Many other countries are multilingual and I respect that immensely—language is the key to understanding everything and everyone on the Earth. The changing demographics of the U.S., to which Kalamazoo, Michigan is no exception, will continue to bring more diversity and it is the duty of the researcher to address these changes and to promote, through research, a peaceful process of change through understanding. I am reflexively cognizant that I am hoping for humanity and justice, and wish to see all im/migrants welcomed with open arms.

My agenda consists of wanting to know what impact im/migration to the U.S. has on the ethnic identity of the Yucatec-Mayan im/migrant, if any. Does the
Yucatec-Mayan im/migrant’s ethnic identity change? Does the Yucatec-Mayan im/migrant even feel identification with being European, Mexican, Hispanic, or even Yucatec-Mayan? I utilize grounded theory in my approach. The im/migrants develop the theory through providing their oral history and their perceptions, which I feel humbled, honored, and privileged to bear witness to in order to promote their human rights. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.24) define grounded theory as “a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon.

The Multiple Referents of Yucatán, México: Epistemological Issues

For this project, my epistemological position is that of the outsider within. Through ethnographic fieldwork in the summers and one winter from 2005-2009, I have gained acceptance and trust as a tolerable outsider within the context of Madrina. Housed and legitimated by the alcalde, or mayor, I gained access to a predominantly male subset of the citizenry, both im/migrant and not, and was treated cordially. The town is a gracious host and many people anticipate my arrival each summer during the fiesta in August. For some in the town I am a gringo, or northerner, and a curiosity, for others an outside acquaintance, and for others still, a friend and de facto family member.

Before discussing the methods of this project explicitly, it is necessary to recognize the multiple layers of complex referent as it pertains to epistemology. Without this acknowledgement, the work itself would continue to perpetuate the problematic, outsider interpretations that have marked colonial and neo-colonial
research. First, I turn to the term “Latin American Studies.” As a researcher, I am academically compelled to use terms of obfuscation, such as “Latin American Studies.” Because of this, the very area in which my particular work is couched is a culturally and racially biased ideal type that is poorly suited to reflect, in any kind of legitimate capacity, the complexity of the regions, polities, and indigenous cultures of the Americas. Note that I could have said the non-English speaking areas of the Americas, but that would have been errant as well, as English is spoken by many people in all of the Americas. Pointedly, Mato (2004) states that the term “Latin America” is discriminatory and exclusive of indigenous cultures. It does not disclose real types, but obscures hundreds if not thousands of cultural traditions and certainly thousands of linguistic worldviews.

Having recognized this fact, I am left searching for a fashionable alternative term in which to couch a more enlightened work. In my search, the acceptable alternatives are in and of themselves limited, making the process truncated and discrete in scope. I should attempt to shift the discourse through new frames of language and new frames of ideal types. I make every attempt to use language that is precise in practice, yet acknowledge terminology as it is used by the people of Yucatán, Madrina, and the im/migrants themselves. What the alternatives might be are questions that only longitudinal, grounded theoretical methods will provide.

Epistemological knowledge of the external world is a concern social scientists have faced, whether they admit it or not, since the beginning of social science. Without any fool-proof way to separate “objective” data from the human condition—that is the condition of flaws, errors, self interest, political coercion, misconceptions,
variability, faulty logic, and failed translation, epistemology will remain a relevant discussion in scientific inquiry into human behavior. This issue has not, and will not, prevent social scientists from pursuing social science anyway, so it is best to engage this question rather than pretend it does not exist.

There is much precedent for grappling with this issue of cultural analysis. Early anthropologists such as Boas (1896) attempted to frame the subject of analysis through a holistic approach, observing different, competing, and cohesive planes of social action. This was but one opening statement to the four fields approach (physical/biological anthropology, culture and ethnology, linguistics, and archeology), which still exists in anthropology curricula today. However, Boas (1896) also felt that research should be grounded in cultural relativism, which means that processes should be studied within and not between cultures. Therefore, we have one of the earliest critiques of comparative methods that seek to map out differences between assumedly separate racial, ethnic, and cultural groups. Historical particularism assumes that similarity between cultures cannot be attributed to similar historical events.

From my perspective, legitimate forms of analysis can be viewed as “subjective facts.” By subjective facts, I mean the transmission of facts that are held to be true by the key actors involved in the data presentation, collection, analysis, and dissemination. Facts exist, but they are social and they are subjective. This means facts have social power in that they are acted upon and those actions have, in turn, social consequences, but that they do not necessarily constitute positivistic reality or even a reasonably close representation of a positivistic reality. As an example,
Denzin’s (1989) types of autobiographical truth themselves lend to this approach. Denzin (1989, p. 23) states “facts refer to events that are believed to have occurred...facticities describe how those facts were lived and experienced,...fiction is a narrative which deals with real or imagined facts and facticities...and truth refers to statements that are in agreement with facts and facticities as they are known and commonly understood within a community of minds.” In many ways, my use of “subjective facts” is congruent to Denzin’s facticities.

Reality Disconnect: Weber’s Ideal and Real Types

The subjective social facts encountered in studied lifeworlds are part of multiple layers of referent facts, facticities, and truths as outlined above. That is, they are symbolic, linguistic systems that are often embedded within broader culturally symbolic systems, which are ultimately translated into new symbolic, linguistic systems of sociological keywords by the researcher. Subsequently, this new piece of academic production potentially becomes reified as an innovative, subjective social fact. This subjective social fact is then acted upon and produces new research, academic criticism, and public policy.

The core problem that social scientists face, though it is not often described in this manner, is complexity. Therefore, the real object, person, or idea does not quite fit the ideal object, person, or idea. Using Weber as a guide, Weber describes ideal types as theoretical structures that attempt to envelop the core essences of an object or idea. Weber (1947, p. 92) states, “[an ideal type is] the construction of a purely rational course of action in such cases serves the sociologist as a type...which has the
merit of clear understandability and lack of ambiguity.” Therefore, the aggregate components of an ideal type are used as a heuristic or stereotype in which to frame what is being investigated. Oftentimes, however, these hermeneutics as they are understood and acted upon as subjective social facts obscure the complexity and authenticity of real types beneath the socially constructed person, object, or idea.

In the case of social science, this obfuscation of reality through ideal types has emerged from errant assumptions, a lack of adequate data, lack of sophistication and elegance of research design, bias, and the belief in a pure, positivistic scientific method. However, there are errant assumptions that come not from the inherent flaws of the scientific method, but from the social and political context in which the method is couched. The last 500 years of colonialization and the present consequences of that past have perpetuated a failure to construct ideal types without cultural and racial bias and without the silencing of voices. This research is no exception. This means that the ideal types that have been constructed and utilized to signify minorities and colonized groups have been more divergent from culturally real types, resulting in racially and ethnically biased assumptions and value judgments. This analysis is underpinned by the assumption that ideal types and real types will never be congruent due to their mutually exclusive and mutually defining properties.

Since humans and the environs that they inhabit change quickly, ideal types will always lag behind real types. Once an ideal type and the real type diverge to the point that the ideal is deemed too erroneous to be an adequate heuristic, change may occur. Through discourse, old types are discarded, modified to fit new realities, or are discussed in terms of the disconnect. When this happens, the effects can ripple
through all institutions of society. Once an ideal type that historically dominated the colonial and the neo-colonial periods of the U.S. was challenged in one sphere, scrutiny of all institutional spheres may follow. In academics, Blauner and Wellman's (1973) announcement of the “end of white sociology” argued against colonial and neo-colonial research and its white-biased, hegemonic moorings. Subsequently, academics are trying to introduce new ideal types into the academic parlance that reflect the new acknowledgment of researcher positionality and the power that underpins academics and politics. The requirement of insider credibility is another reflection of the new approach and is warranted as a way to make amends for past academic sins.

Referent Languages, Translation, and Methods

There is always concern when translating between languages, which are linguistic heuristic templates. Polar (2004) argues that even indigenous writers must also cover the referent by narrating through European concepts and language, which means that the outsider researcher is not necessarily less able to produce valid texts on multiple levels of analysis, since political hegemony constrains the indigenous writer as well. This results mainly from policies against indigenous languages being taught in schools, causing people to speak Yucatec-Maya, but not read or write Yucatec-Maya for example. However, Polar (2004a) continues to call for new forms of research rigorous enough to deal with the complexity of Latin América. Since reality can exist on multiple layers of referent, what matters most is the ability of the
researcher to fluidly move back and forth among these layers of referent and engage the textures as they emerge.

Qualitative Coding

Experiences conveyed are not monolithic in nature. As Tedlock (2000) claims, human experiences are never uni-dimensional. This means they are never "only Black" or "only female" and are never without value judgments as well. As a student and as a researcher I must attempt to navigate the informant and myself, and vice versa, through a complex, mutually affecting conversational maze of Yucatec-Maya, Spanish, and English linguistic templates. In this way, an open-coding seems most appropriate in order to allow real types to emerge, rather than be hindered by the assumptions that come from ideal types.

Using an open-coding method, all speech and utterances in the interview are valid referents. Since I am not employing a hypothesis testing method, the coding will be open to the data that empirically emerges. Therefore, the coding is "open" in the sense that I do not employ any parameters of analysis. In other words, the analytic criteria for discussion will not be specifically pre-coded, or defined before the interview. This approach will better allow for the free flow of multiple layers of languages (Spanish, Yucatec-Maya, and English). This will allow themes through languages to emerge and build the theories to be applied during the analysis. Related to this, Strauss and Corbin (1990) state that the open-coding approach is based in the social construction of multiple realities, which is a blend of postmodern, hermeneutic,
and interpretive paradigms. In addition, creativity is a crucial element, since the
teaching building is based on empirical realities reflected in narrative.

Since experiences are never singular, I will be able to engage the referents
from a number of different levels of position, such as family, im/migration,
masculinity, marriage, religion, and so on. The epistemological difference between
Yucatec-Maya, Spanish, and English is similar to the incongruence of ideal and real
types, so there will be no perfect congruence. The layers of referents between the
languages may merge to the point of inter-lingual synonym, but there will likely be
no exact match of words and ideas at times. I accept this drawback of the research,
and respond by attempting to find the character and essence of shared experiences
within the stories and experiences related to me by the returned im/migrant.

In many ways, the disconnect between the languages will require use of
narrative poetics, much like the translation of the 1984 autobiography of Rigoberta
Menchú. At the time of the book’s production, Rigoberta had only spoken Spanish
for three years. Through poetics, the book was still able to produce an eloquent
depiction of her life that was both factually correct and true to Denzin’s facticitites as
Rigoberta perceived them. Discussing the new journalism of interpretive poetics,
Denzin (1997, p. 208) states, “with the new journalists, the basic unit of analysis is
not the fact but the scene, the situation in which an event occurs.” My job is to find
the essences that encompass the scene in all of the languages: the im/migrant
language and real type of Spanish, English, and Yucatec-Maya, and the researcher’s
academic language of English and the ideal types of sociological terms. Denzin
(1989, p. 83) states “…there is no way to stuff a real-live person between the two
covers of a text.” Because of this reality, I must primarily consider the humanity of the people who have offered to talk to me. Denzin, (1989, p. 83) continues:

...we must remember that our primary obligation is always to the people we study...to write documents that speak to human dignity, the suffering, the hopes, the dreams, the lives gained, and the lives lost by the people we study...If we foster the illusion that we understand when we do not or that we have found meaningful, coherent lives where none exist, then we engage in a cultural practice that is just as repressive as the most repressive of political regimes.

Translation is crucial, but it is only crucial in that the discussants must part ways and the information must be valid and reliable for analysis from a location remote from the field. Since no two languages possess a precise equivalence of expressions, the researcher must possess a feel for the emotional rhythms and turning point experiences of the humans described. Humor, fears, expressions, impressions, and an entire range of universal human emotions can be a conduit to experience that is in many ways superior to the discrete and logical approach of written language as with a strictly coded content analysis.

With the blurring of the researcher and researched positions, the poetics of the description will be as much about my emotional reaction to the stories as the emotions conveyed by the person. Subsequently, all written representations will be pluri-vocal and pluri-emotional. Tyler (1985, p. 8) states “there must be pluri-vocal evocation ‘let the subject’s voice be heard’ for both of us.” Therefore, the shared emotions and meta-language of interaction and the use of multiple languages such as Yucatec-Maya, Spanish, and English necessarily create a multi-referential landscape of impressionist ethnography. My job is not to present exactly what was experienced, but what the experience meant. Referring to this problematic of conveying
experience in a way that is faithful to facticity, Denzin (1989, p. 69) states, “there are no experiences, only glossed, narrative reports of them. The use and value of the biographical method lies in its user’s ability to capture, probe, and render understandable problematic experience.” From Denzin’s (1989) approach, this would be finding the life-turning events, the spirit, and the overall facticity of the experience. This extends beyond the technical components of the interview and allows the scene to emerge, including the feel of the experience, and not only the words as they relate discrete, historical facts.

Outsider-within positionality, poetics, emotions, and imagination can be more important than linguistic precision in understanding someone’s experience and perception, as it is not always the imperative that a verbatim transcription is created. This is not to say that accurate transcription is not important, but that not all of the data will necessarily be reflected in the final analysis. Rather, the major themes and anecdotes of spirit create the final description. In my experiences with im/migrants thus far, the stories are quite elaborate and embellished for effect as emotion and non-verbal communication serve as an overriding conduit to both fact and facticity of experience on a psychological plane beyond the logic of words. Churchill (2005) sums up this experience as the researcher’s mind serving as a transitional space that is constantly trying to decide what and how to report what it observes, and there can be no internal consistency in the results when approached in this manner. As Churchill (2005, p. 7) states, “poetic sensibility can be superior to mechanic precision.”

What is important is that a mutual respect for the voice, emotion, and humanity of both participants is at the forefront of the experience. Sensitivity to
emotional detail is superior to logical consistency and exactitude. Researchers can expect neither the humans we study nor ourselves to be logically consistent and exact every time. I will acknowledge the referent layers, create ethnographic impressionism, and give spirit and feeling to the representations of the life and death experiences related to migration and of the indigenous transnational migrant's ideas about their ethnic identity.

The interviews are open-coded, which means that nuanced themes will invariably be collapsed under broader, overarching themes. The broader overarching themes are outlined the following way. Concepts that are coded as individual identity could consist of “I,” “me,” and “myself.” The ethnic identity of self, family and town could consist of concepts referred to such as “race,” “ethnicity,” “behaviors,” “belief,” habit,” “background,” “heritage,” “legacy,” “inheritance,” “birthright,” “traditions,” “customs,” “mores,” “rituals,” “practices,” “conventions,” “way of life,” “familial origin” and “we,” “us,” “they,” “my/the family,” “my/the town,” when in reference to family and community. For equivalents in Spanish, see Appendix C below.

Research Procedure

Respondents were recruited through use of public spaces in Madrina as well as in Kalamazoo and San Francisco. Word of mouth from one interviewee to another also played a small part in recruitment. Respondents were instructed to arrive at a time in the day of their utmost convenience, meaning without disruption to work-related or familial-related duties or requirements. Im/migrant respondents discussed
their experiences and thoughts on the aforementioned themes for approximately 1 to 2 hours. This took place in a private confidential setting and was semi-structured. Though a set of scripted interview questions was followed as a guide, the respondent was allowed to venture into thematic areas not specified by the interview script, with follow-up questions occasionally offered to ensure clarity.

Some interview notes were handwritten to formulate follow-up questions as the conversation progressed, and the interview was tape-recorded for transcription in the U.S. The respondent had the option of not having the interview recorded, which was on the informed consent form and read aloud by me. Using the informed consent, which was read by the respondent or read aloud by me, the respondent was made aware prior to the interview that a payment of $75.00 Mexican Pesos ($7.00 USD) for interviews in México and $10.00 U.S.D. for U.S. interviews per hour would be paid by the researcher for participation in the project. The respondent was made aware that optional interviews might be requested. Follow up interviews were in no way mandatory, could be refused at any time without consequence, and would entail the payment of the same amounts per hour. The informant either signed or declined the informed consent form, in which case the interview did not occur. Once I had obtained the informed consent form and survey, all other identifying information, such as a signature, were detached and randomly filed to protect confidentiality and anonymity. Total fieldwork was from 2005 to 2009, and data collection was from February 2007 to February 2010.

The data collection consisted of individual responses to each open-ended question in narrative form. I asked the participant a series of questions that
progressively built on the idea of ethnic identity from the individual to the familial to the community level (see Appendix C below). Units of analysis consist of over 50 im/migrants who have returned from or currently reside in Kalamazoo, Michigan or San Francisco, California. Forty-five were given the main interview and seven were given a subset interview on the Mission neighborhood in San Francisco, totaling 52.

Whether or not a particular individual was an authorized or unauthorized im/migrant was not ascertained to protect the rights and privacy of each im/migrant and their family. Moreover, im/migrants were instructed not to indicate legal status or histories of legal statuses to prevent participant fears or anxieties concerning that information. Any identifying information concerning legal status that was demonstrated either implicitly or explicitly within the interview was destroyed, regardless of whether or not it was discussed as an aspect of ethnic identity.

The Interview

The study is principally qualitative using a thematic content analysis of open-ended, narrative interview questions. The interview schedule progressively addresses overall im/migrant biography and ethnic identity. Selected respondents consisted of individuals from Madrina, Yucatán, who lived and worked in and around Kalamazoo, Michigan or San Francisco, California.

The interview script demonstrates the overall trajectory of themes of the conversation. Questions 1-3 are concerned with the general profile of the im/migrant. Delving deeper, questions 4-6 are concerned with identity. Questions 7-14 move towards motivations to immigrate, leading to questions 15-18, which are concerned
with the broader context of immigration and the family. Questions 19-20 are priming questions to prepare the respondent to discuss the impact of immigration in general, which occurs in questions 21-25, leading into the impact of immigration on ethnic identity of self, family, and the town in questions 26-29. Questions 30-31 then seek to finalize the conversation by discussing mixed-status families and the prospect of immigrating to the U.S. permanently, effectively engaging the immigrant in the most poignant question concerned with ethnic identity and immigration.

To reiterate the definitions of both identity and ethnic identity, identity is defined as “the characteristics of an individual, which the individual feels to be an element of self-definition, with varying saliency in particular contexts or situations.” Identity consists of the characteristics that are salient beyond formally situated roles and socially defined cultural and non-cultural group affiliations. Ethnic identity is defined as “a perceived affiliation, association, or commitment to a familial-based ethnic origin that is reflective of an identifiably shared culture.”

Since there is variation in the definition of ethnic identity between family members and aspects of ethnic identity might be embedded in notions of family, the questions began on an individual level, slowly move to the familial realm, and finalize in town ethnic identity. Family is defined as “any person or persons who are considered to be family members, and are labeled as such in interview narrative.” Town is defined as “any person or persons who are considered to be town members, and are labeled as such in interview narrative.”

In review, between Yucatán and the U.S., Yucatec-Mayans have continually been categorized and re-categorized by both internal and external group forces. In
Yucatán, the Caste War served to pan-racialize and pan-ethnicize pre-Columbian, community-level conceptions of ethnicity and culture, although the conflict may also be construed as a class conflict from a Marxist perspective. In other words, the distinction between the Spanish and the Yucatecs was more about differences between rural and urban culture, lifestyle, and language. The political context of being Yucatec-Mayan in contemporary terms seems to exist on an ethnic, rather than a racial, continuum.

Again, within the context of the U.S., racial marginalization of status groups is evident. However, in this case, internal and external group political structure negates a directly racialized approach to Yucatec-Mayan identity. Politically through the census and socially in ethnic and marginalized neighborhoods, Yucatec-Mayans are collapsed under the ethnic category of “Hispanic” or “Mexican” in the U.S. This is certainly attested to by the interviewees themselves below, who find that they are by-default labeled with the marginalized ethnic status of “Mexican” or “Hispanic” in the U.S. though they self identify as “Yucatec-Mayan.” Conversely, in Yucatán, a rural Yucatec-Mayan lifestyle, brought about by the rural and linguistic demarcation of Yucatec-Mayan lifeways, paradoxically denies them the contextually privileged ethnic statuses of “Mexican” or “Hispanic” in México.

Since the work is idiographic and interpretive, there are certain drawbacks concerning reliability and validity. Although cross-cultural comparisons are made throughout, no sweeping inferences or generalizing statements are made. The research is grounded in the data and it is solely indicative of the individuals, families
and town being studied and the regional experiences in and around Kalamazoo, Michigan and San Francisco, California.

Risks, Costs, and Protections for Subjects

Because there is a possibility that a respondent might implicitly or explicitly discuss the realities of being in the U.S. as an unauthorized worker, there is a risk involved. The informed consent form explicitly requests that the im/migrant not divulge that information unless it is necessary to convey relevant information in a particular point of the conversation. It also explicitly explained that I would not ask for this information, thereby protecting the im/migrant from any potential risks stemming from im/migration status. All information concerning legal status was purged from the interview transcripts and destroyed.

It is possible that respondents within families shared information with one another about how they described their ethnic identification. This has the potential for familial conflict if those involved do not share common ideas concerning ethnic identity. This possibility is real, and familial solidarity may have been upset through conversation and disagreement over feelings and meanings of their ethnic identity. Because of this, respondents understood, through the informed consent form, that their information would not be shared with any other individual or family member in Madrina, Kalamazoo Michigan, or San Francisco, California and that no interview-specific identifying information would exist, not even to me. The respondent was also advised that discussion of their interview with others might cause conflict. Though participation is voluntary, the survey itself was a mild inconvenience to the
respondent, as the respondent necessarily sacrificed their valuable time in order that
the interview could be completed adequately.

Potential Benefits of Research

The bulk of im/migration research focuses on the northern border states of
México and the U.S. southwest. However, im/migration of Yucatec-Mayans from the
southern state of Yucatán is increasing and needs to be addressed. In addition, the
public may learn about the economic and social situation of the im/migrant worker.
The respondent may benefit from the research by being involved with a project that
seeks to empower and embrace the culture of im/migrant workers in general. Finally,
all participants will receive, upon their request, a copy of the finished project in the
language of their choosing as a form of debriefing.

Confidentiality of Data

To foster, promote, and maintain trust, participants were informed that the
material would have no identifying markers from which I could identify any
individual. Because of this, the informed consent forms and the interviews have no
matching identification numbers. The nearest identifier will be the demographic
profile of the individual, such as age, gender, place of birth, and marital status.

Data sets were put in a locked security box in a locked house in the Yucatán,
both of which had keys that were solely in my possession. Once the data set was
returned to the U.S., the information was transcribed to a computer file and all
original data were securely maintained in a locked cabinet in the Western Michigan
University office of the principal researcher, Dr. Paul Ciccantell. The original data will remain in said location for the federally required period of three years beyond the completion of the investigation, at which point they will be destroyed. The computer files will remain in my possession under lock and key at my residence. Since the informed consent made no mention of the data being publicly available, and due to the sensitive nature of the data topic, the dataset will not be made publicly available after the duration of the project and all related, publishable writings are completed.

Data Analysis

Once the interviews were collected, they were either through written notes, or by voice recorder, prepared for analysis, and transcribed from Spanish to English. Concerning language, one of the interviews was performed in English at the request of the respondent. Once the interviews were transcribed, they were combed for reoccurring themes directly related to the overarching definitions and terms above, as well as any words or forms of words that harkened to these themes indirectly. This consisted of extrapolation of question-by-question information in order to formulate the overall demographic of the sample, such as age, languages spoken, time in the U.S., number of trips to the U.S., motivation for im/migrating, motivation for leaving, self-selection of ethnic identity, and im/migration’s impact on ethnic identity of self, family and town.

The interviews were collected over a three-year period, which necessitated a layered, emergent approach to noticing, isolating, and analyzing both emerging and vanishing themes. As interviews were collected, reoccurring themes were noticed,
highlighted, cross-examined between interviews, compared for similarity and contrast in content or context of discussion, and categorized thematically within the context of the questions offered in the interview schedule. Since theory was grounded in data, which was open-coded using the indices below, theories on im/migration and ethnic identity were layered within repetitive iterations of re-analysis and re-examination as new themes emerged from themes noticed, isolated, and compared in successive, new interviews.

Interviewee Demographics

The Sample

The sample of im/migrants in this study consists of over 50 men interviewed between 2007 and 2009 during fieldwork in Yucatán, México, Kalamazoo, Michigan, and San Francisco, California (see Appendix B below). Because of the cultural sensitivities of male and female interaction, especially an interaction with an outsider, females were not sampled. In addition, many interviewees and citizens of the town and state that females are not im/migrating in any large numbers. In all, there was only mention of between one and three female im/migrants from Madrina. According to CONAPO (2000), the Mexican government’s division of population information, females represent 24.7 percent of all Mexican im/migrants 1995-2000, whereas males comprised 75.3 percent.

Research shows that im/migration has at times followed a stage model, where men immigrate first and settle, and spouses and children follow (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). Therefore, it is possible that im/migration is so novel in Madrina that the
second stage has not yet began. It is also possible, as is stated quite clearly from the interviewees, that the quality of life is so appealing in Madrina that settling in the U.S. is not seen as an attractive option, and so therefore, women remain behind expecting men to return.

Age

Similar to the findings of Bustamante et al. (1998) who report average ages of 29 and 33 between two separate cohorts, and Fairchild and Simpson (2004), who report average ages of 33, most im/migrants are between 25 and 35 years old with an average of 30. The upper limit of the sample consists of a 60-year-old im/migrant and the lower limit a 19-year-old.

Age At Decision to Im/migrate

The decision to im/migrate to the U.S. usually occurred in the mid-twenties, with an average of 25 years of age. The average amount of time between the reported time of decision to im/migrate and im/migrating is 3 years. Presumably, this delay reflects preparation such as saving money and resources for the trip, such as U.S. contact information, knowledge of a possible job, and a place to stay with friends or family already residing in the U.S.

Number of Trips

Overall, im/migrants usually made only one or two trips, with an average of 1.4 trips to the U.S. However, Esteban, Manuel, and Luis made a significantly higher amount of trips compared to their counterparts with five, three, and three, respectively. Fairchild and Simpson (2004) similarly found that im/migrants to the Pacific Northwest made over seven trips to that area on average compared to their
non Pacific Northwest-destination counterparts, who made about four trips. The reasoning for the smaller numbers here is likely due to the novelty of im/migration in Yucatán in general, which necessarily means social networks in the destination area are not as well established as they are in traditional sending regions, such as western and northern México. The other possible reason is that many im/migrants report poor living conditions in one of their primary destinations, San Francisco. Because of this, returning and staying in the relatively tranquil sending town of Madrina may curb potential second and third trips.

Another determinant of number of trips is the knowledge that the first trip imparts to the im/migrant. That is to say, the first trip, whether deemed successful or not, serves as object lesson and template for future trips. Cultural capital accumulates and the individual becomes a knower of things, who then retains this information for personal use and transmits this information to other prospective em/migrants. Delechat (2001, p. 458) states, “the knowledge and skills acquired by working in the destination country increase productivity and thus raise expected wages. Through migration, individuals also gather valuable information on how to arrive, get around, and find work, thereby reducing the costs and risks of movement.”

**Total Years in the U.S.**

The average number of years that sampled im/migrants lived in the U.S. is 3.67, with a range of one to nearly 10 years. Four respondents stayed for one year, or were only one year into their stay when interviewed, and eight respondents stayed for five or more years. As outlined below, married im/migrants stayed slightly less time, on average, than their single counterparts did. Though previous research from
Lindstrom (1996), Massey and Espinosa (1997) and Reyes (2001) claim that im/migrants from non-traditional sending regions such as Yucatán have longer durations of stay, this sample does not reflect their findings, as 3.67 years is near the average reported from traditional sending regions in México.

Languages

All respondents are fluent, at least on a functional, conversational level, in both Yucatec-Mayan and Spanish. This does not mean, however, that the respondent is able to also write and read both languages, as all can speak Yucatec-Mayan, but are not necessarily able to read and write the language. There is also considerable variation in Yucatec-Mayan vocabulary, grammar, and semantics from village to village, and person to person. In addition, the level of ability in writing and reading Spanish is also low, as most respondents have not completed school beyond the primary and secondary levels. Therefore, literacy and fluency are separate facts. Three respondents, who stayed in the U.S. for nearly a decade, are fluent in English as well as Spanish and Yucatec-Mayan. All respondents attempted to demonstrate some vocabulary and phrase skills in English during the interview or in daily interactions during the fieldwork. This, however, was typically beginner level English and specialized English vocabulary and phrases for the work context.

Marital Status

Twenty-four of the forty-five respondents who completed the main interview schedule were married before im/migrating, and cite family as the core reason behind the decision to im/migrate and return. As stated above, married im/migrants stayed slightly less time than their single counterparts did. When separating the two
demographics, the married cohort stayed an average of 3 years in the U.S., while their single counterparts averaged 4.2 years.

**Number of Siblings in Immigrant Household**

Immigrants report coming from families that consist of nearly five other siblings, at 4.9 as an average, which may be somewhat higher than the average for the town, at 5 people per household, including parents (INEGI, 2000). This means, that, since the household model of immigration is employed here, the size of the family may have a bearing on the decision to immigrate. That is to say, immigrant households may be larger households overall, and in need of the supplemental income of remittances more than smaller households.

**Destinations**

There is no difference in length of stay between the immigrants that were only in Kalamazoo and those only in San Francisco. Each cohort stayed for an average of 3.3 years. Immigrants that lived in both Kalamazoo and San Francisco averaged 5 years in the U.S. Therefore, for this sample, there is no difference between the two locales with respect to length of stay. To add, other reported destinations include Los Angeles, Oregon, Detroit, Michigan, Ohio, Florida, Louisiana, Washington, West Virginia, Chicago, Illinois, and Georgia. For a detailed version of the sample demographics, see Appendix B below.
A Family-Centered Im/migration Model


Certain theories offer a macroeconomic model of im/migration, advocating a structural push-and-pull of labor markets of global economics. Briefly, neo-classical im/migration economics claims that im/migration is caused by disparities in wages between two or more contexts. This is combined with a low labor supply and high labor demand in the receiving context, resulting in wage-labor driven im/migration. In the meantime, wages in the sending context increase due to growth and labor shortages, and as the two contexts reach parity, the laborer returns to the sending context, effectively recreating the impetus for the initial unbalance and disequilibrium.

Other theoretical models offer individualized models of im/migration, including psychological and microeconomic models. In the psychological or rational model, the im/migrant acts in pure, rational self-interest. That is, they are actors who makes decisions based on the self-alone—seemingly oblivious to family and community, or in Yucatec-Maya, *ch'ib'al* and *kaaj*. Puerta (2005) even goes so far
as to frame the decision in terms of an equation: decision to em/migrate = expulsion + attraction > costs and risks.

Although both microeconomic and macroeconomic theories lend valuable insight to the phenomenon, neither hinge on the complexity of familial units seeking to diversify their economic portfolio through the im/migration of certain household members. Moreover, microeconomic and macroeconomic theories cannot adequately explain why people choose not to im/migrate. If wage disparities exist, why not leave? In addition, if wage disparity exists, why return? In addition, micro and macroeconomic theories are useful in understanding the reason people leave, but likewise offer little in the way of explaining why people return even when wage differentials persist between the sending and receiving locations. The household model outlined here, supported by the data of im/migrants themselves below, seems to be more holistic in approach by offering one theory to account for both leaving and returning, as well as a reason for not im/migrating at all.

Data-driven Im/migration Theory: Household Economics

The findings from this study support a familial model of im/migration. Based on Weber’s wert-rational social action, the im/migrants underpin their economic decisions with sentiment towards family and community. Wert-rational action is “value-rational action that symbolizes or represents sentimental or emotional values.” Drawing on the work of Cohen (2004), who found that im/migration from rural towns in the southern state of Oaxaca to Los Angeles, California was best explained through a household model, the family, in a wert-rational manner, is the core sentimental value behind the impetus to im/migrate to the U.S. Cohen (2004, p. 143) states,
"unlike the Mexican migrant who is a loner, focused on self, and uninterested or unable to think about households and communities, the Oaxacan migrant thinks about his or her family and is deeply concerned for the future and the changes that are going on in the region.”

One family strategy is to send a family member to the U.S. to supplement the local forms of income and food production. From discussions with families in Madrina, I have learned that oftentimes sons leave in extended rotations akin to a military “tour of duty,” whereby some sons remain behind to help in the milpa, while others supplement the household by working abroad. After several years, the son or sons will return hacer milpa or to work the cornfield, while the other members venture out in their place. In accordance with this, Massey et al. (1994, 709) state, “[the new economics of migration] is consistent with a growing body of circumstantial evidence...that suggests that poor households use international migration in a deliberate way to diversify their labor portfolios.”

Previous immigration experience, knowledge sets that are learned, as well as social networks and the social climate of the sending community are also part of the rationale for leaving. That is to say, knowledge, experience, and context create a higher probability for further value-based, wert-rational social action. Deléchat (2001, p. 460) states, “the decision of Mexican male household heads to work in the USA is influenced mostly by the impact of previous migration experience, family network, and prevalence of migration in the origin community, reflecting the effect of these variables on the costs and benefits of U.S. labor market entry.” For this sample, the decision to leave occurs within the context of household needs and duty as a
reflection of caring. The im/migrant does not truly have to leave, but is made able to im/migrate and feels compelled to leave in order to provide for the family. In other words, respect, caring, concern, and the ultimate value of love drive the im/migrant’s perceived sentimental duty and felt obligation to act towards the family’s general economic wellbeing, security, and safety.

The household model also takes the distinct history of Yucatec-Mayans into consideration. Historically, households are the locus of control of Yucatec-Mayan ethnic identity. Restall (2004) claims that pre-Columbian orientations to ethnic identity were not to being “Maya” but to family and land. Restall (2004) states that ch’iibal, which is Yucatec-Mayan for family, and kaaj, which is Yucatec-Mayan for village or town, were likely ethnic designations. This is important to understand, as one of the main themes of the interviews is not of leaving and returning for individual gain, but of leaving and returning out of duty and sentimental connection to family, community, and land.

From the interviews, two main reasons for departing for the U.S emerge. The primary reason is the potential of finding better paying employment. Martell, Pineda, and Tapia (2007) also found perceived wage differentials and an abundance of jobs in the U.S. to be the most common motive for em/migrating from the Yucatecan town of Tunkás; however, both the im/migrants from Madrina and Tunkás demonstrate a stronger connection between economics and an absolute family value underpinning the decision. Martell, Pineda, and Tapia (2007, p. 67) state, “migrants tend to be young, married, male household heads with children, who migrate to provide for their families in the sending community.” Although the assumed prosperity found in the
U.S. is one facet, the lack of employment in Yucatán, and the perception of governmental corruption also emerge. In other words, the ability to work for more than just food is alluring in this largely agricultural and subsistent context. The hope of working for more than food is underpinned by, and closely related to the core, wert-rational reason for leaving—that of family. Likewise, im/migrants typically ground the decision to return in the wert-rational, sentimental value of family, or ch'i'ibal.

From here, it is useful to review other research findings from the context of Yucatán in order to compare the stated motivations and experiences of the men of Madrina within the broader range of research. Most interviewees here underscore the decision to im/migrate with the desire to house, clothe, educate, and generally provide for their family in a timeframe that is not possible when relying on limited local opportunities. Similar to the findings of Heusinkveld (2008), who found that secure housing was an underlying motivation, the im/migrants cite the ability to move from precarious traditional housing, such as a house of paja, or tree construction, to a house constructed from masonry. This is especially important in a hurricane-prone area, where security, wellbeing, and psychological comfort are threatened yearly as the hurricane season commences. To offer your spouse and children a more secure house in which to live and your kids the opportunity to have, continue, or supplement their education is at the core of the wert-rational decision. In other words, the money is not solely for frivolous, individual consumption, (although certainly some is used in this way, reflecting changes in consumptive patterns in both the U.S. and Madrina),
but the majority of the money is used for a safer, more secure, long-term familial future—in other words, traditional family values.

Another factor in the decision to im/migrate is the sheer curiosity and lure created by im/migration-centered communication. Drawing on Appadurai’s (1990) concept of “mediascapes,” stories and narratives arrive daily from sources such as oral communication, television, internet, newspapers, foreigners, and academic researchers. The citizenry interacts daily with this landscape of information, as well as directly with returned im/migrants, who arrive with the skill patterns of what Hervik (1999) calls *catrines*, or dandies. This effectively makes the process of im/migrating appear simple, lucrative, and relatively risk-free. Even when the young men are told of racism, violence, potential death, incarceration, and deportation, the stories are mysterious, venerated, heralded, and lauded as exciting.

In the town square, or *zócalo*, it is common for a small crowd to gather when an im/migrant is discussing their trip in Yucatec-Mayan or in Spanish, with eyes lighting up as the stories, which are likely embellished for effect as all stories are, to produce maximum entertainment. Even when the dangers are conveyed the sense of pride and strength shared between the storyteller and their audience makes even the biggest skeptic of the simplicity of the trek cheer the accomplishment as “grand” or “fantastic.” To be sure, im/migration has become a part of the town’s narrative fabric.

Through the storytelling, knowledge is created and candidates for em/migration learn that it is not just about im/migrating to the U.S., but im/migrating to the *right* place in the U.S. All of this theory and knowledge building is yet another
means of motivation and encouragement. The im/migrant seeks to know the areas in the U.S. where others from their town or region tend to be, hoping to draw on that support economically, emotionally, and socially upon arrival. Certainly, communication in all of its forms is highly prized—staged photos of happy, carefree, moneyed im/migrants in the U.S. serve as recruitment images to be consumed by the next cohort willing to try their luck. Communication by phone and by computer also allows people to follow the rumor network of work, opportunity, and community support.

Although family is the absolute value by which people decide to leave, for the cohort of single men from Madrina who do not have responsibilities such as a child or spouse, the curiosity of journey can be enough to warrant leaving. However, this was certainly the exception, not the rule. Hearing the tales from friends and family who remain settled in the U.S., or who return with grand stories, sparks interest and perpetuates, at least indirectly, the decision to leave. However, they too admitted sending money back to family members. Therefore, those who went out of curiosity also contributed to family and extended family in Madrina, though that was not their core motivation.

The prospect of satisfying curiosity while making more money for oneself, regardless of familial obligations, is clearly one part of the experience. Nevertheless, in contrast to the findings of Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994), the im/migrant who leaves for curiosity and adventure is the exception here, not the rule. Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994, p. 83) states, "...the men I interviewed reported that their primary incentive was not to seek money for their families in México, but a desire for adventure and to
see new sights. The remittances they sent home were more of an afterthought or a rationalization for migration.” The findings here demonstrate something altogether different. Though curiosity and excitement is certainly a part of all travel plans, the im/migrants of Madrina usually report the betterment of their home, family, and children as the primary reason for leaving. However, because of the sheer volume of people coming and going in Madrina with tales of “the other side,” inevitably curiosity plays a part. At least a few returned im/migrants claim that curiosity had a part in their decision, but not nearly to the extent of Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994). In the words of one, “to not live an ignorant life” played a part in the reasoning.

Past research offers a gender-based approach to household im/migration strategies. González-González and Zarco (2008) claim that im/migration in Southern Europe and South America reflect gender ideology in that the woman is expected to im/migrate in order to fulfill traditional gender roles such as ensuring their children and family’s security and comfort. González-González and Zarco (2008, p. 448) state, “[migration]...is interpreted and justified by women according to a gender-based approach which is more related with their traditional responsibilities, i.e. ensuring their children’s well-being and improving the family’s standards of living.” González-González and Zarco (2008, p. 448) cite a South American woman directly, who says “…more than anything, women migrate because they want a better life for their children...I don’t want my daughter to suffer like I have...I want to give her a better life...” This may seem to reflect female ideological gender roles, but the sample from Madrina echo this sentiment accurately below. This seems to suggest that it is not the ideology of gender comparatively, but the ideology of familial
obligation, which triggers the motivation to leave and return. This lends obvious further support to the value-rational, family-centered model as a valid theoretical approach to immigration.

Once the person decides to leave, there may eventually be the decision to return. In this sample, the reasons for returning involve three main ideas: first is, again, family. This theme emerges not only in the questions directly asked during the interview, but throughout the interview and unsolicited. When the family was not the principal answer, other answers appear to relate to similar emotional attachments of family within the context of community and land or *kaaj*, such as friends and social relationships, work and farming the cornfields, bees, or cattle, and the customs and cultural lifeways of the town and community.

In addition, the expression of boredom and isolation from their hometown, along with a general distaste for U.S. culture, appear in the interviews. As a conjectural component to the expectation of returning, Everton (1991, p. 29) states, “the pre-Columbian Maya modeled the universe around the concept of cyclicity. All events both human and divine were locked into their own cycles.” It is possible that the desire and expectation to return to the Yucatán, instead of settling in the U.S., is a residual component of the worldview of cyclicity. Returning from immigration may reflect just one such type of cosmic cyclicity in the lives of Yucatec-Mayans (see also Farriss 1987, Jimenez-Castillo 1992, and Burke 2004).

Finally, the household model also speaks to why people would not immigrate in the first place. Neither wage differentials nor individual rationality can speak to this decision-making dynamic to the extent that family can. Castillo, Jiménez-
Pacheco, and Pasillas (2007) found that in another Yucatecan-Mayan town, the most common reason people did not im/migrate was also family, stating, “family circumstances were the factor that most Tunkaseños most often cited as a hindrance to migration. Because family obligations are a high priority among Tunkaseños who have decided not to leave, it is not surprising that fears about the disintegration of the family play a significant role in the decisions to remain in the hometown.” Since each family is different in socioeconomic placement, the household model also explains why some families in Madrina do not have im/migrant members. Although macroeconomic conditions and individual psychological variation may account for im/migration, levels of familial and household resources, familial expectations and needs, and the value put on the family’s wellbeing are a stronger source of motivation within the interviews here and better explain why someone would not im/migrate.

Data: Why I Left

I now turn to the answers to the questions: “Why did you im/migrate to the U.S.?” and “Why did you return to Madrina?” When the respondent is speaking in English or Mayan, the word or words are bracketed in the context of the statement. From my experiences with the men in Madrina, the main reason to im/migrate is that one can produce a higher standard of living, especially for the family, in a fraction of the time. Without attempting to deconstruct the structural aspects of NAFTA driving this reality, the im/migrants have made clear that the reasons are overwhelmingly economic as directly related to family, family maintenance, and family creation. When asking im/migrants why a nearby town does not experience the same rate of
migrant as Madrina, the reply is, somewhat invariably, “they have a maquiladora
and do not need to go to the U.S.” Though the accuracy of this statement for every
town with a maquiladora is certainly questionable, it nonetheless reflects the
consciousness of the im/migrants towards their economic contexts in Yucatán State
and the peninsula. Consequently, the familial benefit of im/migrating is coupled with
a disgust and frustration towards the failure of local employment prospects to be
lucrative.

The im/migrant returns to family and community with new patterns of capital,
materials, skills, and, quite possibly, a new ethnic identity. This may come from
contemplating their place of origin or from experiencing ethnic or racial
marginalization while in the U.S. In other words, the process may crystallize
conceptions of ethnic identity through shared adversity with other Yucatec-Maya. As
I observed, many im/migrants were quite certain things would be easier in the U.S.,
but when asked why they returned, a puzzled look arose on the face then quickly
disappeared followed by the statement “No sé, supongo mi familia.” [“I don’t know,
I suppose my family.”]. This exemplifies the findings below.

The decision to depart one’s hometown is undoubtedly one of the most
difficult to imagine. Nearly a rite of passage, the im/migrant prepares for the trek.
The im/migrant plots the place of arrival and type of work, which is based on current
skills and the type of work others are doing at the place of arrival. The im/migrant
considers the hypothetical time staying in the U.S., which can and does quickly
extend or never end, thus putting extra strain on loved-ones in Madrina. The
separation, danger, loneliness, and isolation from friends, family, children, and
spouses are serious causes of concern for both the im/migrant and their loved ones back in Madrina. Nevertheless, it is not only a need or desire for lucrative employment that influences people to immigrate, but the underlying values of love, caring, and concern for parents, grandparents, spouse, and children, both here and there, that ultimately allows the risks and sadness of im/migrating to be overshadowed by the potential benefits. From the im/migrants, the decision is not individually rational, but rather rational as it is embedded in family values, love, and hope for a more comfortable life for their family. Twenty-four of the forty-five respondents are married (see appendix B below), while a majority felt that obligations to family in Madrina were the primary motivation for leaving and returning.

The first theme of family is closely related to house and home. Though a lack of gainful employment is cited as reason for departure, this employment is generally related to improving the existing house or building a new house for the family. This house may potentially house three to five generations and is a source of pride and security. The findings from this sample are very similar to Cohen (2004 p. 104), who found the following rank-ordered reasons for leaving the rural, indigenous towns of the southern state of Oaxaca: “1) To find work, 2) To better a family’s living conditions, 3) To allow a household to save money for a future investment, 4) To purchase a specific item, and 5) To have an adventure.” The sample from Madrina appears to be negotiating im/migration from a very similar, household-centered model of im/migration.
Pesos for the Family

Economic factors are an influence on the decision to immigrate (Sladkova, 2007). Simply put, nearly all, except those who cited adventure and curiosity, cited economics as directly related to employment for the ultimate goal and motivation of family wellbeing. Roberto and Manuel both lived in Kalamazoo for 3.5 years and state essentially the same thing; “I im/migrated for work opportunities in the U.S.” Fidel was in San Francisco for two years and states, “I immigrated because of the economic situation, to make money.”

Tomas was in San Francisco for seven years and left primarily for work. Tomas is near fluent in English and is the only respondent to interview in English. He declares, “I went to the U.S. for employment. However, I also wanted to learn English there because it’s more difficult and expensive to learn here.” Though the understanding of what could be achieved in the U.S. was palpable, what did not exist in México was palpable as well. Javier was in San Francisco for three years and states, “for lack of economic opportunities. There was no work here.” Alejandro was in San Francisco for one year and continues by saying, “for lack of work. I never found work, it didn’t exist.” Luis was in Kalamazoo for three years and says,

“Necessity, money and work—there’s nothing here, but there yes. There are opportunities in Yucatán, but only a little. There’s a lot of work, but you have nearly nothing.”

Quickly, though, the respondents shift to tangible reasons, not just money in the abstract, but also the betterment of their lives in concrete terms. This is expressed through material possessions such as food, a house, cars, sewing machines, farm animals, and clothing and books for their children. Pedro was in San Francisco for
one year and contrasts working in the fields for food to working in the U.S. for money, stating,

"I immigrated to have a better life. Here it’s tough. There’s work here, but no money. In the U.S., there’s work and money. Here, it’s only working for food, nothing more. I’m poor, so it’s about money."

Gregorio was in the U.S. for five years and resided in both San Francisco and Kalamazoo. He mentions the tangible goal of housing, which is similar to the findings of Heusinkveld (2008). Gregorio also relates the influence the immigration of others had on him, saying,

"I immigrated because I would like to have a new house. Many of my cousins built houses. For me it was the same reason, having the house. I worked in a restaurant called McDonalds in Michigan."

Néstor was in San Francisco for five years and connects the need to immigrate to the lack of opportunities after finishing school. Néstor also mentions the potential influence and sadness of having friends and family in the north, stating at length,

"I immigrated because in México, when you finish studying in the secondary school there aren’t many possibilities for good work. You never use your education, just as it is after the preparatory school. There are more opportunities in the U.S., if you want to have a new house. When you are a child, your mother and father say, ‘you have to build your house in the future.’ There’s work here, but not good paying. The pay in the U.S. isn’t good either, but in comparison to México, it’s much better. We arrive in the U.S. as humble families, as the poor. You work to send money for your house and so that you might have a little bit of extra money. The majority of your friends and cousins are in North America, and it is very painful to separate from your customs."

Finally, Mario was in the U.S. for 6.5 years in both San Francisco and Kalamazoo and says,

"I immigrated because I need things. We have very little resources in Yucatán, compared to the U.S. You can make it there, so I went. Your work here in México doesn’t offer much opportunity? No. It doesn’t build
prosperity. We have the opportunity to have things through immigration, so I went. Thanks to God, I have a little, but that’s not to say I have a lot.”

Miguel spent 2.5 years in San Francisco and frames the decision as part of poor economic conditions in Yucatán, saying,

“I immigrated because I didn’t have the means for work here. I believe in working with the sewing machines I have in my house, but I don’t have money to study, I have no scholarships, nothing.”

Beyond the abstract and general need for money, the conversation typically turns to familial duty. In line with Fletcher (1999) and Parrado (2004), safety and security of a new house all emerge with strength thematically. The following is a sample of the most common theme, and as outlined below, the theme of family is central to returning to Madrina. Jose lived in Kalamazoo for three years and embeds the family within the decision, stating, “I immigrated for work and to make money for my family.” Similarly, Alfonso lived in the U.S. for two years in both Kalamazoo and San Francisco, and says,

“I immigrated out of necessity for my family, and my house. For a new house? Yes, and to supplement our income a little.”

Don Carlos lived in San Francisco for 3 years and places the new house within the context of necessity and his children having a comfortable home and education, saying,

“I immigrated because I have five children in school and I wouldn’t be able to help them here. In México, school is expensive. From five in the morning, until two in the morning I worked to pay for food, gas, lights, garbage, and my children’s studies. Then, I fixed up my house. The money makes me feel satisfied and strengthens my home, house, and children.”

Don Ronaldo was in the Kalamazoo for four years and continues, “I immigrated for work, money, and for my house. Everything is for my children and family.” Quite
similarly, and with an emphasis on consumptive possibilities, Don Arturo, who was in Kalamazoo for three years, says, “I immigrated because there isn’t much work here. I have seven children to take care of. The money that I make here is not sufficient for food, hamacas, nice shoes, and clothing.”

Felipe was in San Francisco for six years and mentions his familial responsibilities and the difficulties of relying on animals and apiculture or bee farming for prosperity, saying,

“I immigrated because I have nothing, no house—nothing. The money comes quicker now for my two-year-old baby. I immigrated to be richer. Neither the bees nor the cattle were suitable for profit, so I went to the U.S.”

Curiosity and Travel Experience

The idea of leaving for the U.S. as a matter of curiosity and experience is worth exploring. In contrast to Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994), who found that a majority of participants cited curiosity as a reason to leave, this was not the rule, but the exception. As found by Sladkova (2007) and Deléchat (2001), a few claimed curiosity about “the other side,” a lack of familial responsibilities, and hearing the tales told by im/migrants who had returned as fueling the motivation to depart. Discourse in the town promotes either directly or indirectly, more im/migration in the spirit of Appadurai’s (1990) “mediascapes.” Mateo was in San Francisco four years and speaks very directly about his curiosity being the driving force in his decision, stating,

“I didn’t immigrate out of necessity. Many people return and tell stories about what happened on the other side. I don’t want to live ignorantly, so I went and returned. *So curiosity?* Curiosity. *Just to travel?* To travel and return.”
Marcelo was in San Francisco for one year and explains how curiosity through conversation with others influenced his decision, saying,

"I immigrated because I wanted to see the U.S. Many people returning would be asked, 'What’s happening with the others still in the U.S.?' So there was an influence from the other Yucatecos that went? Yes, yes."

Causes, Not Motivations: The Im/migrants Call Out Governmental Corruption

The respondents also felt the need to criticize the Mexican government for corruption and failure to produce resources needed to maintain a strong economy. Even though motivations for leaving are overwhelmingly family-based thematically, the respondents interpolated their answers with discussions of governmental corruption and ineptitude, which are external causes, not motivations for em/migrating. This answer is not without statistical support, and is a direct reflection of México’s 2005 ranking of 65th of 159 countries on Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index (Baklanoff, 2008). Although NAFTA, policies, political parties, and individual politicians are not specifically named as being culpable, the demeanor of the responses appears to describe a cynicism about present and future opportunities in Yucatán. The criticism is not directed towards local officials, but rather México as a nation.

One of the components of the cynicism is the widespread knowledge of political gifts. Although corruption through political gifts and biased resource allocation has proven to be difficult to quantify, Turner (2002, p. 107), speaks to the decentralization of resource allocation in México, stating,

"Lack of citizen oversight creates the conditions for discretionary and partisan uses of funds. The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (1998, p. 26)...expresses the concern that decentralization in México “has not been accompanied by accountability... which means that decision-making
will be based on political bargaining rather than on relatively objective assessments of needs.”

Political and economic changes in Yucatán have come with politically partisan responses. Turner (2002) argues that the allocation of resources in rural areas as a way to promote “equitable rural development” since the henequen collapse had a more dire effect in the rural, henequen-producing areas. However, the allocation of these resources was rumored to have been along party lines. As an anecdote, I personally witnessed the allocation of resources in the form of sewing machines in one of the months of my fieldwork. When I asked a local who was eligible for the sewing machines, I was smilingly told, “they are for people who applied for the machines...and people who voted for and were members of the political party giving them out.” Finally, Turner (2002, p. 120) states that in 1995, the mayor of a small town south of Mérida, who was of the ‘correct’ political party “...reported having collected no taxes or fees locally, but, having received his municipality’s full share of participaciones, was able to finance a variety of public works.” Fidel was in San Francisco for two years and speaks to the corruption, stating, “I think immigration is negative, because the decision isn’t voluntary. We shouldn’t go, but rather stay in our lands. There’s a lot of corruption, and the Peso has no value.”

Juan was in San Francisco for two years and follows by saying,

“In the U.S. there is no corruption! There’s less corruption than here in México, and in my experience, there is always an account of things.”

Miguel sees corruption on both sides of the border, stating, “The governments rob us. This is what happens to the immigrant searching for a solution. Past as well as future
governments—the parties are all the same.” Roberto lived in Kalamazoo for 3.5 years and continues, “I know that there are opportunities from education for women, for kids, for the poor in the U.S., but not here. Corruption from the politicians is the crisis here.”

Aramis has these incendiary comments to say, as he alludes to the ethnic balkanization of México,

“We’re going to have a war. The president of the government is responsible for criminal offenses. There is no solution that works for all people in México. These are high crimes and the politicians are bad.”

Felipe focuses on family and his children’s education. Since he has a child in the U.S., he points out the contrast in opportunities and feels trans-national, stating,

“How is it possible that in my country the kids can’t study, and in the U.S. I have a child in school?!? Here you learn nothing! It was like a dream, I had the opportunity to see my children live in the U.S., I am global.”

Finally, Don Arturo gives provocative remarks on the corruption in México, saying,

“I earned more to send to the family, because there is a lot of corruption here. The government assistance and the work never arrives for the people. The most the Mexican government gives is clothing and sewing machines. We work in agriculture and can’t produce because we don’t have support from the government. I earn no credit. We don’t have the resources to work the land. It’s very difficult to not sufficiently maintain the family with clothing, shoes, and food. Then the Mexican is obligated to immigrate to the U.S. because there are opportunities there. The Mexican government has nothing. The Mexican government is corrupt. The Mexican government is brimming with corruption.”

Data: Why I Returned

The reasons for returning are also directly connected to marriage and family. If the respondent did not leave due to familial responsibilities, they returned because of that, as well as the emotional bond felt to family, town, and land in Madrina.
Though im/migrants from other sending locales in México experience similar social problems in their U.S. destinations, Madrina’s generally peaceful environment gives im/migrants another reason to return to their loved ones. Beyond the central theme of family, other themes such as land, traditions and customs, boredom, and isolation from friends and family, and social problems encountered in the U.S., emerge.

Family

Tomas was in San Francisco for seven years and is fluent in English. He is the only respondent to interview in English, declaring, “I returned because of my mom and dad and my family. Money is not enough in life; I want to be close to my family.” Similarly, José lived in Kalamazoo for three years and says, “I returned for my family, my wife, and my kids.” Alfonso, who lived in the U.S. for two years and lived in both Kalamazoo and San Francisco, said, “I returned for my children and my family.”

Within some of the familial responses, the emotional weight of living in the U.S. while the family resides in Madrina emerges. Fidel was in San Francisco for two years and states, “the reason I returned was to continue living here in México with my family, because of the family—emotional reasons.” Mario was in the U.S. for 6.5 years in both San Francisco and Kalamazoo and mentions the difficulty of leaving a pregnant wife, claiming,

“I returned for my child, as he wasn’t born when I left. I wanted to know him. I returned to know him.”

Francisco lived in San Francisco for two years and broadens the familial description eloquently by demonstrating the difficulty of both leaving and staying in the U.S., saying,
"The truth is I returned because of my family. My children miss their papa. When we talked they would say 'When are you going to come back?' My wife would say 'I think it's been too long.' We didn't go together. What we did was very hard, so I didn't leave again. I am not going to leave again because my family was waiting and hoping, and now they expect me to stay."

Don Ronaldo was in the Kalamazoo for four years and explains how familial emergencies were one reason to return temporarily, saying, "My father was ill, so I returned. When my father got better, I went again. I am thinking of going to the U.S. another time."

Marcelo was in San Francisco for one year and connects the need to be with family with the strain of extra chores put on others in his family by being in the U.S. Marcelo says,

"I returned for my son, and my father—our farm animals take work. I thought, 'My God, I need to reconnect with family, because I am getting old and gray.' So I returned to Yucatán, and now I know my son, the farm animals, and I said to myself, 'I don't have a reason to go back to the U.S.'"

Don Carlos lived in San Francisco for 3 years and tells of having a house in Mérida built by him and his children by being in the U.S.,

"I returned to México because I have a house in the capital, on the outskirts of Mérida. Having a house in Mérida is the answer. My kids returned too—three sons. So you have a house in Mérida and the money from the U.S. helped? There are three children that went to the U.S., and three nephews that live here in Madrina. Soon there will be a house here in Madrina from the children in the U.S. Both of the houses are from being in the U.S."

Like the next section below, Javier, who was in San Francisco for three years, acknowledges being annoyed with living in the U.S., as well as being emotionally distanced from his children, stating, "Now I have my house, but it bothered me being in the U.S. I returned for family, for my three children."
Ultimately, the responsibilities of family cause some to take account of their behaviors and return in favor of their family rather than in favor of the decadence of the U.S. This is surely related to the lack of social control, as all of the respondents were without traditional forms of social control from familial proximity. Don Arturo, who was in Kalamazoo for three years, illustrates,

"The problem is the age of my children—they’re in school. They were allowed to drink beer, they were allowed to do drugs, they didn’t obey their mother, and I wasn’t here. My children were not behaving because they didn’t a father. My children gave in to the beer and drugs because I immigrated to the U.S. I came back to stop this problem."

For Land and Traditions

Extending from ch’i’ibal or family to kaaj, or community and land, the secondary level theme emerges. Roberto lived in Kalamazoo for 3.5 years and mentions the family, but also embeds family within the location and land around Madrina, saying, “I returned for my family, and my place of origin.” Manuel also lived in Kalamazoo for 3.5 years and mentions the land. He also adds that the traditions of his home are also a reason for return, claiming, “I returned for my family and my land—I miss the traditions.” Finally is Nestor, who was in San Francisco for five years. Though family is the first response, he later elaborates on the broader community ties and attachments felt, and places these ties in a central location in his reasons to return, disclosing,

“I returned for my family, my siblings, mother, and father. I believe there is a big difference between our culture here in Madrina and U.S. culture. It’s from being attached, attachment to parents, as well as attachment to the family and the customs of Yucatán and the culture. You say ‘I am going back to Yucatán because I want to go to the fiesta. I want to go to see my grandmother. I want to go for my parents, brothers, my friends, and my cousins.’ We are very attached, and I returned for my family. This is why we all return.”
For Family Building

One answer to the question about returning revolved around family, but not in the sense of returning to it. Rather, at least a few respondents said they returned to Madrina because they now had enough money and a nice enough house to be a more desirable suitor—in other words, to build a family. Though Martinez-Curiel (2004) found that marrying a U.S. citizen was a pathway strategy for U.S. citizenship, respondents here felt that marrying and living in Madrina, as opposed to the U.S., was more desirable, and that they now had the wherewithal to adequately court marital prospects. This is important with respect to ethnic identity, as marrying a U.S. citizen, either Mexican-American or otherwise, would be an enormous break from familial and community expectations.

Some people in the town make a living my making clothing in their house to sell in Mérida. Miguel spent 2.5 years in San Francisco and simply states that he needed to return to marry and to utilize the bees and sewing machines he was able to purchase by being in the U.S., declaring,

"I returned and I married, because when I was in the U.S., I bought bees and sewing machines. Then I returned to work, because my father would not be able to work the bees; he would not be able to work."

Similarly, Octavio was in San Francisco for four years and bluntly says in English and Spanish,

"I returned for [English: my family.] Are there no other reasons? Family, and to search for a woman. To get married? Yes. I have been married eight months now. Congratulations."
Humorously, and with reference to a colloquialism in English, Nestor, who was in San Francisco for five years, smilingly declares, “I returned to get a house, a ranch, a car... a wife! [English: No money, no honey!] [laughs] Sure! [Both laughing].”

Problems and Instability

It is clear that family, family building, and broader regional customs play a part in the reason to return; however, there are miscellaneous reasons related to the hassles of immigration that also emerge from the respondents. Issues such as finding work, illness, boredom, problems with law enforcement, and discrimination were themes. There are respondents who returned because of social problems in the neighborhoods in which they lived, as well as a longing for the stress-free, peaceful tempo of the life they left behind. Juan was in San Francisco for two years and states,

“The reason I returned is because of the things that happened that year. I never had the resources to work. It took me time to find the rent, and I didn’t have a car to find work. I always had friends say ‘we’re working.’ But at times, they weren’t. There were problems for many months, so I returned.”

Gregorio, who was in the U.S. for five years and lived in both San Francisco and Kalamazoo, describes the hardship of illness while being in the U.S., elucidating,

“With the illness I had, many people in the U.S. were saying ‘don’t say you’re going back, you’ll feel just as bad there.’ When I left, I didn’t have this illness, but now I have diabetes. I quit work because of this illness. In two months in the U.S. I lost thirty kilos.”

Similar to the findings of Heusinkveld (2008), the immigrants of Madrina allude to the peacefulness of Madrina as a strong reason to return. Heusinkveld (2008) studied the town of Yucatecan town of Tinum and its economic relationship to Cancún. Tinum is a town similar in size and cultural makeup to Madrina with respect to indigenous practices, and the immigrants from Tinum who venture to Cancún
share a very similar sentiment to those found in Madrina. Heusinkveld (2008, p. 121) states, “indeed, most villagers in Tinum feel an aversion toward the lifestyle of Cancún. When asked to cite reasons why life in Tinum was better, the word most frequently mentioned was tranquil (calm, peaceful, tranquil).” This is substantiated quantitatively by Baklanoff (2008, p. 99) who states, “the incidence of crime in Yucatán State [is] 2,148 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2001, [and] is lower than the crime rates in neighboring Quintana Roo (4,044) Chihuahua in the north (4, 979) and the Federal District (17, 718).” This is reflected in the interviews here. Felipe was in San Francisco for six years and worked as a mechanic. He describes harassment by the police, high rent, and high-pressure situations that did not “add up” in his mind since he was only there for “rice and beans,” saying,

“It’s difficult to get things started there. The pressure you feel is higher, the police raids, the cholos, and they increase your rent. They beat you down. I immigrated alone, for rice and beans. Here in Madrina it’s more difficult to fix-up your house. I went for family and I returned, blessed by what I have.”

Luis was in Kalamazoo for three years and says,

“I returned because I wasn’t sending money back anymore. Being there bored and annoyed me. Here in Madrina there is family, there, only promises. It paid a little, now I have my house. I returned for family and I really wanted to return!”

Similarly, Aramis, who was in San Francisco for five years, conveys, “I was annoyed and irritated by being in the U.S. No other reasons? No. It’s different in the U.S., there aren’t a lot of good aspects to it, and there are a lot of cholos.” Aramis delineates between Yucatán and Jalisco, México to the north, which experiences similar social problems as the U.S. This effectively negates any reason to return, saying,
“Yucatán is different from Jalisco. In Jalisco, the people don’t want to return, but Yucatán, yes. What’s the difference? It’s peaceful here, in Jalisco there’s a lot of violence, so the people don’t want to return. So Jalisco is more like the U.S.? Yes, because of the violence.”

The following entry candidly explains the pitfalls characteristic of life in the U.S. Many who return from both from San Francisco and Kalamazoo describe how “bad” behaviors, such as drinking to excess, disrespect, and drug use can occur. These issues will also be addressed with respect to cultural change within the town of Madrina in chapters below. Alejandro was in San Francisco for one year and emotionally describes problems encountered, speaking in Spanish and some English, claiming, “In America there are a lot of drugs [English: For me, no more]. [English: No more for me—no more beer, no more cigars, no marijuana, no cocaine, no morphine.]”

In sum, rather than a macroeconomic model of immigration located on the structural push-and-pull level of global economics and contrary to a rational-individual model of immigration where the immigrant is acting in pure self-interest, this sample supports the household model. Cohen (2004) found that immigration from rural towns in the southern state of Oaxaca to Los Angeles, California was best explained through a household model as well. Since each family is different, this also explains why some families in Madrina do not have immigrant members, as macroeconomic conditions and individual, psychological variation do not adequately account for a lack of immigration when wage disparity remains.

For this sample, the decision to leave occurs within the context of household needs and duty, as the immigrant does not have to leave, but is able to leave within the framework of familial necessity and their desire to help the family in any way.
possible. As a synthesis of the micro-level rational actor theory and the macro-
economic push and pull economic theory, the family or household model of
im/migration takes the rational, irrational, micro and macro into account. This
sample supports the idea that although individuals im/migrate as individual actors,
there can be a tendency to make these decisions in unison with, and on behalf of their
family members. With the underlying emotional connection driving the rational
decision to im/migrate, Weber's *wert*-rational, or value-rational im/migration
theoretical model, seems adequate as a structure of social action.
CHAPTER VII: DATA: ETHNIC IDENTITY OF THE INTERVIEWEES

Self-Selection of Ethnic Identity

The most common self-identifications of ethnic identity were “Mayan” and “Yucatec,” both having thirteen responses respectively. This is followed by ten responses of “Yucatec-Mayan.” “Mexicano” garnered four responses, “Mexicano-Yucateco” three responses, and “Yucateco-Hispanico” and “Hispanico” one response, respectively. Out of the 45 interviews, 36, or 80 percent, designated “Mayan” either solely or in combination with a regional indicator such as Yucateco. This supports the idea that Yucatán is still resistant to Mexicanization, which is in line with other works on this topic from Carey (1984), Reed (2001), Hostetler (2004), Cornelius, Fitzgerald, and Lewin Fischer (2007), and Adler (2008).

The findings here suggest that language use by the respondents is a key indicator of ethnic identity, as all of the respondents speak Yucatec-Maya. These results are congruent with Mijangos Noh (2001) who found respondents’ self-designated ethnic identity is based on the Yucatec-Mayan language and the regional identity of the Yucatán peninsula. The self-selection of im/migrant ethnic identity in Madrina follows a pattern of regional identity that is found across the Yucatán peninsula, which reflects the socio-economic history of the peninsula. As a precise point of comparison, Lyman, Cen Montuy, and Sandoval (2007) found that 70 percent of interviewees from the similar sized rural town of Tunkás, Yucatán self-selected “Yucatecan-Mayan,” compared to 80 percent here. Again, the regional identity of Yucatán, formed by distinct geographic, economic, and historical events continues to emerge from the literature on indigenous ethnic identity. What is new
here, though, is that transnational im/migration neither Mexicanizes nor
transnationalizes the im/migrant ethnic identity.

Maya

Fidel makes a point of mentioning that the Yucatec-Mayan language and attire
are being threatened by change, saying, “I am Maya, but it’s changing a bit. People
speak more Spanish now and dress differently.” Alfonso also claims Maya, and
offers some details that represent being Mayan, saying, “I am Maya. It’s the Mayan
language and the house made of paja, the music and food—my customs.” Don
Arturo focuses on languages passed down inter-generationally, claiming,

“Maya and Spanish is the culture we have. It’s the maternal language of our
parents and grandparents, because that is what we identify with. It’s good.
We are Maya and nothing more.”

Mario explains that some Yucatecs are on “bad terms” with being Maya. He also
fervently excludes himself from “those kind of people.” Mario uses both the Mayan
ethnicity and Yucatecan regional and political identity. Also, it is important to realize
that Mario speaks of Mayan in racial, not ethnic, terms, too, harking to the cultural
racism of the peninsula and the racialization of the Caste War, saying,

“I am Maya. For us, it is an emotion—we are proud to be who we are. You
might say ‘I know Spanish,’ but you are Yucateco, too. I know Yucatecos
that say this. Many say, ‘I am a child of the Spanish.’ If you know you are a
Yucatecan, why wouldn’t you say, ‘I am Yucatecan’? We are proud. I am
not on bad terms with my race—I take heart in it. Many are on bad terms
with their race, but not me.”

Mayan ethnicity is centered in language, production of corn, and land, as
claimed by Batalla (1987). Most customs today would be considered a reflection of
both indigenous and European influence, but the resiliency of the Mayan language
and food culture is also clearly demonstrated in both interview and daily behavior in
Madrina, as it is in all of the rural areas of the peninsula. Felipe centers on this, sharing,

“I am Maya. My grandparents spoke Spanish very poorly—they raised me. Now Mayan is in the schools for those that need it in order to know Mayan and not lose the culture. Here in town there are customs such as the corn tortilla and the land; we see this as a source of pride. There is pride that resonates through the land and the forest like gold; it warms everyone like a fire. There are those who are still proud of the land. There are fruits, *elote*, and *camote*, we are proud of the land. There are many little things like the foods; *Pavo relleno, poc chuc, or cochinita pibil*, these are the customs—and the language.”

Esteban continues, saying,

“I am Maya. Maya is what our parents taught us. If we go to Mérida, the Méridanos speak another language. Many of us know Maya. If you go to Michigan, you might see a person that looks Yucateco and they might ask you ‘where are you from?’ You’d say ‘from Yucatán.’ Then you say, ‘How do you say this in Maya?’ They’d say ‘I don’t know’ and you’d know they weren’t Yucateco because they didn’t speak Maya. If you aren’t from Yucatán, you don’t know the food like *relleno negro*, and *cochinita pibil.*”

Ramon, discusses the Mayan spiritual world as it connects from past to present, as well as language and mestizaje, saying,

“I am Maya. We are Maya through the generations—all of us, by speaking Maya and working the fields as Maya. Dancing the vaquerías like the ancient Maya. There are always things such as *x’ta baay*. The *aluxes* of the ancient Maya that bother you, as well as the Gods of planting and harvesting.”

Finally, Vicente connects the culture to the region, saying,

“I am Maya, because we are Yucatecos. I identify with Maya. We are Yucatecos from Yucatán and from the ancient Mayas. We are Mexicanos one hundred percent, but, we are from *Chichen Itzá*, right?”

**Yucatec-Maya and Yucateco**

In the interviews, Mayan culture and language connect with the regional identity of Yucatán, which creates the most-used ethnic label of “Yucatec-Maya.”

Tomas makes a point of describing how his designation shifts to a broader category
when he is in the U.S., saying, “Here in Yucatán, I am primarily Yucateco and secondarily Maya. In the U.S. I am “Hispanic” to people who do not know me or work and live with me.” Nestor, however, fights this ethnic assimilation into the broader Spanish-speaking ethno-political interest group of “Hispanic” in the U.S., saying, “I am shamelessly Yucateco. It gives me pride to be Yucateco. I am also Mexican, but when Americans ask, I am a Yucateco first.”

The Mayan linguistic designation also shares space with the regional identity. Javier says, “it’s the Mayan language that we speak—the other designation is that we are Yucatecos.” Jose stresses the importance of retaining the culture, saying, “I am a Maya-Yucateco, and I do not want to lose the Mayan traditions.” Aramis also explains,

“I am Yucateco. In general, Yucatecos speak Maya. So the Mayan language is the commonality? Yes—and the food. There’s only Mayan in Yucatán. There are cultures in Campeche and they are Mayan, too.”

Silvio claims the regional and linguistic ethnic identity as well, saying, “I am proud of my land—I am Yucateco, but Yucatecos also know Maya, so we are Mayan too.”

Mateo continues, but with a complex pastiche of designations, claiming,

“I am Yucateco, Maya—the language, we are also mestizos. It’s the language and the customs that we have. Such as ‘xi’ik kaaj que tu?’ [Mayan and Spanish: “Are you leaving town/im/migrating?”] I am a Yucateco and Mestizo, Spanish and Maya. The fiesta, the food, the traditions, the form of speech, they are all our customs.”

Nestor also connects to regionalisms and language with a flare for the ancient symbols of Mayanidad—the pheasant and the deer. Both are ancient staples in the Mayan diet along with the ever-present turkey, which is the most historically and continuously eaten food on the peninsula. Archaeologists have documented, through
residue analysis, the consumption of turkey on the peninsula for thousands of years.

Nestor explains,

"I am Yucateco. This is how the people of Yucatán present themselves, my people, my race, my culture. Everyone is Yucateco. In Yucatán, there is deer, pheasant, cenotes, and Maya—and we don’t forget who we are. Mayan language represents all Yucatecos. But, many born in Yucatán don’t know Maya, and can’t identify with being Mayan. When you ask ‘Do you speak Maya?’ and they say ‘Yes’ then they are certainly from Yucatán. People ask ‘Do you speak Maya?’ and the other person says ‘No, I don’t.’ They’re still Yucatecos, but they don’t really identify with being Mayan—they have no identification. It’s like ‘Maya’ is an ‘ID!’ [Laughs] [Reference to formal U.S. ID cards]"

Don Ronaldo continues with emphasis on region and language and, as related in the section on ethnic change below, on being a farmer and the economics of subsistence, which is in line with Batalla (1987), saying,

"We are Yucatecos. Yucatecos are campesinos working in the fields. The ancient Maya, ancient Yucatecos, those who speak Maya are a family of Yucatecos. Also, there is the culture such as the fiesta and the vaquerías."

Don Juan is different from the others by being sixty years of age. He shows a keen sense of history and the changes in Mayan continuity through religious domination and the attempt at Mexicanizing Yucatecans through ritual events, saying,

"I am Yucateco. The people of Yucatán have the custom of festivals and annual traditional fiestas. It is the jarana and the bullfights which represents life here—the traditional fiestas. There’s also the practices of our ancestors, the religion, Chachac or the Way k’ol. There is change in religion with Catholicism; it changed us from our native culture."

Mexicano-Yucateco

As a reflection of the overall failure to Mexicanize the Yucatán peninsula (see Carey, 1984, Reed, 2001, and Adler, 2008), the identity of this sample continues to place regionalisms such as “Yucateco” and linguistic lifeways such as “Maya” at the forefront of their self-designation. However, a few respondents speak of being
Mexican as well. Pedro states, “I am Yucateco—Mexicano-Yucateco. But I am Maya with my friends.” Octavio follows saying,

“I speak more Spanish so I identify with México and Yucatán. My grandparents spoke pure Maya, and almost no Spanish. Mayan or Yucatecan customs are the jarana, and Hanal Pixan.”

**Mexicano**

For a few, Mexicano is the key ethnic designation. This demonstrates that for some, language and regional identity can be overshadowed by a national, political designation. Alejandro says,

“I identify with Mexicano. Everyone is Mexicano, we speak Spanish, Maya, and English, but we are Mexicano.”

Francisco further elaborates on patriotism and being Mexicano, as well as the concern that others deny their nationality in favor of other countries,

“I am Mexicano. Being Mexicano is to want to do good things for your country! People reject the country. They are Mexicanos, but they go to the U.S. People that speak Maya go to the U.S. and return with a new language, and people say; ‘Now I don’t know Maya.’ They go and reject the country and say, ‘It’s not familiar to me anymore.’ I don’t like this. It’s not good for people to want this—to reject their destiny and their place!”

Marcelo also demonstrates national pride and places his sentiment within ethnic social closure while working in the U.S. Solidarity comes from being Mexican rather than Mayan in the U.S. Second-class status and language barriers are also themes, saying,

“When I left I identified with being Maya and Spanish. I identified with my dialect, and my language. When I left, I wanted the things of the U.S. and I stopped using Mayan! Here in Yucatán I am ‘Yucateco’ but in the U.S. ‘Mexicano’. In the U.S. people asked me if I knew the song. They asked me ‘Are you a Mexicano?’ and I said ‘What is a Mexicano?’ They told me, [sings] ‘Now we are all Mexicanos, carrying on with the life we won’t forget.’ I am Mexicano at heart. If you aren’t pro-Mexicano in the U.S., you aren’t going to find work. Mexicanos are hard workers. Because of the language
issues in the U.S., we are seen as dogs—we are seen as dirty pigs! But we are always Mexicano at heart until death!"

Similar to Mateo above, Rafael explains that there is no difference between any of the designations to him, but that ultimately he is mestizo and Mexicano, saying,

"I am Mestizo. We speak Spanish. I am Mexicano and Yucateco because of my state, but my race is creole. It’s a mixture of Español and Maya. My identity is Yucateco, Maya, and Spanish—we are mestizos. Maya, Yucateco, and Mexicano—all three are the same to me.”

Hispanico

Finally, there is Hispanic, the broadest of all definitions. Similar to the findings of Oboler (1992) and Grimes (1998), this sample demonstrates passive avoidance if not a conscious resistance to this term. In all, only two respondents used Hispánico, with one appending Yucateco to the term thus ironically siding with both a local-regional and pan-national ethnic identity. One respondent has a father from Tabasco and a mother from Yucatán and felt that “Hispánico” was the appropriate self-designation. Gregorio describes Spanish as the respected language of formal economy and mentions the difficulty of doing business in Yucatec-Mayan because of its non-standardization, saying,

“I like speaking both languages. When I am not in Madrina and working in Mérida my boss speaks in Spanish because he is more confident speaking Spanish. Spanish gets more respect. When Maya is spoken, it has double meanings, and because of this, I speak more Spanish. It’s more effective and clear to understand on the job.”

As noted above, the reason behind the shift in language from Mayan to Spanish in the business sphere is not only a reflection of a cultural racism. Many people report that Mayan words can have multiple and even completely different meanings between towns that are very close in proximity, making precise
communication, (which is required in a work context where error and ambiguity could be problematic or even deadly, such as in construction work), easier in Spanish.

In conclusion, this sample suggests that the regionalized, isolated identity of the Yucatán has not been altered by the dynamic upheaval of im/migration to the U.S. With an 80% response rate of Mayan and Yucatecan in any combination, the ethnic identity of the im/migrants still represents the peculiar history constructed from the Caste War, the henequen era, the lack of infrastructural transport to the north, and the creation of internal rural-urban migration circuits with Cancún and maquiladoras. Lastly, there is no appreciable difference in self-designation of ethnic identity as a function of age of respondent. The summary below represents the overview of the data sample on ethnic identity. For a detailed version, see Appendix B below.
CHAPTER VIII: DATA: ETHNIC IDENTITY AND CHANGE

Introduction

In this chapter, I explore change in ethnic identity more directly. Three sections in this chapter address the following questions. “Do you think im/migration has changed your ethnic identity?” “Do you think im/migration has changed the ethnic identity of your family?” and “Do you think im/migration has changed the ethnic identity of the town in general?”

Data: Changes in Self-Ethnic Identity

No Change in Self-Ethnic Identity

When describing ethnic change, the tendency is to personally deny it, but see it as something that “happens to others.” Beginning with simple disavowals of change in self-ethnic identity, Juan self-identifies as Yucateco and states, “my ethnic identity is the same.” José self-identifies as Maya-Yucateco and said, “there’s no difference. I am very proud and I don’t want to change.” Some had a clear rationale as to why they personally were different from others who had undergone a “transformation.” Fidel self-identifies as Mayan and makes the distinction between his language use and the language use of others, claiming, “My form of ethnic identity hasn’t changed, but others speak different languages.” Manuel self-identifies as Maya-Yucateco and makes it clear that the inability to practice traditions in the U.S. was cause for him to return to Madrina, saying,
“I don’t believe I’ve changed. My traditions are important and a necessity. None of my cultural resources are in the U.S. so I returned.” It is important to note that Manuel was in Kalamazoo where the amount of Yucatec-Mayan culture is paltry in comparison to the San Francisco area where the ability to express Yucatec-Mayan culture is more readily possible due to the size of the Yucatec community. Tomas self-identifies as Yucatec-Mayan and is one of the “others who speak differently” because he is fluent in English. Tomas says in English,

“Im/migration hasn’t changed because nobody can change my identity except me. As an example, now that I’ve returned, I prefer to buy local products from Madrina, Mérida, or México in general.”

Tomas also makes a point of describing how the experience in the U.S. has made him more prone to being conscientious about his consumption habits, choosing to support local economy and culture.

In contrast to Tomas, and returning to Everton (1991), Roberto self-identifies as Yucateco-Hispánico and has this to say about the incorporation of new cultures while maintaining the same sense of ethnic identity,

“I haven’t changed but I would like to learn all languages and all cultures. We are connected to the world. I identify with being Maya-Hispano more now—after my travels. The Maya are intelligent but there are intelligent people everywhere and it is important to share ideas with everyone.”

Similarly, Don Arturo self-identifies as Maya and places his ethnic identity within the broader social context of the “we community” and alludes to the presentation of self as it contrasts between the contexts of the U.S. and Madrina, saying,

“I haven’t changed. We are the same people. When we are in the U.S., we do U.S. culture. When in Yucatán, you do the things that reflect who you are. Nothing changes. In the U.S., you can perform the customs using technology. There’s no industry in Yucatán and so you go to the U.S., but you don’t change.”
The lack of ethnic change is attributed to an appreciation of life in Madrina. The town is rural, comparatively peaceful, and without many of the problems encountered in the U.S.—especially in comparison to the Mission neighborhood in San Francisco. Luis self-identifies as Maya and makes it clear that life in Madrina is simply more appealing because he was afraid to leave the house in the U.S. due to the violent and dangerous neighborhood he lived. This is also a theme in im/migrants claiming that they would never live in the U.S. permanently in chapter nine below. Luis states, “I haven’t changed. Life is better here in Madrina than the life in the U.S. In Madrina there’s only corn fields, but its freedom.” Pedro self-identifies as Mexicano-Yucateco and follows by saying,

“Many people like the U.S.—the money, the clothing, the food. I’m happy here—but not everyone is. I don’t want to go to the U.S. again. There are people who stay there, and don’t return anymore. Here in Madrina I only have a small business, but at least there aren’t any problems like in the U.S.”

Miguel self-identifies as Maya-Yucateco and extends the notion of the attractive power of Madrina by adding that the culture is a formidable attractor, saying,

“Im/migration hasn’t changed me because I am accustomed to my tradition and my culture. But, it’s only here in Madrina. In respect to culture, I haven’t changed.”

Mario self-identifies as Maya and mentions the power of his place of birth. He also acknowledges that, regardless of the money, you still have to return to a town that lacks real opportunity, saying,

“Im/migrating has changed nothing in my culture because ultimately I am still poor. I am going to grow from the experience, but I also know that I was born into and remain in a life of poverty.”
One reason cited for a lack of cultural change from the U.S. is the ability to work and live with others from Madrina or from Yucatán. This allows Spanish and Yucatec-Mayan to remain daily languages and saves the individual from being forced to learn English to survive economically. Aramis self-identifies as Yucateco and claims, "I haven't changed. I spoke in Spanish when I worked so nothing changed." Esteban self-identifies as Mayan and reaffirms this perspective. His perception of being Mayan did not erode by his experiences in the U.S., claiming, "My customs are the same. The whole work group in the U.S. was from Madrina. It was as if we hadn't left for San Francisco at all. The language we used was always Maya.”

Gerardo returned from San Francisco after four years and explains that he ironically learned new aspects of Yucatec-Mayan culture in the U.S. He refers to relleno negro, an ancient recipe of stuffed turkey stew saying, "personally, I learned the culture of preparing the turkey for New Year's Day while in the U.S.”

Changes in Self-Ethnic Identity

For respondents who perceive change, the change is often linked to economics and consumptive practices, rather than the perception of a profound change in self-ethnic identity. Using Batalla (1987) as a guide, any change away from subsistence living connected to ancestral lands is as profound a change as one could identify in México. The respondents’ ambiguity about this point is telling, and reinforces the idea that Mayan incorporation of outside culture reframes the issue from “selling outward” to “buying inward.” This process of incorporation effectively lessens the potential cognitive dissonance that changes in the ethnic self, family, and town may create. Marcelo self-identifies as a Mexicano and claims, "How is im/migration
going to change me? I am not going to change. The food here in Madrina changesrom people being in the U.S., but I only eat Yucatecan food.”

Aramis self identifies as Yucateco and mentions his increased pride, saying, “I
have more pride in my culture after returning from the U.S.” Similar to the findings
of Burke (2004), who demonstrates that Yucatecans expect and want to return to
Yucatán, Nestor, who self-identifies as Yucateco, describes pride and confidence in
his ethnic identity, saying,

“I like my culture. It annoys me when people say they don’t know Maya.
They’re rejecting the identity. My identification is with something beautiful.
It’s very important to me—it’s an identity. Now people don’t want to
translate things to Maya—I don’t like that. I’d like to see my children speak it
too—that’s also very important. The identity is splitting. I can’t forget my
culture, my people, my food, my traditions; this is what I identify with most.
Once, I was eating in a restaurant in San Francisco and ‘fuck!’ I imagined
being in Madrina—drinking pozole. I remembered the culture and the food. I
changed a little. It’s a mixture, a blend. I’ll have a hamburger with [English:
cheese] [laughs] or pizza or pasta, or McDonalds! It’s a blend, but I have not
lost my identity. If the person who leaves is Yucateco, they are always
Maya.”

Mario self identifies as Maya and continues to demonstrate the Mayan incorporation
of outside cultures on a personal level. For Mario this process is related to learning
new languages and the cultural capital of technology, saying,

“It’s beautiful to learn about the culture of others. It’s great that you know my
language and I know yours. We are equal brothers. It’s beautiful to know
two, three, or four cultures and languages. I’ve used the technology in the
U.S. and I want to learn these wonderful new things. The technologies are
coming to Madrina and in ten or fifty years there will be a lot! The kids are
more open-minded, which is good. It would be great if Madrina were the
same as the U.S. It’s great that we know English. Knowing all three
languages is difficult.”

Roberto self-identifies as Yucatec-Hispánico and makes the distinction
between external behaviors and internal beliefs, indicating the thesis of Jimenez-
 Castillo (1992) that outside culture that is seen as pragmatic can be easily incorporated into Mayanidad with little cognitive dissonance, saying,

"The change is external by deciding to use the positive experiences from outside Madrina here in Madrina, but inside it is the same. For me, Madrina and México are my mother, my heart, my emotion—but the U.S. is my father, my serious side, my economics, my business."

Data: Familial Changes

No Change in Familial Ethnic Identity

Next, I look at how the cultural remittances from im/migration affect the family. Though a majority of respondents claim that their personal ethnic identity is the same, this steadfast trajectory erodes as the analysis is extended away from individual to institutional and community levels of examination. Alfonso self-identifies as Maya, Juan self-identifies as Yucateco, and Esteban self-identifies as Maya. All flatly claim, “the family is the same.” Emphasizing customs and traditions and extending the discussion from family to community, Mateo, who self-identifies as Yucateco, says, “The food, the culture, everything here in Madrina is the same. Everyone in town is living the same. That is to say, the food and the technologies are the same.”

Jose self-identifies as Maya-Yucateco and says, “the family is in the same form because the families have decided to maintain their traditions for always.”

Addressing family and language directly, Luis self-identifies as Maya and says,

“There’s no change. The life of my children will be the same—there’s nothing else to say. Do you demand that they are taught Maya? Yes, I believe that’s the right thing to do.”

194
At least two respondents placed the lack of change in familial ethnic identity on the strong expectation of return. Manuel self-identifies as Maya-Yucateco and says, “The family is the same. Without a doubt, family in the U.S. will return to Madrina in the future.” Similarly, Don Ronaldo self-identifies as Yucateco and claims, “The family hasn’t changed because im/migration is only for food that doesn’t exist here. It’s more money and nothing more.” Rafael identifies as Mexicano and still resides in Kalamazoo. He believes the lack of change in familial ethnic identity is directly related to the Mayan language, saying,

“The family is the same. We speak to each other the same. They say “¿Biix ani keech?, ¿Ba’ax ka wa’ak?, ¿Tu’ux ka’ bin?, [Mayan: How are you?, Whada’ ya say? Where you heading?] It’s pure Maya.”

Familial Ethnic Change through Economic Transformation

Many respondents frame changes in familial ethnic identity as a change in work and economic prosperity. This is important because traditional, rural Yucatec-Mayan lifeways revolve around the cycles of agriculture and more subsistence ways of living. The ability and motivation *hacer milpa* (to work the cornfield) is essential to Yucatec-Mayan identity, as well as the broader pan-Mexican, indigenous ethnic identities (Batalla, 1987). Heusinkveld (2008) also found that economics have become more consumptive and commodified as rural families change from a subsistence, barter economy to a cash-based consumptive economy. Jimenez-Castillo (1992, p. 198) also discusses the profound significance of Mayan agricultural and religious cycles as cues for economic behavior, saying, “the native religious and Catholic calendars function in synchronized form, always complying with the growing and developing of corn, the essential foundation of the local economy and
the superstructural forms of the ethnic group.” Francisco self-identifies as Mexicano and begins by denying change, then changes his mind, stating,

“It’s only that now the family has more things. It’s not that there’s never change—there is change in leaving. I have relatives, now they have things and so they’ve changed. The family is also bigger from going to the U.S. I have brothers and cousins and uncles and they’ve im/migrated too, so family has changed a lot.”

Gregorio self-identifies as Hispanic and says, “Immigration has changed everyone, because before there was a lot of poverty. Now, there’s im/migration and the family has changed a lot.” Pedro self-identifies as Mexicano-Yucateco and supports the work of Lewin Fischer and Guzman (2004) who call the tourist-rich Mayan Riviera an “immigration school,” expressing, “The family has changed a little bit through better living. It’s good to go to the U.S. I went to Cancún, Playa del Carmen, and Cozumel, too.” Tomas self-identifies as Yucatec-Mayan and explains that the impact on his family is opposite to the impact on his ethnic identity, at least with respect to cultural choices and consumptive patterns. In fluent English he says,

“The family has changed a little, because now people in my family want to try American products. They are curious about the quality of American products since I had such a positive experience there. My consumption patterns have changed in the opposite direction. Now, I take more pride in local products since I have tried both U.S. and Yucatecan stuff.”

The secularization of time from the sacred, religious, agricultural Mayan calendar is another component to change. Jimenez-Castillo (1992) identifies time as the third of three distinct colonizing forces: Christianity (religious), Europeanization (social and cultural), and capitalism (time and productivity). Miguel self-identifies as Maya-Yucateco and elaborates on the third force of time and productivity, describing
familial changes related to time usage and economics. This entry is the only
discussion of time in the sample,

“The family changed in a positive respect by changing to American
punctuality. In Yucatán and México there is no punctuality—no
responsibility—it’s the culture. Some of us change to the strict, responsible,
and respectful American way of life through organization and time use. In the
U.S., they tell you ‘time is productivity’ right? Now, some have that
mentality here in Madrina, but not everyone. I believe what has happened in
Yucatán is a problem in the economic and political system. The system
lowers morale. If you’re a worker, there’s no motivation to work. It’s not
secure and not sufficient to support your family. I have faith in the U.S.—that
it will produce money for my family.”

Mauricio self-identifies as Yucateco-Hispánico and claims that im/migration has not
yet changed his family. However, there is a desire to know more about the world
outside of Madrina, proclaiming, “my family is the same, but now they are more
curious about other cultures in the world.”

Familial Change through Intermarriage, Changing Gender Roles, and Familial
Abandonment

One of the inevitabilities of im/migration is that people stay in the U.S. Single
men father children and married men form families extra-relationally or out of
wedlock. A child who is a citizen of the U.S. but who has family in Madrina has an
identity and ethnic identity that is both claimed and denied by citizens in both places.
This sub-group’s behaviors, languages, power, and money transcend the political and
fluctuate according to context and audience.

The mixed-status child can be marginalized in Madrina, much like the cholo,
but not because of their negative behaviors, but because of their power and ability to
move freely between family in Madrina and family in the U.S. With very few other
children to speak to in English, mixed-status children attempt to use incomplete
Spanish and incomplete Yucatec-Mayan in an attempt to “fit in” while in Madrina. The special identity status in Madrina is obvious. According to conversations with the citizens, these children are “special,” “different,” “lucky,” “powerful,” “bastards,” “outsiders” or even “nortefnos”—the litany of words is endless and is never only positive or only negative. The mixed-status child is an interesting case in that men are the primary em/migrants from Madrina, meaning that mixed-status children primarily have mothers who are bilingual, if not English-only speaking mothers. Batalla (1987) claims that traditional gender roles in México allow for the transmission of indigenous language from mother to child. Thus, from Batalla’s perspective, mixed status children would be much less likely to acculturate into the indigenous linguistic structure.

Likewise, in Yucatán any gender role change could potentially bring linguistic change. Change in gender roles in Yucatán come from im/migration, as women’s roles expand to fill the void left by men who have gone north. As history would have it, maquiladoras are in wait, as women exercise autonomy and shift from rural to urban economic employment. The increase in female workers in maquiladoras and an ever-changing orientation away from the rural subsistence to urban, commodified, wage labor is yet another angle on a cultural orientation that is shifting away from indigenous, rural lifeways.

In this sample, having family members in both Yucatán and the U.S. is a concern for a subset of respondents. Mixed-status families represent a shift in community allegiance and obligation to an ethnic identity based on ch’i’ibal and kaaj,
if not a total redefinition of *ch’iibal* and *kaaj* towards the transnational. Javier self-identifies as Yucatec-Maya and describes mixed-status families, saying,

“The change in family changes the form of the town character because you have two families, you have different rights. When the children return from the U.S., they don’t have to stay, and can go back to the U.S. This changes the family form. People don’t have to stay in Madrina to raise their kids.”

Fidel self-identifies as Maya and likely echoes back to the cholo, saying, “There’s a little change in family ethnic identity from the behaviors of those that arrive with kids from the U.S.—some, but not all.”

Gender roles also change due to the experiences of the im/migrant male in the U.S. Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) and Grimes (1998) demonstrate that im/migration can rearrange family gender roles, gender expectations, and general attitudes towards male and female relationships. More directly, Weinstein-Bever (2002) found that in Sudzal, Yucatán, many women began taking on the roles of local entrepreneurs as a way to supplement the income needed for a male figure to leave, just as women shift towards maquiladora employment. Furthermore, once the man leaves she would be able to maintain that small business while the man was away. This consists of various ventures such as making hammocks or selling fruits in the town square. The sample in Madrina also demonstrates this dynamic. Felipe self-identifies as Maya and senses a difference in gender relations from being in the U.S., saying,

“Before I left I was very chauvinistic. Here in Madrina the men say, ‘I am tough, I am the man and I am first, before the woman.’ Now I have a different outlook on my life. I treat my wife much better.”

Roberto self-identifies as Yucateco-Hispánico and discloses how traditional, familial gender expectations are altered through im/migration,
"The women in Madrina don’t have the social power to make decisions about their lives—this is a negative. Experiences outside of Madrina can change the man or the woman in a positive way—but each experience is different."

Complete abandonment of the family is also a social concern. In this sample however, this is the exception, not the rule. Marcelo self-identifies as Mexicano and discusses familial abandonment. In the process, he returns to the idea of im/migration as a strategy for "family building." However, similar to the findings of Martinez-Curiel (2004), Marcelo’s idea is not to return to Madrina and build a family, but rather, to find a suitable wife in the U.S. Again, this reflects a break from the traditional expectations of both familial or ch’i’ibal and community or kaaj, explaining, “There are people who have gone to the U.S. for ten years and lost their wives. I would like a woman from the U.S. Some men have women from there.”

Mario self-identifies as Maya and speaks to his familial commitment as well as the potential for abandonment by other im/migrants, saying,

“I left Madrina for my children. It was the first time in my life I could buy toys for them. I had no other goal. My child comes first. Many have a wife here and there, and abandon their family. They tell you to look for a wife in the U.S.—they tell you to go. There’s a lot of deception, but being in the U.S. changed me.”

Gregorio self-identifies as Hispanic and was in Kalamazoo and San Francisco, stating,

“We go to the U.S. and we marry Americans but we remain middle class because at times we are not able to move up in class. We are legal and have our documents. Because of this, we have partial legal protections through the women. If you married an American woman, you understand that you have protection through your wife. It’s just that we have to ‘get by’ through marrying and they can legalize us.”
Gregorio continues with a holistic perception of the change in the ethnic identity of
the family, touching on several facets of the culture. He says,

“There are a lot of changes in the family, such as language. My family and I
have learned to eat differently now. To have enough resources and to desire
or be want of nothing changes your life. Life is very relaxing for us now.”

In sum, the family as a topic begins a dramatic shift away from seeing ethnic
change that “happens to others but not to me.” Once the analysis moves away from
the potential ego threat of individual analysis, the respondents are more candid about
the shift in economics, language, diet, gender roles, and familial abandonment, which
would be seen as a controversial topic. This trajectory extends to the community and
is the focus of the next section.

Data: Madrina’s Change

Ambiguity pervades the im/migrants’ discussion on Madrina, much like the
individual and familial analysis. Overall, there is a wide range of positive and
negative themes concerning the impact on Madrina. Im/migration is a relatively new
phenomenon, but im/migrants are conscious of and describe both the economic
positives and cultural negatives.

Like discussions of self and family, a few im/migrants felt that there were no
changes in the ethnic identity of the town attributable to im/migration. For most,
however, there was change ranging from the economic shift in work culture from the
agricultural subsistence economy to a money-based im/migration economy. Other
changes consist of: changes in language and education, the disrespectful and urban
racialized cholo attitude of returned im/migrants and children, changes in
consumption, and mixed-status families. Similarly Castillo, Jiménez-Pacheco, and Pasillas’s (2007) study of the Yucatecan town of Tunkás (which is also a new em/migration town) had the following concerns cited by the citizenry: alcoholism, drug use, violence, language usage, changing styles of dress, disregard for agricultural work, deterioration in ceremonies, less unity, and breakdown of family. Without a doubt, Madrina’s im/migrants evoke a strikingly similar list of cultural and social concerns.

While many positives such as technology, new houses and new educational opportunity for children are evident, negatives such as language change, disrespectful behaviors, and the “othered” cholo are also evident. Lyman, Cen Montuy, and Sandoval’s (2007) study of the town of Tunkás, Yucatán found that the newness of im/migration prevented the citizenry from being able to make a clear or definitive analysis of the impact. This ambiguity is also evident in the attitudes of many of the Madrina interviewees.

New Houses

The material cultural change in the family’s living conditions and housing architecture is the primary change identified, which corresponds with im/migrant motivations above. Alfonso self-identifies as Maya and states, “The culture hasn’t changed. The houses have changed, but the customs are the same. There is still a tradition in the town.” Javier self-identifies as Yucatec-Mayan and continues,

“The town is changing a lot because of the new houses from immigration. Before im/migration, nothing was under construction. Now there’s a lot of construction, more buildings, and more work.”
Paulino self-identifies as Yucatecan-Mexicano and also focuses on new construction, but makes a point of seeing the change in the material culture of housing as a necessity for safety in a hurricane zone, saying,

“Before immigration, the houses were made of tree leaves and during hurricanes everything was blown away. Now there is security in having a house with cement walls during storms.”

Pedro self-identifies as Mexicano-Yucateco and agrees, stating, “there’s change in the town—there are more houses and more money—a lot more.” This theme connects directly to the second and third style of housing shown above, as well as to the themes of leaving and returning for house and household.

**Change in Town Ethnic Identity: A Blend of Hopes and Concerns**

One assumption offered in the interviews is that eventually immigration will allow children to rise above the caste-like poverty induced by a failed educational system. The hope is that future generations will be more adjusted psychologically and emotionally through a stronger education, and that this education will nurture an enlightenment that will prevent the negative changes in the town ethnic identity that are occurring today. The argument maintains that the children will utilize the economic benefits of immigration to empower themselves through education, thereby increasing and retaining their Yucatec-Mayan ethnic identity. However, this is likely to be a pastiche of change that is both inward looking towards Yucatec-Mayan and outward looking towards the useful tools of outside cultures. Miguel self-identifies as Maya-Yucateco and expresses,

“Yes, there is an impact from immigration! The future is open with opportunities for the children, with schooling, studies, and sports. There are many problems here—a lot of death, poverty, and psychological trauma. Without emotional, mental, and spiritual peace, work, and some government, nothing will change. The immigrants could return and contribute to the work
here. Work five or ten years in the U.S, then come back! No more immigrating! Work for the village, for God, for the family. We’ll have no more problems in North America—they only use us!"

Mario self-identifies as Maya and continues the description of cultural change as it relates to technology. However, he sees a forsaking of traditional culture in favor of the culture of the U.S. Mario describes a phone service in which the citizens without house phones (a majority to say the least) pay people to use their house phones to stay in contact with im/migrant loved ones in the U.S., saying,

“Yes, you could say that ethnic identity is changing. There is too much change and more technology than before. Before, you wouldn’t know about the birth of a baby here in Madrina while you were in the U.S. Now when you go to a house in Madrina, everyone is capable of using the technology, telephones, the internet—even a two-year-old child! Do you connect the new technology with im/migration? Yes!”

In Marxist terms, Felix, who still resides in Kalamazoo, alludes to the change in the economic base that underpins the change in the ethnic superstructure, saying,

“The economy changes the culture and the customs. I send money for new things, and little by little, culture change through the economy. The ethnic identity has changed through the change in economy. There’s more technology from the U.S., telephones, television, electricity. The languages and the music are from the U.S., too. Our choice of clothing is more diverse now, because of communications.”

Conversely, Jose self-identifies as Yucatec-Mayan and feels economic remittances have brought about change to the economy but not to the culture in general, saying, “for me, the change is economic, but not much in the way of culture.”

Language is another indicator of change widely discussed throughout the interviews. Aramis self-identifies as Yucateco and focuses on language as well as “American behaviors,” saying, “Many people change in the U.S. They speak English and have the American culture and behavior. They speak and listen to music in
English.” Esteban alludes to the linguistic segregation that takes place. He claims to have made friends with and lived with non-Spanish speaking people, thereby potentially engaging mainstream U.S. culture, if not U.S. born, bilingual Latin-American citizens, saying,

“Do many people return speaking more English? Many do. If you lived with people from the U.S. like I did, you would be able to learn more English.” Fernando still resides in Kalamazoo and adds,

“When people leave Madrina, they speak Maya, but when they return they speak English. It’s as if they assume that you don’t want to speak Maya anymore—as if it wasn’t their culture anymore. They even forget how to dance the jarana.”

Francisco self-identifies as Mexicano and focuses on language too. He makes note of the need for English in the workforce of Cancún. This clearly supports the thesis that Cancún acts as a sort of “immigration school,” where work skills entail cultural capital such as English are learned (Lewin Fischer & Guzmán, 2004). Francisco says,

“The languages used in Madrina have changed. Many immigrants know English and the children understand it, too. Their fathers speak to them in English. Children say ‘Bye!’ [laughs]. A child might tell a story in English or someone passes by and she says ‘Hi.’ This process is good, like sending money to buy new things like a music cd. If you don’t want to go to the U.S. for work and you know how to speak English, you can go to Cancún, too.”

Mateo self-identifies as Yucateco and seems more concerned with education, and the future of Spanish and Yucatec-Maya as symbols of local ethnicity. He also describes the difference that occurs when people move from traditional Yucatec-Mayan housing (type number one above) to cement houses (types number three and four above) explaining,

“The children have a better future in the U.S. Children have to study in the U.S. but in Madrina, no. If your child doesn’t want to go to school, they
aren't obligated. He or she doesn't have an obligation to go to school! The change is that in the U.S., education is obligatory. The ethnic identity is different because houses are different now. The elders lived in the fields in a small house of paja leaves. Now we live in houses of pure masonry construction. Also, now Maya is taught in the schools and is promoting Mayan culture to an extent. There's still more Spanish than Maya in the schools though. People speak both, but Spanish is stronger, we are mestizos.”

Don Arturo self-identifies as Maya and faults the local educational system for not preparing im/migrants with the needed English skills for life in the U.S. This is interesting, because it implies that im/migration is seen as a foregone conclusion requiring institutional and structural preparation of the citizenry by local government.

He also describes the changes in how being Yucatec-Maya is learned by some in the U.S. and from generation to generation, saying,

“Hopefully the culture in Madrina is better because here the language is Maya and Spanish. In the U.S., I tried to teach myself English. I knew it would help me, and it’s a beautiful language. I understand and speak English. When an American asks me something, I like to speak it in return. The next generation leaving has more opportunities and more schooling. We speak the maternal language—Maya and the kids do too. Although they don’t always speak it, they understand it and listen to it while in Madrina. The process of learning language is not direct anymore. There’s English in the preparatory and secondary but not more than a half hour—it’s not sufficient.”

Tomas self-identifies as Maya-Yucateco and is fluent in all three languages and hits on the linguistic changes eloquently. In English, he also describes the fear of tightened U.S. security as a reaction to the September 11 hijackings. As shown above, downwardly trending em/migration differentials in Yucatán’s population decreased dramatically after 9/11, which is likely an effect of heightened security from the U.S. and increased trepidation and fear on behalf of the candidate im/migrant. Tomas says,

“Collectively, our perception has changed from before 9/11. Now it’s more difficult to immigrate because of the U.S. security pressure. Now we have
more problems with the process. Ethnically there have been changes in language. People name their kids ‘Todd,’ ‘Stephanie,’ and ‘Courtney’ when they’re mixed-status families. People also use words like ‘troca’ or ‘van’ instead of ‘camioneta’ or ‘chatear’ for internet chatting instead of ‘charlar.’ There’s more American clothing and tattoos, but food not so much change.”

Don Ronaldo self-identifies as Yucateco and describes the plight of the town after the annual fiesta in August. People cite a chronic shortage of able-bodied men to prepare the event because so many im/migrants are gone. Ironically, many of the im/migrants in the U.S. who are saved from helping prepare the fiesta return for the fiesta every year with pockets full of money and ready for a week of discretionary spending. Citizens of Madrina report that this same problem manifests itself with town sports as the soccer team is occasionally lacking enough people in town to play. Don Ronaldo claims that returning for the fiesta is decreasing (though this is not substantiated by other respondents), saying

“Much has changed in Madrina because we are prospering from immigration. There are more people that don’t return now! When the fiesta is over, fifty percent of the men will leave! Will they return? No, and for many this will be their first time im/migrating! So it’s a problem that there are not many men in the town? Yes. The negative is that for those who have not yet gone and are going—they don’t know they’re fucked!”

Still others see the change as an inevitable, if not a reified natural part of social evolution. Comparable to the findings of Grimes (1998), Felipe, who resided in San Francisco, sees a culturally progressive “evolution” in the town. Interestingly, part of this cultural change comes by way of a new culture of environmentalism. As stated above, the social concerns over sustainability are evident in Madrina and elsewhere in Yucatán where new consumables are available (likely because of the new im/migration money floating around the town) in rural areas without an
infrastructure to support trash removal. Felipe describes how environmentalism in the U.S. has changed his worldview saying,

“Now I don’t like garbage in the streets. Now, I don’t throw garbage out of the windows. I keep a small bag inside the car. People ask me, including my family, ‘why do you care?’ It’s ignorance, and it’s seen as normal here in Madrina.”

Conversely, one of the cited reasons that ethnic change has not yet occurred full-scale is the tight-knit living situations in the U.S. As outlined above, the demographics of neighborhoods and housemates can affect assimilation to mainstream U.S. culture. This extends to language, since living and working in Spanish and Mayan could be a hindrance to linguistic assimilation to English. Manuel self-identifies as Yucatec-Maya and views the experiences of the U.S. Yucatec-Mayan community this way,

“The groups in California or Michigan, they’ll return and be the same one day. Sharing ideas, language, and the common history while living together in the U.S. Through solidarity, united, the town will be the same.”

To be sure, many changes in ethnic identity and culture are cited, including changes from traditional to hurricane-proof housing, trilingualism, shifting gender roles, use of technology, educational opportunity, and even environmentalism. However, the negatives are clearly understood by the respondents as well. In line with Batalla (1987), attention is now turned to the social concerns of the new, othered minority who fails to represent rural ethnic indigenous lifeways and rural, Yucatec-Mayan behavioral ethics and social orientation—the cholo.

**Intergenerational Change: Normative Ethics and the Racialized Cholo**

Many respondents suggest that certain returned im/migrants are viewed as fundamentally different and are “othered” from the rest of the population. One point
of contention is the inability and lack of interest of returned im/migrants to work the cornfields as well as the lack of motivation to learn on behalf of the youth and future generations. Yucatec-Mayan identity is intimately connected to the cosmological and practical centrality of hacer milpa or working the cornfields (Batalla, 1987). In reference to returned im/migrants to a pueblo that has a symbiotic economic relationship with Cancún, Re Cruz (2008, 138) says, “[on]...who is Maya and who is not, the migrants are non-Maya because they no longer work the milpa, or if they do, (in the case of temporary migrants,) they have to accommodate the agricultural-ritual cycle to their job contracts and demands in Cancún.” Schmook and Radel (2008) drew on 203 surveys of im/migrant and non-im/migrant households in 14 communities in Yucatán peninsula and found that im/migration earnings begin to take the place of agricultural earnings and that ultimately, im/migrant households use significantly less of the available farmland in their community.

The most frequently cited and highly contentious theme in the interviews is the new “othered” ethnic identity of the returned, racialized cholo. The social perception of a new normative behavioral ethics marked by arrogant urban culture make the cholo a socially marked major point of contention in Madrina. Many im/migrants and citizens view the erosion of traditional Yucatec-Mayan culture in terms of ethics, such as a lack of respect for and deference to elders both publicly and privately. More than any other theme, the cholo attitude appears central to the perception of change in ethnic identity and the de-ethnicizing of the youth and future generations towards an arrogant, self-centered orientation towards money, consumer products, and urban U.S. culture. From my experiences in Madrina, however, the
actual erosion of traditional culture seems overstated, as the changes have been through the incorporation of cholo culture as a parallel, set internal subculture. Either way, a change in normative ethics and a behavioral change away from the México Profundo of Batalla (1987) are indicated.

Rather than losing identification with being Yucatec-Mayan by becoming a cholo, the cholo continues to identify with being Yucatec-Mayan. This is in spite of being viewed with contempt and suspicion by the citizenry. Consequently, the incorporation of the new, tough, urban cholo attitude exists within, as a sort of subcultural strain, rather than apart from being Yucatec-Mayan. As the citizenry react against the returned im/migrant cholo, the returned im/migrant cholo seems to not sense a change in self-ethnic identity, whatsoever. This change extends beyond Madrina to other towns in Yucatán State. In reference to similar sentiments between Dallas, Texas and a town in the northern henequen zone of Yucatán state, Adler (2008 p.66) states, “those who remain somewhat humble—at least in public—are held in high esteem by the community.” Central to the cholo attitude is the opposite of humility as a normative ethical behavior. Rather, toughness and feigned arrogance in knowing the ways of the racialized streets of the Mission in San Francisco are used as outward displays of a new identity, similar to the work of Anderson (1990).

Other researchers have demonstrated that this process is not idiosyncratic to Yucatán State or the Yucatán Peninsula. My data adds to a burgeoning survey of literature documenting similar ethical and ethnic dilemmas in the rural sending towns of México. Quinones (2007) found that the returned cholo in central Mexican sending towns is also viewed and treated differently, and that the urban accessories of
baggy pants, gang signs, turned hats, and tattoos were viewed as negative, residual components of an im/migration from the rural to urban areas internally and transnational im/migration to the U.S. In rural, indigenous towns in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca, Cohen (2004, p. 102) finds “young adults who want the goods and services...of ‘modern life’...results [in] an illness, [of] ‘migrant syndrome’, which addicts rural youth to the ‘drug’ of U.S. cultural and consumer goods.” Cohen (2004, p. 123) cites an elderly woman in town who says “being a migrant is not in general a good idea...migrants learn bad habits, like taking drugs and joining gangs. They forget their homes and families.” Similarly, Grimes (1998, p. 85) cites a woman in a town in Oaxaca who had this to say about the changes in youth behavior from im/migration, “I worry because when kids leave here, they are good kids. And when they return, many are drug addicts. They get mixed up with gangs.” Reese (2001) found that the urban areas in Los Angeles were cause for concern due to an erosion of a rural culture of respect. These results allude to a similar process of transformation from a rural, respectful culture into cholo culture. Finally, Lyman, Cen Montuy, and Sandoval (2007) find that alcoholism, language, dress, aggression, and disrespectful attitudes of returnees and cholo youth impacted by the returned culture are also a common theme among the citizenry of Tunkás, Yucatán, a rural town in the central part of the Yucatán Peninsula.

The theme of the new ethnic cholo emerges in this sample from Madrina, and actually come from the returned and non-returned im/migrants themselves—some of whom would actually be viewed as the cholos in question! Like the im/migrants from Oaxaca who lived in Los Angeles, the Madrina im/migrants live in similarly rough,
urban, and racially charged conditions in San Francisco’s Mission neighborhood compared to their Kalamazoo counterparts. In the interviews, the San Francisco cohort was twice as likely to make mention of the cholos during the course of the conversation without any prompting. This difference manifests itself in the San Francisco cohort being less likely to confirm the desire to live in the U.S. permanently. In other words, the more racialized structure of the urban Mission in San Francisco appears to have an impact on settlement desire. Ironically, the cholos return from San Francisco to avoid the very same culture that the citizens of Madrina admonish as a negative type of cultural remittance.

Part of the transformation comes from a change in spaces lived, people lived with, and activities performed—especially since some of the im/migrants arrive in the U.S. as adolescents. Stodolska and Yi (2003, p. 59) studied the leisure behavior of Mexican, Korean, and Polish immigrant adolescents and young adults between the ages of 14 and 22 (to whom 10 of this sample belong to in age) and found that “young immigrants established their identity through comparisons with other members of their own ethnic group.” If this is the case, then identity and ethnic and cultural behavior is being formed in one of the toughest and most violent areas in San Francisco. The Edison neighborhood in Kalamazoo is not without its social concerns but pales in comparison.

The issue here is that the new ethnic point of comparison is established in an urban environment, where gangs, racial segregation, and racialized social structure are daily social facts that must be learned for survival. If the im/migrants from Madrina are arriving in a socially disorganized, transitional ethnic enclave
neighborhood such as the Mission, where cholo behavior is an established strategy for survival and acceptance, it is likely that behaviors learned in San Francisco would transfer to Madrina as negatively viewed cultural remittances. Paradoxically, the Mission neighborhood in San Francisco also provides much more in the way of Yucatec-Mayan culture due to the size of the Yucatec-Mayan population.

One need not go to the U.S. in order to become experienced in the urban lifestyle. For the Yucatecan, it has come to Yucatán in the form of Cancún. The urbanizing effects of Cancún parallel the U.S. in many ways. Re Cruz (2008) studied a rural town near this urban giant of the eastern Yucatecan state of Quintana Roo, claiming that im/migrants become different people in the eyes of the small-town citizenry;

As seen from Chan Kom, Cancún is a dangerous entity that de-ethnifies Maya people. The urban Maya are thought to be members of another kind of society where they fall prey to the dangers of money, stress, and physical violence” (p. 144).

This underscores the idea that separation from family and milpa not only represents a physical separation, but a spiritual separation as well (Batalla, 1987, Heusinkveld, 2008). Once the individual becomes the knower of urban things, they are seen as someone different—as an “other” in the town and quite possibly no longer Yucatec-Mayan, although they may see this as something that “hasn’t happened to them”, but that does happens “to other people.”

The impact of im/migration on Madrina parallels the town of Tunkás in Cornelius, Fitzgerald, and Lewin Fischer’s (2007) study—both point towards a rural to urban transformation. The conflict over this transformation emerges repeatedly in
the interviews. Abstractly, Nestor sees immigration as marked by the cultural homogenizing of the world or “Americanization,” articulating,

“Oh! There’s already change. The entire world is like the U.S. The youth behavior, the culture—a little is fine. Many kids don’t want to learn Maya. They are losing the identity so it’s a problem, but I like my culture.”

More directly, Mario self-identifies as Maya and complains of the cholo gangster attitude of returned immigrants. He claims that regardless of your money and your attitude, you return to the same context of Madrina, where the social expectations of respect and deference remain, saying,

“Many go to the U.S and they don’t have skills. They make a little money and they return. They return as if ‘no one is as good as they are’ because they have a little bit of money—and they start with that attitude. How does this serve you?”

Gregorio self-identifies as Hispanic and relates the frustration from mixed-status returnees,

“There are a lot of Yucatecos born in the U.S.—the children of Yucatecos in the Mission neighborhood. They grow up in the Mission and they are people with a different type of character because they return aggressive, like cholos. There are a lot of cholos in the Mission. Constantly, there are people with baggy pants and the hats; they are the children of the Latinos. Their fathers or mothers are Yucatecos but they’re born and live in the U.S. They return cholos. I don’t know why they return, but they return aggressive. They’re U.S. citizens, right?!? Apparently, their parents are Yucatecos, but they’re more like Americans. They return aggressive because they use a lot of drugs and now there are a lot of gangsters here in Madrina that carry different gang names. I’ve seen a lot of cholo groups, and they’re the children of pure Yucatecos.”

Don Carlos self-identifies as Maya and describes the violence from the cholos. He claims their rightful place is in a more urban Cancún, which is what they represent culturally, saying,
"Yes, there’s change—now there’s violence. The cholos go to Mérida, form gangs, don’t work, rob, assault—they actually like to do this. Hopefully they'll leave and go to Cancún.”

Esteban self-identifies as Maya and articulates,

"Many immigrants come back, and oh how they’ve changed. Your friend returns with money and it’s as if you don’t know him. They arrive and drink beer. A lot of im/migrants arrive as cholos. They leave normal, they dress nice, but return in cholo style clothing, and through that, there is change. It’s from San Francisco.”

Following the discussion of cholo attitudes by Esteban above, Don Carlos, who self-identifies as Maya, says, “much has changed. The cholos arrive with stories of murders and are taking drugs.” Don Ronaldo self-identifies as Yucateco and says, “the immigrants go for three or four years, then return complete cholos!” Mateo identifies as Yucateco and brings back the original motivation of family, all while attacking the adoption of “U.S. manners,” saying,

“In fifty years, there will be too many cousins from the U.S. coming to Madrina. The kids are going to change because they’re charmed by the culture in the U.S. In San Francisco they are cholos. A lot of ’em bring it here. I’m against it. This is something that others do—but not me. For me, immigration is for earning money for my kids. In fifty years my town will be very different; it’s already not as peaceful as it was. It is going to be a big, ugly city. Our children grow up in San Francisco and want to be cholos. Many have U.S. manners and adopt American culture. The cholos don’t work. They’ve adopted this culture.”

Luis self-identifies as Maya and mentions mixed-status family returnees, whom he calls “Chicanos.” He makes no distinction between the behaviors that emerge from San Francisco from other areas in the U.S., implying that im/migrants may be forced into impoverished, urban areas where the cholo attitude is prevalent as a racialized, social cue, saying, “Yes, there are immigrants that change. In the U.S., there are a lot of cholos, but not everyone. It’s from everywhere in the U.S.”
Consumerism and experience with technology are also likely roots of change. Stodolska and Yi’s (2003) study of Mexican, Korean, and Polish adolescent im/migrants found a commodification of leisure time and personal interests. That is, access to new forms of technology aroused curiosity and engagement into a consumer economy. As the cholo youth return, so returns an expectation to consume in Madrina in a manner similar to the U.S. Gregorio self-identifies as Hispanic and claims,

“Yes, there’s been change. These kids are used to having money. More of the youth live differently from the past, when there was respect. There’s no respect and a lot of bad behaviors now. The kids pass you on the street without acknowledgement. Soon, the little ones won’t have much respect either. They don’t answer their parents and as it goes in the world, so it will go here too. When the girls pass each other in the streets, there are insults. None of them has respect for each other. It’s from the cellular phones, the pornography, and the internet. Now the Madrina police have to deal with these cholos.”

Octavio self-identifies as Mexicano-Yucateco and expresses similar sentiments. He also mentions the changes in the fiesta. This is a reference to the addition of house, rave, hip-hop, Mexican and U.S. punk, “emo” rock, and reggaeton to the music choices at the fiesta. This is supplemented by scantily clad female dancers, strippers, and cross-dressers and transsexuals that descend on the town fiesta. Like migrant circuit entertainers, the dancers bounce from one town fiesta to another throughout the year, harvesting large amounts of cash in the process. Locals report that these new, ‘immoral’ or ‘unethical’ components of the fiesta do not pre-date 1994 or 1995, when em/migration spiked and remittances and im/migrant returnees with large sums of money to spend descend for the week-long party. This is described in more detail in chapter eleven below. Octavio says,
\begin{quote}
"The police are more on alert now with all the money that comes back. There are foreigners [mixed status kids] who like the money. The beliefs—our beliefs are different now. There are more insults now. The customs are different at the fiesta, now.”
\end{quote}

Aramis self-identifies as Yucateco and focuses on drugs and the youth culture, but also acknowledges the reciprocity of cultural interchange, saying,

\begin{quote}
"Drugs have changed the youth, and they bring these experiences with them to Madrina from the U.S. Everyday in the street in Madrina, there is cocaine, marijuana, and crime. There are also cultures from México that have changed the U.S., too. The only difference between México and the U.S. is that there’s work in the U.S.”
\end{quote}

Felipe, who self-identifies as Maya, claims, “Yes, there are changes in ethnic identity, like the little drunkards, the cholos. Many arrive from the U.S. drinking, not doing anything.”

Finally, Felipe self-identifies as Maya and discusses the evolution of ethnic identity as part of the reified, natural process of life. Interestingly, he mentions the role of technology and its relation to economics. Felipe echoes back to the negative cholo behavior, but not without mixed blessings, claiming,

\begin{quote}
"There’s change, but not only from immigration. It’s just the youth of today. It’s evolution. Being Maya is lost between the generations. It’s not just because of immigrating. A lot of people return and are the same, they return with humility. You should learn to be silent, to be quiet and humble, to say nothing! Through not speaking, you learn. So the change is part of a social evolution? Yes. There’s change, but only through evolution. But why is there evolution? Technology more than anything. So it’s easier to chat with family in the U.S.? Yes, the internet! I’m going buy a computer for my son. My son José learned computers for three years in the U.S schools. Now it’s free here in Madrina in the government building. So immigration hasn’t changed the ethnic identity of Madrina? No, on the contrary, it has improved the situation economically.”
\end{quote}

In conclusion, there is evidence of ambiguity over the change through incorporation in the ethnic identity of the town, but self-conceptions appear to be
maintained under the framework of “Yucatec-Mayan.” The ambiguity exists because
economic changes are seen positively and cultural remittances, especially of the
racialized cholo, are seen negatively. The racialized cholo, then, represents a
“cultural remittance” that is cause for social concern. Rural Yucatec-Mayan lifeways,
like all indigenous cultures in México, have been victimized by cultural racism
throughout Yucatecan history (Batalla, 1987). Today, the urban lifeways of a
racialized, urban, segregated, and marginalized U.S. structure returns as a new form
of individualistic and decadent ethnicity. With this new ethnicity comes a new
normative ethical behavior that represents the experiences in an urban, racial U.S.
The change appears to be real as a facticity, but the newness of em/migration from
Madrina means that the second and third generations of returnees and mixed-status
youth from the U.S. will continue to compete for a share of an ethnic identity shift.
This shift in ethnic identity will either allow or disallow them the courtesy of being
“of Madrina” and “of Yucatec-Maya” as well as “of the streets” “of the U.S.” and “of
the cholo lifestyle.” This is discussed at greater length in chapter eleven below.
CHAPTER IX: DATA: A QUESTION OF PERMANENT SETTLEMENT

Introduction

One way to examine the ethnic change of the im/migrants from Madrina is to ask whether they would be willing to live in the U.S. permanently—to never return other than as occasional visitors. Deciding to become permanently settled in the U.S. is partially a function of the socio-economic living conditions of the sending community as well as the receiving community. Initial socio-economic status, marital status, gender, and language capabilities are also factors in the decision-making process. Since the motivations cited above for returning to Madrina are connected to family or ch’i’ibal, land or kaaj, traditions, and sentiment towards the broader community, a break from the place and land of one’s heritage symbolizes a dramatic break in identity. The decision to create a new type of orientation in your identity, as well as the identity of children and future familial generations is the last bastion of traditional Yucatec-Mayan ties. This is true whether the individual imagines living in the U.S. in a more culturally homogenous Spanish-speaking neighborhood or if the person imagines living in a heterogeneous middle or upper-class suburb.

Available data shows that Yucatec-Mayan im/migrants expect to return to Yucatán (see Farriss 1987, Jimenez-Castillo 1992, and Burke 2004.) Speaking Yucatec-Mayan appears to influence this trajectory. Lyman, Cen Montuy, and Sandoval (2007) also found that being able to speak Maya has an impact on whether or not im/migrants from Tunkás, Yucatán want to stay in the U.S. or return to Tunkás.
The finding shows that speaking Yucatec-Mayan increased the desire to return, demonstrating a stronger identification with the sending village.

Since all of the respondents here spoke Yucatec-Mayan, it is fair to assume that wanting to return from the U.S. was similarly reflective of Yucatec-Mayan language, an affinity for the small town life, and the strength of Yucatec-Mayan identity as a partial explanatory factor in the decision. However, since all the respondents in this sample speak Yucatec-Mayan, I cannot compare between a Yucatec-Mayan and non-Yucatec-Mayan speaking sub-sample in this project. Undoubtedly, the linguistic homogeneity of this sample represents a potentially stronger ethnic connection to Yucatán, as well as to family (ch’i’ibal), land, and community (kaaj) in Madrina as compared to urban im/migrant samples from Mérida.

I Will Not Settle in the U.S.

No, Because of Resources and Family

Beginning with emphatic declinations, many of the respondents claim that living in the U.S. permanently is simply not desirable. Family, friends, and ancestral lands are central to this meditation. Tomas interviewed in English and says, “I’ve worked in Cancún and may go again, but not permanently in the U.S. I have my base, my foundation, and my resources in Madrina, and my heart is with the people in Madrina.”

Don Carlos agrees that his cultural resources are in Madrina and focuses on the resources of his land, saying, “I would never settle in the U.S. I have my work, my ranch, avocado, fruits, sweet oranges, limes, and papaya here in Madrina.” José agrees and injects issues of family into the question that parallels the findings on
motivations for leaving and returning, claiming, “forever, no. Only temporarily, or with my family visiting temporarily.” The distinction between economic opportunities and the sentiment of family is made, with emotion and family winning the fight. Esteban says, “Permanently, no, not even with the family. In reality, you know that there is only work there. In Madrina, you can be with your relatives, friends, and family.” Finally, Ramon still resides in Kalamazoo and says, “certainly not, it’s only work. We will leave the U.S.”

No, Because of the Social Concerns of Living in the U.S.

Concerns over the social problems in the U.S., emerge from the data concerning permanent settlement. Alejandro explains the difficulty that the language barrier presents. This is somewhat surprising since Alejandro lived in San Francisco, where the ability to engage a broad, Spanish-speaking and Yucatec-Mayan community is available daily, saying, “never permanently. I have a lot of problems speaking English. So ‘no’ because of my English skills.” Adding on to the cultural difficulties of living in the U.S., Mateo elaborates,

“No, because the U.S. customs are not my customs—not my culture. If I were to go, it wouldn’t be possible to stay forever. I was born in Madrina, and I’m going to maintain our customs in Madrina morning and night, day in and day out. Staying in the U.S. couldn’t happen—never.”

Living in a marginalized neighborhood can adversely affect the im/migrants’ perception of other minorities who inhabit those spaces. Grimes (1998, p. 85) found similar phenomena in her work with im/migrants from Putla, Oaxaca, saying,

“Living in impoverished neighborhoods, often near large public-housing projects, the Putlecan migrants deduce ‘how African-Americans are’ from observing those they see hanging out or living on the streets and from the news stories. The indigent, the alcoholic, and the criminal form the basis of their construction of African-American identity, merging race with
poverty...these impressions of African-Americans are based on superficial visual contact, hearsay and fear that occur when language barriers and limited social interaction impede other types of communication that could counter negative racial stereotypes.”

This similar dynamic is found in both Kalamazoo and San Francisco samples. Both the Kalamazoo and San Francisco cohorts lived in economically and socially marginalized areas shared by other minorities. Citing the interpersonal problems and racial animosity of life in the U.S., Luis lives in Kalamazoo and says, “not permanently. I don’t like it in the U.S. There are a lot of blacks and they rob you in the street.” Octavio lived in San Francisco and reported being beaten by a group of African-Americans to the point of being hospitalized. He continues, “not permanently. The experience I had with blacks in my neighborhood is that they don’t work and only sell drugs.” Adolpho returned from San Francisco after four years and expresses the complications of being afraid to leave the house due to the violence in the streets, saying, “I don’t believe I’d stay forever because you can’t leave the house like in Madrina—I don’t like it.”

The racial animosity is not reserved for other minorities such as African-Americans, Arab-Americans or Asian-Americans, as negative experiences with whites are also reported. Nestor was in San Francisco and says, “not permanently. My heart is here in Madrina. Americans would always say ‘Fuck you, I am white! I’m better!’” The problems were not always between ethnic or racial groups, but from discrimination at the hands of public officials. Aramis says,

“There’s a lot of discrimination from the police. In Portland, Oregon, I was walking and the police asked me ‘Where are you going?’ I didn’t have an I.D., but I didn’t have a record on their computer either, so they said I’m ‘ok’ and went on.”
Finally, Mario, who originally self identified as Maya, expands his definition to Mexicano when contemplating leaving the U.S. for good. This is insightful as to how ethnic identity can change in interview. Mario says,

"Not permanently, because I wouldn’t like to continually mask and hide my heritage and customs. Not even if I had full citizenship. I don’t have the heart to turn my back on my homeland. It would be better to be in Madrina—to be Mexicano. I am afraid of never returning."

Yes, I Would Settle Permanently

Yes, But Only Under Certain Conditions

For many who said “yes,” there were certain qualifications. Those respondents who said “yes” retreat from an unequivocal “yes” to add the desired details of the arrangement. Concerns about permanent legal status, rather than temporary worker status, as well as spouses, children, family and land are evident. Roberto succinctly says, “only with a green card and my family.” Miguel continues “not without a visa. I also have a lot of responsibilities in Madrina with my bees and cattle, so it’s an issue.” Pedro continues and still holds dearly to the idea of visiting Madrina, saying “with my family, a job, and papers giving me the ability to return to Madrina—it could be nice.” Fidel rounds out the imagined arrangement saying, “yes. But only in a good situation, with work, education, and legal identification.” Felipe was married and living in San Francisco and says “yes,” but is hesitant to allow the family to go as well. Presumably, this is due to the social concerns and social problems of San Francisco, saying,

“If I were a permanent citizen I could live there. Life is easier as a resident. I don’t know about the family. I didn’t like going out into the street, there was a lot of violence and drugs.”
Don Ronaldo also hesitates to bring the family, saying, “Yes. I could stay permanently, but not with my children or wife. It doesn’t bother me to be there for them, with my family still here in Madrina, but it’s hard.” Don Arturo appears confident that a future life in Kalamazoo would be better, citing the support he could receive from the ethno-political Kalamazoo HAC if there were problems, claiming, “I could be happy with my family in the U.S. because life is easier there. There’s work in Michigan, Chicago and Atlanta. Hopefully, there’s an opportunity for us all to go to the U.S. We are hoping to go and would use the Hispanic American Council in Michigan to help if there are any problems.”

Francisco also expects to receive more infrastructural support in the U.S., saying, “Permanently? Sure. If there’s an opportunity with papers and support. There’s always support and assistance in the U.S. The government helps, and there’s a lot of support for children, too. But not on my own—only with my wife and kids.”

Octavio unknowingly references police harassment within his narrative. He also mentions the socially contested cholo, saying, “Sometimes I think ‘yes’ and sometimes ‘no’—but only with my family. I didn’t have any problems, and I spoke almost no English. The doctors in the U.S. speak English and Spanish—the police did, too. They’d say ‘Hey buddy, where you headin’?’ and I’d say ‘To my house.’ I don’t like the U.S., there’s too many Yucateco cholos. There’s thousands of people from Yucatán there. Immigration fucks, fucks, fucks the Mexicans—well, almost all Mexicans! [laughs]”

Paulino still lives in Kalamazoo and affirms the possibility of staying permanently. He returns to the issue of destination location, as he too does not like the problems associated with his current neighborhood in Kalamazoo. In the process, he shows his fondness for small town living similar to Madrina, saying,
"Yes, I would stay permanently, but I don’t like the blacks, drugs, and the cholos. In this Kalamazoo neighborhood there’s more problems than in the smaller towns like Mattawan, Michigan.”

Gregorio returns to family building and is an anomaly in that he considers marrying a U.S. woman, although she is Mexican in heritage. Marriage is a central part of respondent answers, saying,

“Yes, as long as I’m not married. I know a girl from the U.S. She is Mexican but from the U.S.—a Chicana. She waits tables, speaks English, and is going to school. I stayed with her for a time—she is pretty and I like her a lot.”

Marcelo also focuses on family as a deterrent from living in the U.S. permanently, saying, “If my family is in the U.S. too, yes. If they’re here in Yucatán, no. I would only live in the U.S. if I had my kids and wife, too.” Raul still resides in Kalamazoo and says, “not permanently because my family is in México. I would with a wife and the entire family here in the U.S.” Rafael resides in Kalamazoo and makes a very qualified answer, with emphasis on family, family building, and legal rights, saying,

“If you have the papers and can look for a wife, and you were married here, yes! With my father and brothers too, I would be interested in that. However, only without legal problems. I’m not your dog! Only with full legal rights.”

Félix still resides in Kalamazoo and acknowledges the benefits for women and children. He also supports Lewin Fischer and Guzman’s (2004) thesis, saying,

“Yes, it would be cool with papers and work permission. I’d like to stay in the U.S. as a permanent citizen. Legal rights are the question. Life’s harder in Madrina—there’s less education. The U.S. is a blessing for children. It would be cool to be in the U.S. with family and kids. There’s more opportunity for women. In México, you need five years experience to get a good job. Here you apply without experience and get the job. Before the U.S., the people of Madrina were immigrating to Playa, Cancún, and Mérida—there’s work there, but the pay isn’t much. I worked construction in Cancún to make money to go to the U.S.”
Vicente still resides in Kalamazoo and says, “definitely with a good girlfriend or if I married an American with permanent papers.” Gerardo returned to Madrina from San Francisco after four years and again demonstrates the daily pressures of living in San Francisco, saying,

“If immigration law is fixed, if they give permanent visas to Mexicans, that’s fine! Yes, I’d like to live in the U.S. permanently, but here in Madrina there’s no worries—it’s peaceful.”

Unqualified Yes

A Clean and Permanent Break

A mere two respondents felt they were destined to be in the U.S. indefinitely or permanently. Silvio is married and still resides in Kalamazoo and rejects the idea of returning to Yucatán, yet explains with salient emotion. He tearfully says, “I’m never returning. I am going to be here in the U.S. without my family. I am not going to return.” Jesus still resides in Kalamazoo and says, “I like the lifestyle here in the U.S. I’m not going to return to Madrina.”

I now address comparative differences in response to the question of permanent settlement between married and single respondents. Comparisons between the San Francisco and Kalamazoo cohorts on the question of permanent settlement are addressed in chapter ten below.

Married Versus Single

Marriage affects attitude on permanent settlement in the U.S. In this sample, there is a significant difference between married and single im/migrants on this question. Fourteen of the 24 married respondents (58 percent) said “no” to living in
the U.S. permanently. Ten of the 24 married respondents (42 percent) said “yes” to permanent U.S. settlement. The single cohort is different. Seven of the 21 single respondents (33 percent) said “no” to living in the U.S. permanently. Fourteen of the 21 single respondents (67 percent) said “yes.” The desire to live permanently in the U.S. appears to be affected by marital status as a key indicator. Though the sample is small and likely not generalizable alone, it does seem to suggest and substantiate the explanatory power of the household model of im/migration as a holistic model of both leaving and returning.

In Sum

This sample is different from other research in Yucatán. Unlike Adler’s (2008) work in Dallas, where an overwhelming majority of male im/migrants interviewed would stay in the U.S. permanently, this sample yields only 53 percent respondent willingness to stay in the U.S. permanently. It is possible that a longer history of im/migratory social networks and cultural resources in the Dallas area outweigh the social concerns of living conditions.

It is also possible that the relative closeness of Dallas from Yucatán offsets these issues, as San Francisco and Kalamazoo are enormous distances from Madrina to say the least. Bush International Airport in Houston has daily, direct flights to Mérida International Airport, making it an easy departure platform in case of an emergency and the need for a quick and cheaper return. Flights from San Francisco and Chicago often must connect to Houston International or Atlanta Hartsfield International, are longer in duration and very costly to and from Mérida International. One option is to fly to Cancún International, which then entails a half-day bus ride to
Mérida and another hour bus or a *colectivo* to Madrina. This approach is cheaper, but extremely arduous and only seems rational when the cost differential between Mérida International and Cancún International is extreme.

I also suggest that a lack of cultural resources is also to blame. Food culture in Madrina is very important and repeats each week ad infinitum (i.e. Wednesday is pork and black bean stew, Thursday is chicken and noodle stew, Friday is poc chuc, etc...). Kalamazoo lacks a sizable Yucatec-Mayan community and is isolated from large, urban, Spanish-speaking neighborhoods, which makes for a less appealing lifestyle and an inability to reproduce the food culture with any consistency. Opposite to this, it is possible that the social concerns and social problems of the Mission neighborhood trump the cultural resources available. Isolation, boredom, alienation, harassment, discrimination from employers, and other ethnic and racial groups add to a sense of being trapped in a beeline between work and house that is evident in the interviews. Along with this is a deep appreciation for the serene lifestyle, family, land, customs, cultural resources, and friends in Madrina, where the comparatively peaceful lifestyle is a more attractive place to hang one’s hat. I now turn to the comparison of San Francisco and Kalamazoo directly.
CHAPTER X: DATA: COMPARISON OF KALAMAZOO AND SAN FRANCISCO

Introduction

The two destinations of Kalamazoo and San Francisco share commonalities, but their differences indicate the differences that typify the “new im/migration destinations” (for a review of other projects on new destinations, see also Jezierski 2002, Fink 2003, Millard and Chapa 2004, Zuñiga and Hernandez-Leon 2005 and Massey 2008.) San Francisco is a traditional urban destination for Yucatecans and Central Americans. Kalamazoo represents a newer, suburban destination that is only now beginning to grow a sizable population of Yucatec-Mayans through employment networks and chain im/migration. A majority of Madrina’s im/migrants work in the restaurant industry in San Francisco. This is not the case for the Kalamazoo cohort, which is heavily concentrated in agriculture. At the time of this writing, only one of 13 im/migrants in Kalamazoo worked in the restaurant industry. Consequently, the im/migrants in Kalamazoo are largely employed in the secondary sector. Massey et al. (1994, p. 711) define secondary sector employment as “typified by instability, low pay, limited benefits, and unpleasant or hazardous working conditions.” Conversely, San Francisco offers a largely tertiary sector service industry of employment for the newly arrived from Madrina. Both of these locales offer something distinct—and the effect that emerges in the interviews is as distinct as the destinations.
Daily Life in the Edison Neighborhood: Kalamazoo, Michigan

A city of roughly 100,000 people, Kalamazoo shares the typical economic downturn of most Midwestern, post-industrial rust-belt towns. Michigan is an annual leader in unemployment rates in the U.S., and is prone to annual budget shortfalls and economic recession. The Kalamazoo area also has a long history of immigration from Latin America. México, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Puerto Rico are all represented among the local Hispanic population, as one hundred years of constant immigration for work in agriculture is evident (Millard and Chapa, 2004).

Although San Francisco is a popular destination, a smaller group of Yucatec-Mayan immigrants has also arrived in the Midwest, Southeast, South, Northwest, as well as Kalamazoo, Michigan. Through family, friends, relationships, rumor about job opportunity and knowledge of settlement destinations providing social, economic, and emotional support, chain immigration is created, perpetuated, and crystallized into permanent enclaves and settlements.

While sharing a small amount of tertiary sector employment with San Francisco (which is typified by behind-the-scenes work in restaurant kitchens), the work in Kalamazoo is almost exclusively agricultural. Agricultural work can be physically grueling and is prone to seasonal slow downs, less than full time employment, followed by seasonal rush periods where overtime, on the order of ten to twelve hour days are strung together six or seven days per week. More broadly, other Spanish-speaking immigrants in Kalamazoo find work in other secondary sectors such as construction, day laborers, landscaping and tertiary sector work such
as cleaning in hotels, domestic work, baby-sitting, food preparation for parties or events, clothing repair and creation and other ethnic community-oriented tasks.

The Hispanic community is somewhat segregated in the Edison neighborhood, which is geographically situated along the eastern gate and corridor of Kalamazoo. According to the Edison Neighborhood Association, the neighborhood is demarcated by Michigan Avenue on the north, Miller Road on the south, City Limits on the east and Burdick Street on the west (www.edisonneighborhood.com). The population is also socially marked by a spatial adjacency as well as integration with an African American community and white community. Ethnic spatial cues such as Spanish-language businesses exist throughout the neighborhood. Signage such as tiendas de las comidas Mexicanas, tiendas de los articulos Mexicanos, taquerias and restaurantes define an ethnic, Spanish-speaking business space as well as a residential space of habitation and settlement.

Because of the long history of Spanish-speaking communities in Southwest Michigan for agricultural work, ethno-political, non-governmental agencies dedicated to the development of the Hispanic, Spanish-speaking community exist. Assistance to newly arrived in/migrants and support for the settled and naturalized Hispanic community comes from the Hispanic American Council (HAC). As evidence of the local Spanish-speaking political history embedded within the broader civil right struggles of the 1960’s, the HAC recently celebrated a 25th anniversary, demonstrating the consciousness and local political development of the Hispanic community.
The HAC, like many ethno-political organizations, attempts to assist with a myriad list of issues and social concerns particular to the Spanish-speaking community. In line with Millard and Chapa (2004), the HAC history parallels the history of the racialized African-American population in the U.S. by being embedded within the one institution that could be leaned on (even if ethnically segregated by congregation), the church—in this case a Catholic church. The agency attempts to reach out to the recently arrived to assist in various legal issues such as citizenship, worker rights, issues of exploitation, employment, ESL classes, women’s support programs, domestic violence, translation in hospitals and courts, cultural celebrations and fiestas, emergency communication to family in the country of origin, and other miscellaneous needs.

The overall level of hospitality towards im/migrants in this area is mixed. For example, some hotels overtly embrace the diversity of their employees by offering cultural diversity training classes for all employees. Prior to and during this ethnography, I personally took part in Spanish classes for local law enforcement officers at the HAC as a way to learn to better serve the Spanish-speaking community and prevent dangerous situations from further escalation due to language barriers. However, a lack of bilingual services across the mainstream private and public sector is pervasive. Institutional discrimination persists.

Prior to and during this ethnography, I was again personally involved with an initiative to create a bilingual education program in conjunction with Western Michigan University’s Department of Education and Department of Spanish. It never came to fruition due to state-level legal constraints and monetary shortfalls.
Furthermore, an occasional rumbling is heard concerning closing a very successful bilingual primary school in town called Lincoln Academy—about which I and several other members of the HAC protested at the Kalamazoo Public Board of Education Council Meeting. These examples serve as vivid reminders of economic conflict and competition and institutional discrimination masked behind the usual mantra of “budgetary shortfalls.”

On an interpersonal level, social concerns are not just connected to institutional racism and barriers. The interviews are also rife with anecdotes of fraud, exploitation, extortion, discrimination, coercion, human rights violations, employer tax evasion, and blatant racism. Millard and Chapa (2004) found a similar type of discrimination in their project on Latino newcomers arriving in the rural Midwest, where bilingual services, especially in emergency medical services, were particularly lacking. These barriers can and do result in death, when new im/migrants arrive in new, rural destinations where finding a bilingual paramedic is as likely as (in the humorous words of one respondent) “finding a pot of gold that’s been struck by lightening.”

For the Hispanic population in the Kalamazoo area, which includes Yucatec-Mayans, ethnic identity is one of many concerns that continue to be at the forefront of group politics. The HAC casts a broad ethnic net compared to the Mayan Association in San Francisco that specializes in Yucatec-Mayan im/migrant and community concerns. In line with Beserra (2005), who found a shift in identity as a situational construct, one im/migrant from Madrina noted a strategic shift in ethnic identity, poignantly saying,
"I am Maya-Yucatecan, but when I needed legal help I became Hispanic. For that one moment my problems were the problems of many others both like me and different from me. Maybe they aren’t Maya-Yucatecan, but they’re immigrants and they came from México or elsewhere.”

Interviews by Veeck et al. (2004 p. 37) find the following four issues cited by the Spanish-speaking community in the Kalamazoo area to which newly arrived and settled im/migrants belong: “1) Maintenance of a Hispanic identity. 2) Economic issues based on quality of life concerns. 3) Concerns over interpersonal interactions with mainstream culture and stereotyping. 4) A desire to experience more activism and representation.” Thus, ethnic identity maintenance is cited as a fundamental concern for the local Spanish speaking population.

Kalamazoo is located within a broader context of seasonal im/migration in Michigan’s large agricultural sector. According to Millard and Chapa (2004), most of the workers in the agricultural sector in Michigan are Mexican. However, current reports indicate that only a few farms are actually owned by Spanish-speaking Latinos and certainly there are none owned by Yucatec-Mayan speaking Yucatecans. Citing the 2006 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Enumeration Profile Study, Bickel and Roelofs (2006, p.1) state “about 90,000 migrants move through Michigan each year, the sixth highest migrant population among the 50 states.”

Agriculture is an essential part of the regional economy and im/migrants are a critical force in the production of the seasonal crops in a context where reports claim that globalization is increasing competition. Millard and Chapa (2004, p. 144) discuss the Michigan agricultural situation, claiming,

According to Anglo residents, some farms are closing due to increased global competition, rising costs of running a farm and lack of farmworkers. Last year, several apple farms closed, mainly because of competition from China.
Nevertheless, in the summer, southwest Michigan abounds with horizontal job mobility from a diversity of crops such as blueberries, strawberries, apples, grapes, and cherries. Agricultural employment is prone to instability, as it is often temporary and dictated by the natural rhythms of the season. All the same, most Yucatec-Mayans from a rural town like Madrina are familiar with the seasonal fluctuations in farming work, as *hacer milpa*, or working the cornfields in Yucatán, is innermost to the lifestyle-based ethnic identity of a Yucatec-Mayan.

Related to Michigan's regional agriculture, greenhouses serve Yucatec-Mayans as a useful employment strategy against the instability of seasonal harvests. Although this sample does not show a difference in length of stay between Kalamazoo and San Francisco, the Kalamazoo im/migrant is able to find year round employment. The winter greenhouse job is a primary component to lengthening the stay in the region, and, quite possibly, the U.S. This is different from working with traditional, seasonal agriculture. Greenhouse workers are able to stay year after year, build trust and commitment with the employer, and further solidify the potential for permanent settlement in the process. Consequently, a greenhouse job precludes you from needing to follow the harvests as part of the harvest worker circuit to other parts of the country. Since Yucatec-Mayans are now plugged into this sub-context of agriculture, it is likely that the Yucatec-Mayan community will continue to grow through employment networks and chain im/migration.

As mentioned above, during the busy planting season, the men typically work six or seven days per week, for 8 to 12 hours per day with double time wages on Sundays and holidays. At this time, they find little time to enjoy or engage the
broader community when not working. Though living in relative isolation from the broader public, there is a network of Mexican and Spanish-speaking friends from Guanajuato, Oaxaca, Tamaulipas, Guatemala and other parts of Latin America. This networks of friends and coworkers live and work in close proximity and regularly come and go like an extended family throughout the week and especially on the weekends. Part of this friendship is increased cultural resources through parties, *quinceañeras*, tamale vending, birthdays, weddings, or *bodas*, and other religious and secular community events.

All of the men from Madrina live together in a two-story house, except two who live with other im/migrants from Oaxaca and Guanajuato. Contrary to the findings of Millard and Chapa (2004), who found that most newcomers to the rural Midwest im/migrated as familial groups, the men in this sample im/migrated without their spouse and kids. However, there are familial formations consisting of first and second cousins and siblings such as one team of brothers. The house is sub-divided into dormitory-style rooms. With two or three people to a room upstairs and a parlor and living room converted into sleeping quarters, the conditions are crowded. This crowding is a source of both solidarity and conflict. By hanging sheets as temporary dividers at breaks in the walls, the im/migrants are able to compartmentalize the larger spaces into sleeping spaces, which are semi-private, albeit susceptible to large amounts of noise from conversation, stereos, computer games, and televisions.

The central room of the house is the kitchen. Traditional Yucatec-Mayan food and drink are prepared and consumed in social but serial successive fashion. This is a classic hallmark of rural Yucatec-Mayan culture. In the context of Madrina,
food is prepared in large portions and is ready for consumption whenever the person is ready to eat; therefore eating is not a stable, “sit down together” ritual event. This tolerates the often-hectic day when people are coming in and out from working at the ranch with the honeybees or the milpa and farm animals. This is also practical for the people (mostly women) tending to the fruits and herbs grown around the solar or house yard. Consequently, the ritual of sitting down together and eating all at once is the exception, not the rule—and this serial style (eating one after another) is replicated in both San Francisco and Kalamazoo.

The men engage in traditional cooking styles as best as could be achieved with limited ingredients, frequently making Cochinita pibil, Relleno negro, Choco Lomo, pepita, and other various traditional meals in large batches that are consumed when one “has the time.” Hence, the ritual of sitting together all at once is the exception not the rule. For this reason, there is usually a hot comale on the stove ready to soften up corn tortillas for consumption. A conservative estimate suggests the men, who buy corn tortillas by the 100-count case, consume 200-300 tortillas per day, thereby replicating life in Madrina, where a majority of caloric intake is reliant on the sacred corn and corn-based products such as the traditional pan-Mayan breakfast drink atole de elote. By sharing the food purchasing responsibilities and cooking large portions, the busy men saved money and time.

Cleaning responsibilities are also divided and shared, resulting in a dry-erase board on the kitchen wall outlining the cleaning, cooking, or shopping responsibilities of each household member for the month. Since the men work in agriculture, the house is very difficult to keep clean, as nearly 15 are coming and going from the
fields every day. The living room is the other central social room in the house. The men from Madrina and other friends and co-workers gather to watch Mexican League soccer and Spanish-language movies nearly every weekend. The living room is also a space for impromptu sleeping when friends stay over or when beds are otherwise occupied upstairs.

The men live in a tree-lined neighborhood called Edison that is home to a mixture of Spanish speaking, African-American, Asian-American, and Arab-American minorities. There is also a white community interpolated throughout. Though there are definitely newly arrived im/migrants in the Edison neighborhood, it would not be considered an ethnic enclave, as the neighborhood also consists of previously settled families and families of im/migrants from decades if not centuries past. In contrast to the Mission, however, the im/migrants in the Edison neighborhood do not have an adversarial relationship with the African-American community, but rather maintain friendships with the African-American population.

The socioeconomic demographics of the neighborhood are middle to lower class. The neighborhood certainly shares some of the Mission’s social disorganization by being a transitional neighborhood, but not to the degree of the Mission. Social concerns such as property and interpersonal crime (although not organized crime to the extent of the Mission), drugs, and prostitution exist in the Edison neighborhood. However, it is not as urban, segregated, or as particularly dangerous in comparison to the Mission neighborhood in San Francisco.

Because the im/migrants are marginalized and fear discrimination, racism, and violence on a daily basis, they generally stay in or around the house, as it serves as a
protective space of sorts. The house has a backyard, which serves as an extra room in the summertime. On the weekend, friends and co-workers stand around and talk in the yard behind the house listening to music, cooking on the grill, and drinking beer together after a long week’s work. Conversations revolve around work, sports such as soccer or the Yucatecan passion baseball, family, relationships, and love interests and politics.

The more important part of this process is to talk about the latest news from Madrina. Recently, the conversation was centered on the H1N1 influenza and a rumor that this year’s fiesta could be cancelled—a complete tragedy to say the least, as the fiesta is the true highlight of the year and the week that all im/migrants want to go home for if no other week during the year. The possible cancellation raises a dilemma, as quite an amount of money is spent to make it home for the fiesta, and it would be foolish to go to such great lengths to return if the fiesta was then cancelled. It would be a roll of the dice, indeed.

There are several local Mexican grocery, clothing, and music stores and several taquerias within walking or short driving distance. These ethnically marked stores are patronized by African Americans and whites, but largely target and are patronized by the Spanish speaking population. The tiendas offer fresh-cut meats, cheeses, fruits, vegetables, imported chilies and canned foods, imported spices, and cooking utensils. All of these resources are imperative to cultural replication and perpetuation and are likely the place where the men buy cooking utensils such as the comale above. Other services include a remittance service for sending money to family in México, and various ethno-social networking bulletin boards announcing
civic events and community fiestas, bus routes to México and other parts of Latin America, and Spanish-language newspapers.

One complaint heard in both casual conversation and in the interview data is that Kalamazoo, Michigan, as compared to San Francisco, has relatively few opportunities to practice a cultural lifestyle similar to the lifestyle enjoyed in Madrina, México. Although there are a few small grocery stores that cater to the tastes and needs of the Hispanic population, the quality and quantity of Spanish-language services, businesses, and population is low in comparison to the Mission neighborhood in San Francisco and reflects the small percentage of the overall population they represent in Kalamazoo.

Daily Life in the Mission Neighborhood: San Francisco, California

For many of the im/migrants from Madrina and Yucatan Peninsula, the Southwest and West Coast is a primary and traditional destination. There is a large contingent in San Francisco, which is much larger than the group in Michigan. Anecdotal estimates are in the thousands for Yucatecos, with hundreds coming from Madrina. The older receiving destination of San Francisco consists of a neighborhood called La Misión or the Mission.

The Mission is an urban neighborhood located between Twenty Sixth Street, Mission Street, Guerrero Street, and Potrero Streets respectively. In many ways, the Mission neighborhood represents a transitional neighborhood, with many of the hallmarks of social disorganization. The Mission is a landing pad and possibly a social trap for the newly arrived. Inhaling and exhaling populations, the Mission experiences rapid turnover of people, businesses, and ethnicities—all of which
compete for space and place, causing the neighborhood to be disorganized and susceptible to random petty and organized gang crime.

The Mission constitutes a neighborhood that represents and perpetuates a racialized structure. If newly arrived ethnicities had no experience with being viewed through the lens of race and variations in physical characteristics, they soon learn the feeling in the Mission, where the changing array of faces, skin tones, and languages heard in just one city block is head spinningly fast. For example, it would not be surprising to walk into a Yucatecan restaurant owned and operated by Asian-Americans (such as the restaurant ‘Yucatasia’), with a white, Peruvian-American server with Yucatec-Mayans in the kitchen serving white and black clientele.

The San Francisco Bay area constitutes a cosmopolitan ethnic hub of the world like Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. In San Francisco, you can engage Hispanics and Spanish-speaking businesses in a much broader spatial area from the Golden Gate Bridge to the commercial center, to the Mission, to South San Francisco, a short drive away. Consequently, the broader destination of the San Francisco Bay area allows for a continuity of a variety of Spanish-speaking backgrounds. Since it is an international destination, you find upper-class immigrants who are “globalized professionals” taking advantage of the strategic market placement of San Francisco to the Pacific Rim, as well as “low-status, manual workers” such as the men of Madrina (Poulsen, Johnston, and Forrest, 2002).

Since the Mission neighborhood in San Francisco is generally Spanish speaking, engaging public life is much more convenient and comfortable for the men of Madrina. In the interviews, some said, “it was just easier” to live in San Francisco
because you became a Hispanic or Mexican in the eyes of those who could not readily distinguish the differences between the various Hispanic groups and Spanish-speaking indigenous groups such as the Yucatec-Mayans. This allows the im/migrants to “blend in” to the environment, rather than exist in sharp contrast to others, such as in the Kalamazoo context. This also provides a wider field of living space, as road trips to the Spanish-speaking middle class suburban town of South San Francisco provide a break from the monotony of the inner city.

Upon entering the Mission, you encounter a bric-a-brac of ethnic entrepreneurial small businesses. The services you find in the Mission neighborhood are owned and operated by and cater to a litany of new im/migrants from all continents. Though the corner of 16th and Mission is the self-proclaimed “Mayan corner”, or ground-zero of Yucatec-Mayan im/migrants, you need not look far to see Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Guatemalan, El Salvadoran, Peruvian, Honduran, African, Middle-Eastern, Arabic, Nicaraguan, African, African-American, European, and white owned and operated restaurants, grocery stores, fruit markets and numerous other businesses.

More recently, the Mission neighborhood is currently undergoing a re-identification, and is now the place to be seen if you are a “hipster.” Although the gentrification process has produced hip, new, trendy apparel shops and upscale bars and restaurants, interviewees describe dense traffic, noise, pollution, and high rates of property and interpersonal and organized crime, including assaults, robberies, and gang homicides. During the day more than night, you will find young, urban
professionals and an art crowd intermingling with the newly arrived. To be sure, the young, white, urban professionals are newly arrived to the Mission, too!

Interviewees also note animosity between the Spanish-speaking im/migrants and African Americans, Arab Americans and Asian Americans. This was evident to the extent that a palpable fear of leaving the house for anything other than work or shopping was often expressed. Some respondents say the racially segregated area ironically Mexicanizes or Latinizes Yucatec-Mayans while they are in the U.S. However, returning to Yucatán allows the designation of Mayan, Yucatecan, or Yucatec-Mayan to return. As Beserra (2005) found with newly arrived Brazilians in Los Angeles—you have to do Latino in the right context and situation.

In San Francisco, the tertiary sector work of the im/migrants from Madrina is exclusively in the restaurant service industry. This entails several im/migrants from Madrina working in the same kitchen and becoming masters at Indian, Mediterranean, Thai, Italian, French, and Creole cuisine as well as becoming master pastry chefs. This follows Garcia and Barreno (2007), who found that for Yucatecan Tunkaseños in the U.S., the service sector accounted for 56% of all employment, with restaurant work comprising the single largest segment of all service sector employment at 25%. Research on other towns in Yucatán demonstrates a similar concentration of im/migrants in the tertiary sector service industry (Martell, Pineda, and Tapia, 2007). This is also in contrast to Massey et al., (1987), who found positive correlations between rural sending locales and rural receiving locales where agriculture is the main type of work in the U.S. Differently, many of Madrina's im/migrants chose San Francisco and show similarities to the majority of im/migrants
from rural towns in Oaxaca who work in the service and tourist industries in Los Angeles and Santa Monica, California (Cohen, 2004).

According to the im/migrants of Madrina, extortion, discrimination, low pay, incorrect pay, lay-offs, cutting of hours, threats of termination, and long arduous shifts in kitchens prevail. Im/migrants from Madrina report discrimination at the hands of Asian-American and Arab-American bosses who actively take advantage of Mexican and Latino or Latina workers. The bulk of animosity seems to be directed towards Asian-Americans and Arab-Americans in the employment sphere. One interviewee explains this process and alludes to the racializing effect that emerges from the economic competition and conflict,

“There’s a lot of discrimination because the Arabs and Asians take advantage of the undocumented Latinos. They pay low wages and at times, they don’t pay at all if you don’t have an I.D. or if you don’t have papers. At times, you work for weeks and weeks and they don’t pay you. Relations are very bad because we want full time work, but they won’t pay you for that. And so, there’s malice and negative feelings towards them. It makes us become racists, because they treat us bad. They take advantage of all of us.”

Interviewees report that Asians-Americans, Arab-Americans and African-Americans are not competing for the same jobs as the Yucatec-Mayan population. Consequently, animosity towards Asian-Americans and Arab-Americans is connected to employer-employee relations, while animosity towards African-Americans generally pertains to social relations in the shared streets of the Mission. At least one interviewee felt as if there was resentment among the Black community that im/migrants were taking available jobs. Misperceptions abound, as there is a widely held opinion among interviewees that Mexicans have a stronger work ethic than their African-American peers—a perception that is also commonly held by employers in
labor studies literature (Metz 1990, Fairchild and Simpson 2004, and Maldonado 2006.)

This perception maintains that the complaints of native-born European-American and African-American workers are signs of native-born entitlement, which is non-existent in newly arrived populations. Yucatec-Mayans feel as if complaints from nonSpanish-speaking populations, native to the U.S. or otherwise, are unjustified, since employment competition is between Spanish-speaking newcomers. The misperception that the African American community lacks work ethic is in line with the findings of Grimes (1998), as misperceptions, stereotypes, and prejudice are overt and based on extremely limited direct interaction and hearsay. One interviewee said, “Yes Blacks feel hurt, but they only want government support and to sell drugs. They assault people in the streets, they drink, and they don’t work, they’re lazy.” People asking for money on the streets of the Mission were reported as being “lazy” and “unwilling to work” by the men of Madrina, who proudly viewed themselves as hard working, loyal employees.

Employment competition is reported to be between Spanish-speaking peoples born in the U.S. and from all parts of México, Central America, and South America, (though Central America seems to dominate the discussion). A tendency to compete for jobs between Spanish-speaking populations rather than between non-Spanish-speaking populations is a main theme. One interviewee claims that in the Mission, competition is between Central Americans such as El Salvadorans, Hondurans, Guatemalans, and the Yucatec-Mayans interviewed here. Other competitors include chilangos from the Federal District of México City, im/migrants from the Mexican
city of Puebla, as well as people from the Mexican states of Chiapas and Guanajuato. One interviewee relates,

"There are many Spanish-speaking people from Guatemala, Honduras, and various parts of the state of Michoacan. There were also people from Veracruz, Oaxaca, El Salvador, Honduras, and Central America."

The men of Madrina also report that Latino gangs are a common daily threat. One interviewee says, "Living in the Mission is very dangerous. There's alcohol and drugs and at night you're afraid to walk the streets. The Mission is very dangerous."

Respondents mention strategies such as walking in pairs at night, avoiding certain streets on payday day and night, carrying only small amounts of money, and concealing money in socks and shoes when walking. One such gang cited is the Mara Salvatrucha, or MS-13. This group claims members worldwide, but originated in El Salvador. Other than MS-13, the two principal rivals are the Sureños and the Norteños. As a matter of "representin' colors," Norteños wear red, are usually of Latino descent, and are born in the U.S. Conversely, Sureños wear blue, are also usually of Latino descent, and are born in México, Central or South America.

Although violence associated with gangs is reported, the im/migrants focus more on random assaults and people asking for money in the streets when describing the daily annoyances or dangers of life in the Mission. This is due, in part, to a clear understanding of the territorial dividing lines in the Mission. The im/migrants report that any street below 24th Street is generally recognized to be a Sureño area, while Norteños inhabit 24th and above. So, walking down the border street of 24th ‘representin’ either color is equivalent to a challenge on the Norteño, Sureño border or north, south border. In many ways, 24th Street is similar to the DMZ separating the
two Koreas—both sides are fundamentally Latino like the two Koreas, but each is separated by nationalistic differences due to country of birth. Hence, the “24th Street Parallel” is more heavily patrolled by each group, anticipating any breach of the boundary. Therefore, unless a breach of boundaries occurs by someone intent on “startin’ shit,” you can generally go about you business in your part of the Mission without fearing gang attack. This leaves random violence and petty theft as the remaining social concern.

For the recently arrived, temporary work may come into play to make ends meet until something permanent manifests. This includes the day-laborer strip on Cesar Chavez (Army) Street two blocks north of the Sureño and Norteno “24th Parallel.” On this street, you can find “un-gang-colored” new arrivals and recently settled im/migrants trying to find itinerant work as temporary day laborers. Rain or shine, men stand in groups of three to fifteen near buildings that symbolize their stock in trade. Painters can be found in front of a dilapidated paint store, construction workers near a hardware store, and so on. This is the first and last resort for many who do not arrive with social contacts, community networks, and planned jobs. For the men of Madrina, the day laborer situation does not seem to come into play, as they actively reproduce their community networks through the restaurant industry.

When a new im/migrant arrives from Madrina, they tend to arrive with an address, a job or potential job, and a place to stay. This means that some kitchens are “Yucatec-Mayan” kitchens and others need not apply. The same would apply to an “El Salvadoran” kitchen—ethnic social closure refined to an art. Like a sociology department being a “union shop,” employment contexts can be “ethnic shops.” In
these ethnic shops, preferential or non-discriminatory job treatment can come from managers who are Spanish speaking, from México, or from Yucatán, or from current employees who recruit within their network and put their credibility on the line by recruiting friends from their hometown. Typical forms of work consisted of washing dishes, salad prepping, prepping plates, and cooking.

New arrivals without specific employment prospects may become involved in prostitution, interpersonal and property crime, and drug dealing. This underscores the desperation that can exist in and around the Mission. One respondent told of a friend who was injured on the job and could no longer work. He gained a MediCann Medical marijuana card and purchased an ounce of weed each month. This was broken into dimebags and sold as a way to make ends meet. I once passed a Latino on the street who blatantly wore a shirt that read “Soy un coyote,” [“I am a human smuggler”]. All humor aside, this anecdote represents the size of the im/migrant population living in the Mission compared to the Edison neighborhood in Kalamazoo.

One positive side to life in the Mission in contrast to the Edison neighborhood is the sense of camaraderie felt from the large Spanish-speaking, Mexican, and Yucatec-Mayans population. Many men from Madrina report a sense of solidarity and companionship, as the ability to talk with others from nearby towns in Yucatán or Madrina is a daily possibility. Because of this, customs and foods that replicate Yucatec-Mayan culture can be found and enjoyed. One interviewee states,

“One positive is that they make food in the Mission just like my town in Yucatán. Hot, hand-made tortillas on 24 Street—it’s all like Yucatán and makes you feel like you’re in Yucatán.”
Although Yucatec-Mayan immigrants are able to access Yucatec-Mayan foods and restaurants, which is very important, many of the Yucatecan restaurants are only Yucatecan in that the cooks are Yucatecan—the owners are almost always Asian-American or Arab-American. The name of at least one restaurant—“Yucatasta,” says it all. Other restaurants include “Mi Lindo Yucatán” (My Beautiful Yucatán) “El Maya Yucatán,” and “Poc Chuc” which is a traditional Yucatec-Mayan pit-barbequed pork roast. This last restaurant is owned by a family of Yucatecans from Cancún who cut their teeth in the tourist zone—thereby supporting once again the thesis of Lewin Fischer and Guzman (2004) that Cancún is an “immigration school.”

Figure 13
The Restaurant Poc Chuc
Ethno-political organizations abound in the Mission. I counted at least ten, of which the most specific to this project is the Asociacion Mayab (AM). The AM has an accompanying website, asociacionmayab.com, and promotes and supports
Yucatec-Mayan immigrant rights, literacy, community, and culture as well as the similar issues as they relate to the settled Yucatec-Mayan-American community. While the Kalamazoo organization casts a broad ethnic net with an organization such as the “Hispanic-American Council,” the Mission proudly displays a more specific Yucatec-Mayan orientation.

Like the HAC, the AM also parallels the religious history of the racialized African-American population in the U.S. by being embedded within the one institution that could be leaned on, even if ethnically segregated by congregation, the church—in this case a Protestant church (Millard and Chapa, 2004). The AM provides the opportunity to reproduce culture in the Mission for the Yucatec-Mayan speaking population. Asociacion Mayab services consist of translating from Spanish and English to Yucatec-Mayan and teaching classes on Yucatec-Mayan. They also create ethnic festivals support extensive citywide baseball leagues (see figure 16 below), offer legal assistance with human rights issues, and provide other services focused on the Yucatec-Mayan population in the Mission and greater San Francisco Bay area.
Like Kalamazoo, the men in San Francisco likewise lived together in groups where solidarity and the shared Yucatec-Mayan language helped keep morale high and economic support nearly continuous. Since many im/migrants worked in various locations in the city, not just in the Mission, residential patterns are also widely dispersed. Some work groups of men rent apartments in downtown San Francisco near Chinatown or near the Haight-Ashbury district and Golden Gate Park, and Geary Avenue, where a restaurant owned by a family from the neighboring Yucatecan town of Oxkutzcab created opportunity.

Most of the im/migrants expressed a desire to learn more English, both from curiosity and from practicality and horizontal job mobility. However, attempting to learn English proves difficult due to time constraints. Most report that finding the time to learn English is just not possible due to work, while others actively took classes at the City College of San Francisco. For those who have time to improve
their English skills, better paying, tip oriented, public-oriented jobs were a possibility. Another strategy was through self-help. The men of San Francisco frequented websites for learning English vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Tutorial books could also be found in the apartment, as the cultural capital for a broader range of success was clearly understood.

As a point of comparison, it is difficult to describe the Edison neighborhood as an ethnic enclave. It is certainly an arrival neighborhood for newly arrived Arab, Asian, and Latino populations; however, the neighborhood is also home to white populations extending from the lower to middle class. The Mission, which is much more urbanized, and inner city, is home to strong pockets of newly arrived im/migrants from Madrina, Yucatán, México, Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The Mission, however, is an ethnic enclave. As a center of im/migrant entrepreneurship, ethnic resources abound in the form of residential patterns, restaurants, grocery stores, money-sending tiendas, and ethnic fruit and meat markets. Accordingly, all of these indicators of new arrivals and entrepreneurship are rather varied ethnically in the Mission. According to Gu (2009, p. 1),

An ethnic enclave is an area of concentrated immigrant entrepreneurship. In many metropolitan areas, ethnic enclaves such as Chinatown, Little Italy, Little Tokyo, Little India, Irishtown, and Germantown are fairly visible and have become tourist attractions. Ethnic restaurants, gift shops, and grocery stores can be found in these areas. Many immigrants, especially newcomers and laborers, reside in neighborhoods where fellow immigrants have settled. Living in an ethnic enclave helps immigrants adapt to the host society, obtain access to jobs in ethnic industries, and establish social networks in ethnic communities.

Many Yucatec-Mayans (including some from Madrina) have exited the dangerous living conditions of the Mission and are living in non-ethnic, non-
im/migrant neighborhoods. The degree of segregation in the both the Edison and Mission neighborhood is framed within the analysis of Poulsen, Johnston, & Forrest (2002), who list three main components of neighborhood segregation analysis:

1) The degree of residential concentration—the extent to which there are residential areas in which the group predominates; 2) The degree of assimilation—the extent of sharing residential space with the ‘host society’; and 3) the degree of encapsulation — the extent to which the group is isolated residually from both the ‘host society’ and other ethnic groups (p. 231).

The Mission is more segregated than the Edison neighborhood in Kalamazoo, but is more likely to change due to economic gentrification. The Edison neighborhood does not face this social dynamic, although the Kalamazoo Promise, which allows free college education for children of Kalamazoo Public Schools, may threaten working class communities who rely on lower rental costs and property values.

Lastly, small town politics do not stop at the border, but are transnational too. Some of the men of Madrina report that they avoid the Mission altogether. Partially because of the dangers that exist, and partially to avoid others from Madrina towards whom they feel animosity from a history of relational problems back home. In other words, poor relations often follow the men to San Francisco and Kalamazoo, resulting in pockets of people from Madrina living separate lives in order to avoid conflict that originated in Madrina. I now turn more directly to the data.

Data: Comparisons between San Francisco and Kalamazoo

San Francisco and Kalamazoo: Is Im/migration a Positive or Negative Reality Overall?

San Francisco and Kalamazoo appear have a differential affect on the perceptions and attitudes of the im/migrants. This is presumably due to the
differences in quality of life, work, lifestyle, urbanity, race relations and racialization, and daily social concerns. Reese (2001, p. 455) found that im/migrants described trying to balance between the “economic good and moral decay” of life in the U.S. This sentiment is also revealed here, as Madrina’s im/migrants also struggle with the economic positives and cultural negatives of im/migration.

When asked if im/migration is a positive or negative reality in general, there are marked differences between the Kalamazoo and Edison neighborhood cohorts. The San Francisco cohort is nearly perfectly divided on this issue, with 42 percent saying that im/migrating has been “positive overall,” while 38 percent say “negative overall.” Twenty percent said im/migration was “a blend of economic positives and negatives due to personal risk and cultural change.”

As for the Kalamazoo cohort, a much higher 62 percent say “positive overall” and 38 percent say “negative overall.” For those who were in both San Francisco and Kalamazoo, 75 percent say “positive overall,” while none said “negative overall” and 25 percent said it was “a blend of economic positives and negatives due to personal risk and cultural change.” Therefore, it appears that the juxtaposed perception of im/migration as a blend of positives and negatives was consistent between the two cohorts. However, the sample from Kalamazoo reports a stronger positive perception of im/migration in general.

Although the subset of the sample was numerically the smallest, the im/migrants who lived in both Kalamazoo and San Francisco had the highest overall positive perception percentage (75%). I hypothesize that movement from one locale to another has a positive impact on the perception of im/migration. Experiencing a
new location and therefore gaining perspective from the old reference point might “rounding out” the perception of what life in the U.S. could be, therefore increasing a positive perception. That is to say, transferring from one location to another may foster a sense of freedom, success, and social mobility in the move, resulting in a higher satisfaction in the overall experience. It also means the im/migrant has two distinct reference points in which to judge the potential quality of life in the U.S. I raise this question: Who would not have a more positive perspective about a nation from seeing more of it? Diversity in contact and experience equals diversity in viewpoints. This is certainly an issue for future research.

San Francisco and Kalamazoo: The Question of Permanent Residence in the U.S.

Because of the overall perceptions outlined above, the San Francisco cohort is more likely to say “no” to permanent residence in the U.S. at 71%, or 17 of the 24 respondents. The Kalamazoo cohort was substantially less likely to say “no” to permanent residence, at 46%, or 6 out of 13 saying “no.” Fifty percent or four of eight of those who lived in both San Francisco and Kalamazoo would stay permanently. Consequently, Kalamazoo’s relatively peaceful, suburban living may have a positive effect on im/migrant perception of life in the U.S. Work in Kalamazoo is more agricultural, and life is more rural and peaceful like Madrina, thereby potentially having a “positive staying” effect, too.

The urban problems associated with the Mission neighborhood in San Francisco apparently have an effect on the im/migrant decision to remain permanently, though there is no difference in actual years stayed between both locations at 3.3 years on average. This is powerful, as San Francisco has a larger
Yucatec-Mayan population, more resources for Yucatec-Mayan speakers, and a broader context in which to associate. Consequently, the social concerns and the potential negatives of the larger, urban, and more racialized city appear to undermine the enhanced ability to practice Yucatec-Mayan and Yucatec-Mayan-American culture, which is less possible in Kalamazoo. To be sure, anecdotal reports suggest that at least some of the men in Madrina who lived in the Mission now live in residential neighborhoods in San Francisco, away from the inner city violence of the Mission.

**San Francisco and Kalamazoo: A Comparison of Marital Status**

When combining marital status at time of departure with destination in the U.S., an interesting yet inconclusive difference emerges. For the San Francisco sample, twelve of twenty-four respondents, or 50%, were married before departing for San Francisco. In contrast, nine of thirteen or 69% of the Kalamazoo sample were married before departing for Kalamazoo. When adding in the three interviewees who were married and who went to both Kalamazoo and San Francisco, the numbers change slightly to 56% married in the San Francisco interview and 75% married in the Kalamazoo interview.

Based on marital status and the difference in the quality of life in the two destinations, I would suggest that networks of communication back and forth between Madrina and both locales inform potential em/migrants of the living conditions of each destination. Due to this possibility, it may be that men with spouses and children actively choose the more rural, tranquil location. Conversely, the single cohorts in both San Francisco and Kalamazoo may actively select the more energetic,
fast-paced urban life that San Francisco offers, as this would be more appealing to the young, single im/migrant “looking for action.” This is also a potential avenue for future research.

**San Francisco, Kalamazoo, and Ethnic Identity: A Contextual Effect?**

Concerning self-selection of ethnic identity, there is no appreciable difference between the San Francisco and Kalamazoo cohorts so I will omit the table. Fifty-four percent of both cohorts reported an ethnic identity of Yucatec-Mayan. Thirty-one percent of the Kalamazoo sample claimed only “Mayan,” whereas twenty-one percent of the San Francisco reported “Mayan” as well. To continue, twenty-five percent of the San Francisco sample used “Mexican” or Hispanic” in self-ethnic identification, whereas only fifteen percent of the Kalamazoo sample claimed this same category. Consequently, if there is a racializing effect from staying in the more segregated, racialized ethnic enclave of the Mission, the effect is only slight on self-selection.

However, the San Francisco cohort discusses the cholo as a threat to Yucatec-Mayan ethnic identity twice as often (taking into account the difference in cohort size) in interview. This may demonstrate that San Francisco is a “more racially charged” context in which to live, but which does not necessarily alter permanent ethnic identity away from being Yucatec-Mayan. Thus, in line with Beserra (2005), “being Yucatec-Mayan,” and “not being Yucatec-Mayan” is still contingent on the situational and contextual constraints experienced in a racialized, but varyingly racialized, U.S. structure (Omi and Winant, 1994). Due to the relatively small sample size, further research would be useful here in order to develop all of the possible dimensions related to this question. To be sure, the Yucatec-Mayans of Madrina
seem to hold fast to their ethnic identity as defined in Yucatán, rather than as ethno-politically applied “ethno-racial” groups in the context of the U.S. or transnational identities of im/migration.

San Francisco and Kalamazoo: Age Differences?

There is a slight age difference between San Francisco and Kalamazoo. The average age of the San Francisco cohort is 30.3 years, whereas the Kalamazoo cohort was 33.4 years at the time of interview. Interestingly, the cohort of eight respondents who lived in both San Francisco and Kalamazoo were younger, with an average age of twenty-six. Consequently, there does not seem to be any appreciable difference in age between the two groups.

San Francisco and Kalamazoo: Concerns over the Cholo

The San Francisco cohort was twice as likely to mention the cholos as the Kalamazoo sample. This variation likely reflects the differences in racialized living conditions between the urban and comparatively dangerous San Francisco and the comparatively tranquil and suburban Kalamazoo. That is to say, the San Francisco cohort lives a more intensely marginalized and racially segregated existence. Reese (2001) and García and Barreno (2007) found similar results in studying rural, Yucatecan value systems as cultural points of contention, often viewed as “under attack” from the urban living conditions in the U.S. One family in Reese’s (2001) study mentioned moving to a rural farming community in California because drug use and gang membership was prevalent in the urban Los Angeles neighborhood in which they previously resided. The perception of small town ethics and cultural morality as
“under attack” in Madrina echoes this issue as well, but in a comparative manner between both Madrina and the U.S. and also between Kalamazoo and San Francisco.

Ambiguity and a juxtaposed, mixed bag of im/migration perceptions concerning ethnic change in Madrina are found between both the San Francisco and Kalamazoo samples. This likely reflects the relative newness of em/migration in Madrina. Future generations will likely realize the true impact of the process on Madrina. This finding has been found in other Yucatecan towns, as Lyman, Cen Montuy, and Sandoval (2007) found ambiguity and ambivalence in Tunkás. However, in this sample, not only is there ambiguity and ambivalence, but there is also a marked difference between the San Francisco and Kalamazoo cohorts with respect to the positive experiences of im/migration, permanent residence, and concern over the cholo.

San Francisco and Kalamazoo: The Commonalities

Aside from the differences in context between San Francisco and Kalamazoo, there are similarities in experiences for the men of Madrina in both locales. In both destinations, the men live communally in work-groups, renting out large houses that are then subdivided into semi-private dormitory spaces. This allows for camaraderie, solidarity, support and assistance with work and leisure, as well as a concentrated space in which to practice Yucatec-Mayan cultural lifeways. More importantly and as outlined in the interviews, the im/migrants have the linguistic freedom to maintain and even advance their Yucatec-Mayan language skills and cultural practices.

A secondary aspect to the communal living quarters is a de facto form of social control. Close living conditions allow household members to support each
other as well as mentor and develop newer and younger arrivals who may not have
the cultural capital to survive in the new social climate. This means straying from the
path is more difficult, as is neglecting responsibilities to the group, work, and lines of
communications to and from family and friends in a small town. Since Madrina is a
small town where rumors spread relatively quickly, maintaining appearances of
upstanding behavior is that much more important in a tight, private space such as a
work group filled house. Having said this, it is apparent from conversations that
people actively assist each other in compartmentalizing potentially damaging
information leaking back to family and friends in Madrina. News about failures,
indiscretions, and vice-oriented behavior become part of an information game that is
reliant on allegiances and tight-lipped friends in both San Francisco and Kalamazoo.

A sense of pride is also exhibited by the im/migrants, for they have done the
impossible. They successfully made the journey to the U.S., found friends and family
waiting on the other end, and are successful in supporting their families in the
process. They build on this pride by learning the “lay of the land”, the streets, the bus
lines, trolleys, and the underground transportation system, restaurants to hit,
restaurants to avoid, a good price for a six-pack of beer, how to get to a 49er’s or
Giants game, what to order in Chinatown, and all of the neighborhoods. All of this
information is learned with pride and is the hallmark of proud citizens of any large
U.S. city.

Although there are ethno-political differences in community organizations
between San Francisco and Kalamazoo, there is undoubtedly a shared experience as a
secondary Spanish-speaking minority. As mentioned, the net is cast broadly in
Kalamazoo, with the Hispanic American Council being the place where Yucatec-
Mayans go to “become Mexicans.” In San Francisco, there is a pan-Spanish-speaking
presence too, as well as more ethno-specific organizations such as La Raza.
Nevertheless, in the end, the Asociacion Mayab is the place where Yucatec-Mayans
go to “be Yucatec-Mayans.”

In sum, there is no evidence here that living in one locale alters ethnic identity
in any appreciable way, but the returned racialized cholo in Madrina is the U.S.-
constructed outsider from a more racially charged and racially segregated
environment. “Being Mexican” or “being Hispanic” when it is needed situationally
occurs as a pragmatic approach to negotiating political and economic forces that seek
to define their political constituency in the most inclusive terms possible.
CHAPTER XI: CONCLUSION: A NEW ETHNIC MINORITY IN MADRINA

Town Concerns over Im/migration: A Postmodern Context

The overarching theme in the data is postmodern contradiction, ambivalence, and a pastiche of juxtaposition of both positive and negative sentiment. Nearly all of the respondents deny being changed by im/migration in any appreciable way, which is in contrast to thoughts on how other people in town have changed—again, “I am the same, but others have changed.” This is not a case of being unaware of the ways in which they are the agents of change, but that Yucatec-Mayans have historically been open to the incorporation of seemingly useful things (i.e. houses, cars, telephones, computers, etc.), from outside the region while still maintaining a sense of integrity—that is “buying in” not “selling out.” “Incorporation not assimilation” is the Yucatec-Mayan mindset.

The juxtaposition is between positive economic changes and negative cultural changes. There is no cognitive dissonance with viewing a valuable commodity such as the internet or a cell phone, which allows transnational communication with loved ones, as a characteristic of the “new Yucatec-Maya” while conversely attempting to block other cultural influences and change. There is certainly a social defense against the incorporation of the disrespectful, urban cholo attitude, which is seen as a negative cultural marker of the U.S. and an erosion of rural, Yucatec-Mayan lifeways and ethics. Thus, useful technologies like the internet or cellular phones are more likely to be incorporated into “being Yucatec-Mayan.” Just as Carey (1984), Reed (2001), Hostetler (2004), Burke (2004), Cornelius, Fitzgerald, and Lewin Fischer
(2007), and Adler (2008) show, the attempt at “Mexicanizing” Yucatec-Mayans by the Mexican government was a failure, and according to this sample, so too is transnational im/migration. Again, thirty-six of 45, or 80 percent of respondents, self-defined themselves as either “Mayan” or “Yucatec-Mayan.”

The experiences of the im/migrant in the U.S. are by no means marked only by positive outcomes. As the anecdote of the Oaxacan im/migrant family’s failure to take care of their tequios attests, im/migrants can be fined, arrested, deported, and return peso-less, ashamed of their failures, and ostracized and excommunicated from their community. At least a few im/migrants maintained that they felt a strong sense of animosity towards the U.S. This is due to less-than-friendly treatment by bosses, coworkers, property owners, police, neighbors, and a racializing social structure that greets people already leaving from a culturally racist homeland. To be sure, lack of competent (if there are any at all) translators in hospitals, schools, employment agencies, and organizations both private and public contribute to an alienation and fear of public assistance or assistance from any official agency, regardless of the im/migrant’s legal status—it can also be the difference between life and death.

Geographic estrangement from their community in Madrina coupled with the marginalization and segregation in the U.S. can manifest in the form of drug and alcohol problems, gang membership, crime and imprisonment, legal and employment-related problems, and in some cases deportation. There is also potential for familial abandonment. Squandering family remittances on sex, drugs, alcohol, and other vice and frivolity along with the emotional disconnection from family in Madrina can result in complete emotional and physical abandonment.
Family was by far the number one reason for im/migrants to return. This was partially to enjoy the fruits of labor in the way of new dwellings or material possessions, partially out of longing and heartbreak from being apart from loved ones, and partially from the fear that a sancho, or home-wrecker, was plotting the demise and corruption of the family by luring infidelity. Regardless, all of these realities can and do build up momentum and prove too much for the im/migrant to withstand—resulting in the return to Madrina.

The impact on the family is quite obviously a blend of positive in the economic sense and negative in the emotional sense. It is profoundly telling that the family is simultaneously the reason for leaving and returning. The stress on the family can be evidenced by simply talking to many im/migrants about fears and concerns over family wellbeing while they are away. Fear of sancho, family members dying while being out of contact, the hardship on others in the family or performing work in the milpa or around the house, depression, and a host of other drawbacks emerge in conversation.

Because of these concerns, communication and technology is embraced within the social context of Madrina. Calling cards, cell phones, email, and instant messenger all leach into the sentimental pattern of the family. I recall many nights in the town palacio sitting with family members of im/migrants, waiting for the phone to ring. A commonly known strategy in the town consists of a family member calling collect and the im/migrant declining the call, only to hang-up and call back to the palacio with an inexpensive calling card, track phone, or cell phone. In the neighboring town of Oskutscab, a massive television monitor was assembled in the
town square during the fiesta so that families could receive video messages from
loved ones in the U.S. who could not make it home for the fiesta.

Without doubt, the absence of a particular family member requires the family
to alter the pattern of division of labor in and around the house and community.
Daily tasks such as tending to animals, procuring resources for meals, preparing
meals, construction, and maintenance of car and house are certainly rearranged.
Because of this, one family in particular would rotate im/migration between two male
children. Once his younger brother was old enough to go, he returned and his brother
left. At the time of my stay in Madrina, the older brother was waiting to hear if the
younger brother would be coming home in the fall. If so, the older brother was to
return to the U.S. for another working stint. This is the reason for much concern for
mothers, fathers, and wives of the im/migrants, but it was generally reified as
“necessary,” “inevitable,” and, most importantly, a symbol of love and commitment
to the family and community from the im/migrant.

Contemporary demographics suggest that between 1998-2006, around 10
percent of the available population of Madrina em/migrated to elsewhere. This
includes Cancún and northern México. Though chain im/migration is clearly
indicated, I never heard anyone mention hometown associations or collectivos for
Madrina in the U.S. Hometown associations are organizations of im/migrant who
pool their money to finance infrastructural projects back home. They do not exist in
Madrina at this point. This is significant, as hometown association have
demonstrated tremendous political strength from beyond the sovereign borders of
México on the town of origin (Smith, 2005). The im/migrants and citizens of Madrina deny that any such thing exists.

Concerning patterns of consumption, the complexity of the town ranges from subtle to radical and amusing. *Tamales colados, poc chuc, cochinita pibil, relleno negro, salbutes, and panuchos* are served alongside pizza, hot dogs, hamburgers, and sandwiches that are obviously from “elsewhere.” Technology has been integral to linking the im/migrant to his or her family, but it has also been integral to the consumption of ideas and goods from outside the immediate economic spaces of Madrina. Children and adults both want to participate in and incorporate the outside world within and beyond Mexican borders through blogging, tweeting, emailing, and web surfing. One cultural entrepreneur in town has created an internet blog that heralds the Yucatec-Mayan culture with pride—and in the Yucatec-Mayan language. Technology imported from decidedly non-Yucatec-Mayan locales by im/migrants mirror the approach of the militant Zapatistas in the nearby state of Chiapas, who also embrace the incorporation of both the sacred and the spiritual to the profane, modern, postmodern, and technological.

This has brought forth changes in cultural tastes. The youth especially are learning to have an ear for rave, emo’, ska, punk, reggaeton, rock, and rap. This, however, is still within a generationally layered context where elders are far from accepting of the new music and accompanying urban, gangster attitude. At times, the encroachment can border on the absurd and incredible—as happened in the instance of the birthday party of a government official. The event took place on a busy corner in front of the mayor’s house with all of the “who’s who” in attendance. With
traditional *huipiles*, four-pocket *guayaberas*, and cowboy hats, the party was a major event. However, between sets of the live band, a DJ who apparently did not speak English played an Eminem song with the most explicit, vulgar-if-not-perverse lyrics imaginable. As I looked on in awe, the elders danced and swayed to the music, not realizing the barrage of profanity being released into the cooling night air. This went ahead full steam until a younger woman who was obviously bi-lingual leaped to her feet and ran to the music booth. The music was stopped and the band was quickly hastened to the bandstand for the next set.

The symbols that returning im/migrants are willing to display to demonstrate the success of their trek is also evident. In one very big *casa de los Estados Unidos*, I noticed a U.S. flag, at least 3 by 5 feet in height and width, proudly displayed on the wall of a living room—and directly in front of the window where passersby would notice. It is quite possible that this is a symbol of a mixed-status family, with citizenship meaning U.S. and Mexican citizens in one family. In another instance, a returned im/migrant proudly tacked the U.S. flag to the back window of his truck while simultaneously having a large decal that said *sangre de indio* or “indigenous blood” on the front windshield. Clearly, these indicate mixed messages, juxtapositions, blended worldviews, consumption changes, and shifts in lifestyle, beliefs, citizenship, and ethnic identity. As a note, on my last trip to Madrina I noticed that the individual described above no longer had the U.S. flag in the back of his truck. I asked him why that was, to which he responded, “People were giving me shit about flying the U.S. flag in México, so I took it down so I wouldn’t have any more problems.”
There are, however, active contestations of cultural changes in Madrina, especially when it is displayed outwardly in the town. Though much new consumerism and technology has changed the overall economics of the town, language choice is still important and is viewed as a matter of tact and courtesy. Newly returned im/migrants who have acquired new language patterns, such as English, want to demonstrate their new skill. However, this is not always well received by others in town. For two im/migrants to speak English while in the presence of others who do not or cannot speak English is an infraction, a slight—and it will be mentioned as such on the spot. One im/migrant who knew English but chose not to speak it said to me in private and in English,

“It is ok to speak English, but not too much. We are Maya-Yucateco and Yucatec-Maya is our language. Spanish is different because we all use that as well. When you use English, you are excluding some people in the group, and excluding yourself as well.”

Therefore, to use the technology for financial gain or for increased communication possibilities with friends or family adrift in the U.S. is fine, but the internet blog and the conversation during a game of dominoes, or fichas, should still be in Yucatec-Mayan or in Spanish as a matter of courtesy towards the elders or non-im/migrants. The key to the Yucatec-Mayan ethnic identity is language. Since the majority of respondents elected “Mayan” and “Yucatecan” as their ethnic identity, it is clear that the regional Yucatec-Mayan dialect is the master status.

Today, Yucatec-Maya are using language to their political advantage. The use of Spanish or even English as a shared language among and between intellectuals and political activists is increasing as a conduit for broader Yucatec-Mayan ethno-political organizations. New projects to teach Yucatec-Maya are in progress through
IndeMaya in Mérida and the Association Mayab in San Francisco. However, the projects consist of more than just speaking, but more importantly, reading, and writing in Yucatec-Maya as a way to better develop total literacy of the population. The new tolerance if not promotion of Yucatec-Mayan in primary secondary schools is also a sign of the times. The political fight and cultural resistance will be in Yucatec-Mayan as transnational associations in the U.S. and Yucatán emerge as formidable transnational actors. I hope that as Smith (2005) found in New York, these transnational ethno-political organizations will become more salient during local political elections in México, Yucatán, and Madrina as well.

The Fiesta: A Seven-Day Microcosm of Ethnic Change

The annual fiesta has become a profound reflection of the changes. Some of the changes are inter-generational, some within the citizenry, and some reflect what em/migration and return has brought to the town in the way of cultural remittances. The citizenry of Madrina report that the recent push to em/migrate began around 1996. This is two years after NAFTA liberalized the economic and political relations between the U.S., Canada, and México and one year after the “December Mistake” of then Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, which resulted in the Mexican Peso devaluation of 1994-5. The citizens report that it was shortly after these two events that the economic remittances began en masse, and the culture of the fiesta started to change as well. Lyman, Cen Montuy, and Sandoval (2007, p. 178) quote a Tunkaseño who quite bluntly stated, “some immigrants return cholos, and tell those who have never been to California to dress like them. Many people copy them even though they’ve never been to California.” Madrina experiences this returning
migrant, as well as a second generation born in the U.S. who return passport in hand. Focusing on a transnational circuit between New York and a Mixteca village in Oaxaca, Pries (1998, p 121) states,

During the important fiestas like the fiesta of the town patron saint, Christmas, New Years, and Easter, numerous migrants return to their home communities, nearly all of which have been successful in obtaining permanent legal work and having many years of experience working in the U.S. [Translation].

The fiesta is the annual showcase of local Yucatec-Mayan culture, religious traditions, and community identity and ethnic identity. The fiesta consists of bullfights, or corridas, the traditional Yucatecan folkloric dance called the jarana, and traditional Yucatec-Mayan foods such as salbutes, panuchos, and xi’ix. The fiesta is a time of eating, drinking, dancing, camaraderie, solidarity, and renewal of culture and ethnic identity. During the fiesta, the daily grind is put aside to focus on community solidarity, shared culture and identity, and loyalty to family, neighbors, town, and region.

Prior to the fiesta, people in the town perform various duties connected to the preparation and celebration of the fiesta. About one week prior to its start, people begin the task of assembling the arena where the bullfight takes place. This consists of cutting, cleaning, aligning, and tying together thousands of tree branches made into wooden poles. Each of the poles will be laced together to make the structure secure. The structure itself is marvelous and can be two or three stories high.

Other tasks consist of anything from donating bulls for the bullfight, or promesas, performing in the bullfight as a bullfighter, sewing huipiles for the young girls and women for the gremios, being a bullfight cowboy, being a food and refreshment vendor, running the beer tent, and cooking the town barbeque with the
first bull killed in the bullfight. Other tasks include tearing down the arena after the bullfight, cooking U.S. cuisine such as pizza, hotdogs, and hamburgers to satisfy the new tastes, and booking and accommodating the bands that will perform that week.

The fiesta is also a showcase of immigration and successful immigrants and immigrant families. Many immigrants now reside permanently in the U.S., have children in the U.S., or are second-generation, Yucatec-Mayan-Americans citizens. A few days before the fiesta, they descend on the town for a week of festivities, visiting parents, grandparents, extended family, and friends. Depending on the biography of the individual, returning to Madrina for the fiesta can be a time to become acquainted with the culture for the first time, thus helping form an ethnic identity and allegiance to both Madrina along with their hometown in the U.S. This can also consist of meeting grandparents and cousins for the first time. Returning for the fiesta is also an opportunity to reacquaint themselves with the town culture if the individual emigrated from Madrina and is not U.S. born. As this new sub-set of transnational, moneyed and empowered town citizens descend upon the town, the town attempts to acknowledge and incorporate this new type of citizen into the social fabric. Although this new type of citizen is largely welcomed, the urban, racialized, cholo represents a kind of ethnic minority who no longer represents the normative behavioral ethics and ethnic identity of Yucatec-Mayan. The new type of citizen has roots in both the local Yucatec-Mayan and global urban U.S. culture.

Two days before the fiesta, the gremios commence. Gremios represent work guilds such as tortilla makers, farmers or any other trade. Young girls and women dressed in traditional huipiles parade through town and arrive at the Catholic Church
along with men playing accompanying music, which is the religious centerpiece of
the fiesta and the oldest Catholic Church on the peninsula (see figures 17 and 18
below).

Figure 17
Madrina’s Catholic Church

Figure 18
End of Gremio Procession at the Church
The first two days of the fiesta are a time for the renewal of traditional Yucatec-Mayan culture. Day one and two feature the traditional folkloric dance of the jarana. The jarana is performed by skilled and graceful dancers who wear both the traditional female huipiles and the male guayabera. The huipile is a white, near ankle length dress with colorfully embroidered floral patterns near the neck and at the bottom hem of the dress. Often the women will wear flowers in their hair and accompany the dress with matching white shoes and red tassels carried in both hands as adornment.

The males wear the guayabera four-pocketed white shirt with matching white slacks and white shoes along with a red handkerchief hanging out of the pocket that essentially matches the tassels of the females. This outfit is finally accompanied by a matching white panama-styled hat and white, slightly heeled dancing shoes. The music is poly-rhythmic, mostly European in style, and performed by a live band consisting of brass, drums, strings, and vocals (see figure 19 below). Today ambassadors from other towns are recruited to come to the fiesta and perform. This is partially to fill-in the dance and partially because the skill is losing out to modern forms of musical tastes. In other words, it is largely symbolic and ritually performed only a few times per year.
Once the *jarana* is performed on the first two days, the fiesta takes on a decidedly more modern feel. This change in the fiesta not only represents an expansion from the regional ethnic identity of the *jarana* to the Mexican and Hispanic sounds of *tejano, cumbia, bachata, and tropicale*, but also now includes the modern and urban rave, dance, punk, trance, reggaeton, and hip-hop sounds. Therefore, the town incorporates cultural changes into the complexion of the town fiesta without eliminating the more traditional cultural forms of attire, representation, and symbol.

The popularity of *tejano, tropicale, cumbia, and bachata* predate the new em/migration, but local citizenry report that the shift to rave, hip-hop and emo-punk music only dates back to around the year 2000. Locals report that the change in musical styles reflects the ever-growing youth citizenry who arrive for the fiesta to visit family living in Madrina. Along with this, the children born in Madrina who are also influenced by the cultural remittances of urban youth culture in the U.S. take part as a way to be “cool” and know U.S. culture. The urban music controls the night as
rave, hip-hop, and electronica interpolates with traditional forms of music from
midnight until four in the morning. Participants in these dances consist of mainly the
youth and their chaperones. In many ways, one can perceive age differences in the
participants depending upon the style of music. During the jarana, all ages
participate, but with an emphasis on the elders and professional dancers from
elsewhere.

At this point, I would like to relate a very profound occurrence at a dance at
the fiesta. At a rock music dance, a song was performed that had a decidedly
immigration-conscious theme. At various points during the song, a telephone would
ring over the loud speaker. The lead singer on stage would stop singing and answer
the telephone—"bueno," or "hello." It was at this point that a hidden musician on the
other side of the dancing area opposite the stage would respond with a trumpet,
playing a traditional Mexican melody in a call and response fashion. The crowd
cheered, as "México was calling." As stated, waiting for the phone to ring in Madrina
and in the U.S. is a daily part of life for families that are split apart to make ends
meet. The performance presented, in no uncertain terms, the consciousness, the
heartache, distance, alienation, and sadness felt by all involved in the process of
immigration and for one moment, the entire town, not just immigrants and their
families, felt as a community the shared sadness that immigration was creating in
their lives.

The Cholo/a at the Fiesta

To be fair, a direct discussion on the cholo (or chola) is needed since the cholo
is obviously on the minds of the respondents. This new urban youth culture of the
fiesta also contains the new ethnic minority—the returned cholo. The cholo is a person with an attitude and demeanor that is distinct, and which represents the dangerous, urban lifestyle that marks the existence of many of Madrina’s im/migrants in the U.S.—especially from the Mission in San Francisco. The cholo may wear the baseball hat in reverse, tilted to one side ever so slightly, and walks with a swagger. The cholo also wears baggy clothing with the pants hanging low and the underwear showing. The cholo walks and carries the body in a different way, presenting a toughness that can only be construed as “prepared” and “fight-ready.”

In one conversation I had in Madrina, a young man aspiring to emulate the cholo style repeatedly begged me to teach him how to say, “Who the fuck you think you’re talking to?!?” in English as preparation for any altercation where respect might be demanded and proven through action. This speaks to the work of Anderson (1990) who outlined the appropriate way to carry the body as a presentation of self in an African-American neighborhood where demonstrating respect is central to survival (see figure 20 below).
Though the cholo is “out of context” in Madrina, Yucatec-Mayans and Yucatec-Mayan-Americans acculturated to the urban, racialized U.S. still present themselves in the gangster manner and are noticeably different in their manner of \textit{pasear}, or promenading through the town square during the fiesta. I recall being taken by surprise the first time a person barked out in nearly accent-free English “Whasup homess?” I turned around and was face-to-face with a person who could pass as a U.S. born Mexican-American from any major city, not a person from a small, rural Yucatec-Mayan pueblo. We introduced ourselves to each other and began to talk. He outlined his arrival in the U.S. eight years ago, his work, and life in the U.S. He spoke to me as someone who was seen as and who felt like an outsider in Madrina. He explained that he had been in the U.S. so long that he could never really return to Madrina—it was just “way too chill” for his tastes. He was in Madrina visiting family and would be gone in a few days—the body returned but the mind did not.
Another conversation brought forth another poignant issue experienced by the cholo. During a bullfight, one cholo said to me, “I used to have a horse when I was young, but it’s been 15 years and I don’t really know how to be a cowboy anymore. I’m not really from here anymore—I'm not a campesino anymore. However, the real problem is that the three strikes law makes me uneasy about returning to the U.S.—I have two strikes. I can be free but an outsider here, or risk my freedom and go back to what I am and what I know now.” This paraphrased statement demonstrates the issue at least some cholos face in Madrina.

The perception is that the cholo is unethical, lazy, pretentious, and a bad influence on the youth of Madrina. There is added resentment if the cholo has the paperwork to go back and forth between the U.S. and México, or if they are a U.S.-born Yucatec-Mayan-American. They arrive flaunting their cash, their power, and their decidedly non-Yucatec-Mayan life. Citizens and im/migrants alike report an upswing in drug and alcohol abuse by the youth as well as an increase in gang membership, violence, and gang ideation and emulation.

Regardless of their citizenship status, the cholo is transnational in the truest sense of the word and is able to spend money as they wish at the fiesta due to the beneficial exchange rate between U.S. Dollars and Mexican Pesos. This is in stark contrast to people in the town who do not have im/migrant family members. Non im/migrant families use the public space of the town square or zócalo during the year but then are more absent during the fiesta, which demands a fair amount of money to take part in actively and daily. In many ways, im/migration has turned the fiesta into a moneyed affair. If your family does not have an im/migrant and lacks remittances,
then you cannot “pay to play.” With the majority of the money circulating through Madrina coming from im/migration remittances, it has become a “who’s who” of im/migration, mixed-status transnational characters, and transnational cholos.

Even though the cholos may still self-identify as Yucatec-Mayans, other im/migrants and citizens of Madrina see the cholo as a representation of what can “go wrong” with im/migration. The cholo represents the foreign, the dangerous, and the social ills found in the U.S. The cholo confronts the citizens of Madrina as an unwelcome addition to the im/migration process and creates an unwanted “cultural remittance” juxtaposed with the wanted economic remittance. The cholo represents the unwanted stranger returning to inhabit and sully the newly built family house during the fiesta.

A Postmodern View of Ethnic Change

Ethnic identity is defined as “a perceived affiliation, association, or commitment to a familial-based ethnic origin that is reflective of an identifiably shared culture.” It is clear that the im/migrants of Madrina still identify as Yucatec-Mayan, even after experiencing the potentially culturally erosive effects of outward em/migration and resulting cultural remittances. The maintenance of ethnic identity and the incorporation of new cultural capitals are likely not distinct to Madrina, but likely represent a process shared by other towns in Yucatán. Lyman, Cen Montuy, and Sandoval (2007, p. 176) found a very similar dynamic in Tunkás, Yucatán stating, “the act of crossing the border makes them different, yet they do not lose their status as “Tunkaseños.”
The ambiguity and ambivalence over cultural and ethnic change in the interviews is likely due to the novelty of the process. As globalization continues, and as long as cultural remittances return with the people who have emigrated, more change in ethnic identity and cultural lifeways should be expected. This change will likely be furthered through the same mechanism seen here—intergenerational change. The cholos, the mixed-status families, the new money-oriented youth, and the adaptive structural components of the fiesta reflect if not encourage this process and will perpetuate a dynamic, reciprocal ethnic change.

As Marx would claim, if you change the economy, you change the culture. Changing from a subsistence agricultural economy to a wage labor economy based on emigration to Mérida, Cancún, and the U.S. will continue to create parallel cultures that are incorporated through the generations. Ultimately, this may erode the traditional, Yucatec-Mayan culture to something indistinguishable from the global culture of today—time will tell.

Echoing back to Batalla’s (1987) three indigenous orientations of the México profundo, that of a non-Western orientation towards environment and production, indigenous linguistic orientation, and orientation towards communal, local lands, the citizens of Madrina complain that the youth of today, and likely youth in generations to come, are not interested in hacer milpa. Just as second and third-generation children of settled im/migrants in the U.S. are distinct from their parents and grandparents, so goes the distinction of the second and third-generation youth im/migrants and the children of those im/migrants when they return. Schmook and Radel (2008) found that already in Yucatán, im/migration earnings are substituting...
for agricultural earnings and that im/migrant households use significantly less milpa in their community. Already, the citizens complain that the youth are interested in consuming rather than "being." Already, the citizens complain of increases in new languages such as English.

Madrina is distinct from other villages in the state of Yucatán and the Yucatán peninsula simply due to the idiosyncrasies and particularities of the citizenry. However, Madrina certainly shares a common experience that is comparable to other towns in Yucatán State and the Yucatán Peninsula. Indigenous groups that came into contact with the Yucatec-Mayans such as the Olmecs and Mixtecs, the Spanish and other European colonists, Africans, Afro-Caribbean, Lebanese, Chinese, tourists of Cancún, maquiladoras of NAFTA, and academics all have had a hand in this process.

Yucatán is one idiosyncratic context of study amongst many cultural contexts in a globalized world, but the commonalities with other locales are clear. Of Oaxaca, Klaver (1998, p. 150) states, “since the mid 1970’s international labor migration to the U.S. has gradually taken on significant proportions and has incorporated the indigenous communities in the global economy with large consequences, both culturally and economically.” A similar trend is expected to unfold in Madrina in the years to come. As the cultural changes emerge after the intergenerational dust of im/migration settles, a clearer picture will emerge. This cultural palimpsest, however, will constantly change as economy and culture tango in a reciprocal process of negotiation, contestation, and emergent states of beingness and consciousness.

At least one fact remains for Madrina and other rural, indigenous towns in Yucatán and México: there can be disdain by a segment of the town population for
the returned, urban, and disrespectful cholo. The person with an air of attitude, trading respectful behavior in favor of dressing and acting “cool,” aggressive, or “gangster-like” is an “othered” ethnic minority and a point of contention with those who hold dearly to traditions. García and Barreno (2007) interviewed a person from the Yucatecan town of Tunkás who stated, “if I take my child to California, he’ll start school there and he’ll learn another way of living, another way of carrying himself—changes in clothing, earrings, tattoos, hairstyle.” Nash (1958), Farriss (1987), Everton (1991), Jimenez-Castillo (1992), and Heusinkveld (2008) also found similar incorporation of “money-centered, urban lifestyle” returning to the sending town. Cross culturally, Stodolska and Yin (2003) found changes in the leisure activities of Polish and Korean adolescent im/migrants who wanted to spend money on clothes, cars, and technology in the U.S. Consequently, the process is transnational, processual, and reflects an interface between sending and receiving towns and regions and the cultural changes that emerge from changes in economic orientation.

The quality of life in the sending and receiving location does have an effect on this change. Madrina is as distinct a sending location as San Francisco and Michigan are receiving locations. Time spent in the U.S., ethnic homogeneity of the receiving neighborhood and/or household, chances to, requirements of, and motivation to learn English, type of labor, and marital status all contribute to the likelihood that the im/migrant will experience a change in ethnic identity and transport that change to Yucatán. Each destination has peculiar stressors such as access to housing, rental costs, work opportunity, access to healthcare, segregation into socially disorganized
neighborhoods, police harassment, and the emotional toll of being away from home and with no clear timetable for return.

Nevertheless, the common denominator of experience for the em/migrant worker from Madrina is lucrative employment, which promotes the ability to “keep up with the Sosas” and support the safety, security, and comfort of their family through housing and other household-related resources. To return to your family who now live in a new, more secure, hurricane-proof house in a fraction of the time is the goal. As you walk through the town, all the citizens can quickly point out the difference between houses that were hecho en México and houses that were hecho en los Estados Unidos. The ability to build a house in a few years, rather than a decade or lifetime, entices, resulting in im/migration becoming a question of “when?” rather than “if?” This is especially true when the village is already experiencing a rapid growth in outward em/migration, as the families that do not have im/migrant members must live as outsiders-within during the now expensive fiesta—not able to consume frivolously to the degree of lavishness as im/migrant families, mixed-status returnees, and returned cholos.

To be sure, this is a peculiar continuation of the outsider-within history of Yucatec-Mayan communities in Yucatán as they battled the outside economic and social forces—this is yet another chapter. Again from a Marxist angle, with economic change come new patterns of culture and identifiable cultural knowledge. New patterns of language and behavior, an understanding of or familiarity with new technologies, culinary tastes, new languages, and a new ethnic lifestyle all contribute to an im/migrant that has become accustomed to the “ways of the north.” In
comparison, Cohen (2004) found that in Oaxaca, there was very little evidence
through participant observation or interview data that traditional cultural practices
were in decline. Rather, new practices were being incorporated into the established
traditions, such as languages, technologies, and urban behaviors like the “cholo,”
each vying for a place in the present and future. Madrina seems to reflect a similar
trajectory. A longer, longitudinal gaze at this social process is needed to see how
things will unfold in the future.

What is found is a new sort of citizen who returns and reflects the cultural and
ethical postmodern borderlands between Yucatec-Mayan, and Yucatec-Mayan-
American—one that returns and is neither here nor there, culturally. The findings
suggest an emergent culture, through language, spiritual beliefs, histories, practices,
and worldviews colliding with, incorporating, and being confronted by the cultures of
the U.S. through the cultural reciprocity of im/migration.

Because of this, ambivalence and a mixed attitude of optimism and pessimism
towards the cultural changes emerges in the interviews. Pérez Taylor (1996) and
Pries (1998) approach this possibility by way of dialectics, claiming that Yucatec-
Mayans live in a world existing between the demarcation of public, private, rural, and
urban life. Pace of life, conceptions of time, taught knowledge of the selva or forest,
approaches to healing, hunting, clothing, and culinary choice all define the traditional
in a way that is oriented towards the rural environment (Batalla 1987). Ambiguity,
juxtaposition, and a perceptual blend of optimism and pessimism concerning
im/migration are uncovered and likely reflect the novelty of em/migration in Madrina.
This finding has been found in other towns, as Lyman, Cen Montuy, and Sandoval
(2007) found a blend of uncertainty about the real consequences of immigration in Tunkás, Yucatán.

This complexity is reflected in the dizzying, postmodern juxtapositions of sights and sounds found in Madrina every day. The sound of the cholo’s music and hip-hop cell phones ring tones and the thunder of the *vaqueras* and the *jarana* intermingle in the night. The sights of the *huipiles* and the tattooed, tilt-hatted cholo and pot-smoking “jipi-tecas” impress the eyes as they converse. The smells of *poc chuc* and pizza both entice on the street corner. The tastes of *box k'ool*, *xi'ix*, cheeseburgers, and hot dogs stamp down hunger. The feel of a *hamaca* hooked to the walls of the family’s new cement house, comfort the body, and mind. All represent postmodern referent layers of contested divisions, cultural disjunctures and confrontations, and solidarities in a town of family-oriented, individual actors, and, a town as an actor, playing the part of family members seeking to incorporate the outside economic world to the inside cultural hearts and minds of Yucatec-Mayanidad.

The newness of outward emigration from Madrina disallows a final statement of fact concerning cultural change. The juxtaposition of both positives and negatives demonstrates that the citizenry are fully cognizant of the both the benefits and risks. That is to say, they are conscious of the battle between economic good and moral decay, between rural autonomy and the encroachment of the increasingly self-indulgent and individualistic urban areas of Mexico and of the U.S. As time goes by, the im/migrant and their families will realize the full economic, social, and cultural implications of immigration. Second, third and fourth generation Yucatec-Mayans
are born, leave, and return to a town that is increasingly developed through economic remittances and changed by the cultural remittances of lifeways, language, technology, and the cholo. To close, Martínez (2002, p. 603-4) states, “Mexico City intellectuals are only half joking when they say that postmodernism actually originated here five hundred years ago with the Conquest and its clash of radically different sensibilities.” Lo and behold, the clash continues.

Review: Five Findings

One: A Household Model of Im/migration

Yucatec-Mayan im/migrants use a ch’i’ibal-centered, or family-centered, value-rational decision making process in which to frame leaving and returning to their hometown. This “family-centered im/migration model” follows Massey et al (1994), Massey and Durand (2002), Cohen’s (2004) “household” or “new economics of migration,” the findings of Cornelius, Fitzgerald, and Lewin Fischer (2007), Martell, Pineda and Tapia (2007) who studied the reasons for im/migrating from the Yucatecan town of Tunkás, and Piacenti (2009). However, I employ Weber’s “wert-rational” social action to underpin this analysis theoretically. Massey et al. (1994, p. 709) state, “[the new economics of migration] is consistent with a growing body of circumstantial evidence...that suggests that poor households use international migration in a deliberate way to diversify their labor portfolios.” Leaving is rational economically, but is typically a reflection of an emotional, absolute value system connected to family maintenance and family creation in Yucatán. Weber (1947, p. 114) states, “Wert-rational [involves] a conscious belief in the absolute value of some
ethical, aesthetic, religious, or other form of behavior, entirely for its own sake and independently of any prospects of external success.”

Two: Still Yucatec-Mayan

The ethnic identity of Yucatec-Mayans is still resistant to “Mexicanizing,” as well as “transnationalizing,” as 80% of the sample claimed “Yucatec-Mayan” as their ethnic identity. This clearly reflects a history of confrontation between clearly demarcated cultural and racial sides. Yucatecans clearly recognize a regionalized ethnic identity. This is due to slavery and the resultant Caste War, geographic isolation from infrastructures linking Yucatán to the political metropole of northern México, cultural oppression and cultural racism, and cultural warfare between indigenous Maya, the arriving Spanish, and the Mexican national government, henequen production, and now, the emergence of Cancún and maquiladora production.

Three: Buying in, Not Selling Out

Since many im/migrants return from racialized, marginalized urban environments, they inadvertently return with “urban cultural remittances” which are transforming and urbanizing the town. Although all social groups in the world assimilate into new forms of living as a component of intercultural contact, the difference is that Yucatec-Mayans perceive the change as centrifugal towards being Yucatec-Mayan, rather than centripetal towards outside lifeways. This effectively reduces the perception of “selling outward,” and increases the perception of “buying inward” of novel, urban, lifeways that can “be Yucatec-Mayan.” As an example, in reference to a Yucatec-Mayan language website that promotes Yucatec-Mayan
culture, one citizen of Madrina stated, “my internet blog, my twitter updates, my cell phone, and my I-Pod—they are all part of being Mayan.”

Four: Parallel Universes of Lifeways

To follow the logic of finding three, I suggest that the perception of incorporation and of a centrifugal “buying in” operates to prevent (at least temporarily) the deterioration of local, traditional lifeways and rituals in the town. Due to the relative newness of the town to the im/migration process, attitudes towards im/migration are an intermingling of hopes based on economic advancements and new consumptive abilities, and concerns over changes in the normative ethics of behavior of the town. Ambiguity and juxtaposition mark im/migrant perceptions on change in family and town.

Intergenerational and long-term changes are yet to be fully realized and are still emergent, requiring a longitudinal approach to examine the continuing effects for years to come. Although inter-generational behavioral changes such as the racialized cholo are a point of controversy, mixed-status families, use of technology, use of language, and change in economic orientation are likely to continue and emerge, however, practices such as the fiesta, ceremonial beliefs and culinary practices, orientation towards ch’i’ibal (family) and kaaj (land) appear to remain intact.

Five: The Cholos of San Francisco and Their Social Effects

The San Francisco cohort appears to reflect a more intensely racialized, segregated environment and marginalized experience. The focus of this social concern is the cholo, who returns with a way of being Yucatec-Mayan that confronts the traditional, rural ethic and ethnicity. The San Francisco cohort was twice as likely
to make mention of the chulos as a threat to ethnic identity during the course of the conversation than the Kalamazoo sample. The San Francisco cohort is also divided on whether im/migration is positive or negative in general, with 42 percent saying that im/migrating has been “positive overall” for themselves, their family, and Madrina, while 38 percent say, “negative overall.” The Kalamazoo cohort appears to have a distinctly different perspective on im/migration than their San Francisco counterparts. A much higher 62 percent say that im/migration is “positive overall” and 38 percent say “negative overall.” Twenty percent also said it was “a blend of economic positives and negatives due to personal risk and cultural change.” For those who were in both San Francisco and Kalamazoo, 75 percent say “positive overall,” while none said “negative overall.” Perceiving im/migration as a blend of economic positives and cultural negatives was consistent between the two cohorts. However, the sample from Kalamazoo reports a stronger positive perception of the impact of im/migration in general.

Because of this overall perception above, the San Francisco cohort is more likely to say “no” to permanent residence in the U.S. at seventy-one percent, or 17 of the 24 respondents not wanting to remain in the U.S. permanently. The Kalamazoo cohort was substantially less likely to say “no” to permanent residence, at forty-six percent or 6 out of 13 saying “no” to permanent residence. Fifty percent or four of eight of those who lived in both San Francisco and Kalamazoo would stay permanently, so Kalamazoo may have an effect on im/migrant perception of the U.S. in general. Life and work in Kalamazoo is more suburban and tranquil like Madrina than is San Francisco, thereby Kalamazoo may have a “positive staying” effect.
Future Research

Based on this research, I recommend future research into the household model of im/migration. I also recommend more investigation into the gender differential concerning em/migrants from Madrina, as this appears to be an anomaly. New destinations in the U.S. should be the focus of future research and should explore the differences between larger, urban locales and smaller, rural, and non-traditional destinations in the U.S., as the outcomes for the im/migrant, im/migrant family, im/migrant community, as well as the receiving community are important.

Im/migration Policy Recommendations

Before leaving I should like to return to the original motivation for this project—that of realizing social justice. Social justice is arbitrary, partial, and reflective of the ebb and flow of social attitudes of time and place. I recently wrote a grant proposal to the Society for Social Problems (SSSP) for the Asociacion Mayab in light of the 2009 annual conference being in San Francisco. The grant competition was concerned with San Francisco organizations and human rights. The grant lost to a medical marijuana initiative. Although I am pro-medical marijuana as well as for the full legalization of marijuana, I am hard-pressed to imagine that medical marijuana is a more serious human rights issue than indigenous rights and human rights of im/migrants. As the song goes—que será, será, whatever will be, will be.

However, in order to promote viable and humanistic im/migration policy, data must be made available that reflects all facets of the process. Without doubt, the data presented here demonstrate the need for policy that focuses on the families who feel
the impact directly. As Massey, Durand, and Malone (2002) clearly explain, the increased border patrol from the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) increased the number of years im/migrants lived in the U.S. In this case, the policy provisions of IRCA had the unintended consequence, through increased border patrol, of making it more difficult to return.

Since a family model of immigration is employed here, policy should likewise focus on lessening the potential negative impact, such as time of separation on im/migrant families. If the married cohort here averages 3 years in the U.S., while their single counterparts stay 4.2 years, then marriage and family may compel return. If this is the case, then im/migration policy should not make it more difficult to return, but rather promote a process that will seek to support the institution of family through family-centered models of policy. Therefore, im/migration policy should reflect the underlying motivations behind im/migrating to the U.S., as well as the underlying motivations for returning to the sending community.

If the institution of family and family values are assumed universally important social values, and, if im/migration policy is to reflect this assumption of family and family values as important, then policy must be driven by data that clearly shows that the promotion of familial stability should underpin that policy. It is clear that im/migrants take great risks to physical, psychological, and emotional self by im/migrating, but it is equally clear that this action is not self-interested, nor is it necessarily wanted, but that this action is noble action, action of character, action of love, caring, concern and mutual support, and self-sacrifice. Without doubt, these are
attitudes and behaviors that policy makers must acknowledge and support through appropriate im/migration policy.

If we begin from a point of understanding that treaties and policies will never eliminate im/migration, the next step is to lessen the potentially negative impact of im/migration on the families (in all of their potential forms) who experience the phenomenon directly. Certainly, the growth and prosperity of both the U.S. and México, as they are conjoined under the auspices of treaties such as NAFTA, are contingent upon the success of citizens and institutions. Failing to support policy that promotes the growth and prosperity of family is to undermine the very hinge that connects the individual to the broader society. This work provides the material support and design in order to form policy that acknowledges vital belief systems that are shared across all cultures, regions, and geo-political entities.
END NOTES

1. Though the exact origin of this quote is disputed, it has been attributed to Goethe, G.H. Mead, and C.H. Cooley among others.

2. The respondent is errant on this final point, as cochinita pibil is a dish that is widely prepared throughout México, but is, in fact, a staple and favorite on the Yucatán peninsula.
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Glossary of Spanish and Yucatec-Mayan Terms and Phrases

Almorzar-(sp) To eat lunch
Alux-(m) A mischievous Mayan spirit that protects cornfields and occasionally bothers people
Atole de elote-(sp) Corn-based breakfast drink of pan-Mayan origin, which is flavored with cinnamon, sugar and sometimes chocolate
Bachata-(sp) Music from the Dominican republic, popular throughout Latin America
Barrio-(sp) Neighborhood
¿Ba’ax ka’ wa’ak?-(m) How are you? or What do you say?
¿Biix ani keech?-(m) How are you?
Boda-(sp) Wedding
Bo’ox k’ool-(m) Black chili sauce
Brazo de Reina-(sp) Literally “arm of the queen.” Dish consisting of chaay, boiled egg and tomato puree
Caanche-(m) A raised kitchen garden used to protect herbs and fruits from pigs and turkeys
Camioneta-(sp) Truck
Camote-(sp) A type of sweet potato
Campesino-(sp) Farmer
Cargos-(sp) Involuntary work duties informally required of the citizens of certain rural Mexican towns
Casa de los Estados Unidos-(sp) House in México financed by working in the U.S.
Catrines-(sp) A refined person or social dandy. A person with airs
Cenotes-(sp) Underground caves and cavern systems in Yucatán peninsula, which were used for water sources and cultural practices and believed to be entrances to the underworld. They are now used to draw tourists due to their surreal beauty
Charlar-(sp) To chat. Today, chatear is synonymous, but meaning chat through the computer
Chac-(m) Principal Mayan rain god
Chachac-(m) Mayan ceremony to honor the principal rain God Chac
Chaay-(m) Spinach-like leaf used in traditional Yucatec-Mayan cooking, such as the dish “arm of the queen”
Ch’i’ibal-(m) Family, lineage, ancestry
Chichen Itzá-(m) Major Mayan settlement in late classical period in the Eastern part of Yucatán state. It was abandoned in the 9th century and resettled in the 10th century. Also eventually invaded and controlled by Toltecs from the region near México City. Now it is one of the Seven Wonders of the World and is a tourist draw for a view of the optical illusion that occurs on the side of the pyramid “El Castillo” or “The Castle,” which occurs on the vernal and autumnal equinoxes
Chilango-(sp) A person from México City
Chinampa-(sp) Floating agricultural plot built in a shallow lakebed by alternating layers of vegetation and mud
Choco lomo-(m, sp) Beef tenderloin stew. Pork can also be used. Choco lomo is a blend of both languages; “choco” is Yucatec-Mayan for “hot,” while “lomo” is Spanish for “tenderloin”
Cholo-(sp) A gang member or someone with a gangster attitude and dress.
Cochinita pibil-(m) Suckling pig slow roasted in an underground pit
Collectivos-(sp) Financial cooperatives created by groups of immigrants in the U.S. used to pool money to finance projects in México
Colectivo/Combi-(sp) Shared vans used to transport people along daily trade routes in both rural and urban areas
Comale-(sp) Iron plate used to cook tortillas and warm other foods
Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas- (sp) National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples
Corazón-(sp) Heart
Corrida-(sp) Bullfight
Cruz Parlante-(sp) The talking cross of the Cruzob, who battled the Europeans in the Yucatecan Caste War of 1847-1901
Cruzob-(sp/m) The followers of the talking cross
Cumbia-(sp) A Colombian musical style
Curandera-(sp) A traditional doctor or medical expert
Dzul-(m) A white person or foreigner
Ejido-(sp) Publicly-owned, usufruct lands used for farming, animal husbandry, and growing corn
El Diario de Yucatán-(m) Newspaper in the Yucatán state capital city of Mérida
El Grito de Dolores-(sp) The war cry of the War of Mexican Independence, from the Catholic priest Miguel Hidalgo from the town of Dolores, México
Elote-(sp) Ear of corn.
Escuela de inmigracion-(sp) “Immigration school”
Evangelico-(sp) An evangelical person
Faenas-(sp) Involuntary work duties informally required of the citizens of certain rural Mexican towns
Familia-(sp) Family
Fichas-(sp) Dominoes
Finca-(sp) Farm, ranch, or farming estate
Frontera-(sp) Literally “frontier”, but also the common name for the shared border area between the U.S. and México
Fruterias-(sp) Fruit stand or fruit market
Gremio-(sp) A work guild. During the fiesta, a gremio can consist of a procession of young girls and also women, construction workers and so on.
Gringo/a-(sp) Slang for white person from the U.S. Although this term can be used pejoratively in certain contexts, the use in Yucatán lacks prejudice, or malice and is generally used as a statement of fact
Guayabera-(sp) A men’s white linen shirt with four symmetric pockets found in and around the Caribbean
Hacer milpa-(sp) To work a cornfield
Hamaca-(sp) Hammock or bed that is hung from walls and made of woven fibers
Hanal Pixan-(m) Maya phrase for Day of the Dead
Hecho en México y hecho en los Estados Unidos-(sp) Expression to compare houses that come from working in México, and houses that come from working in the U.S.
Hetzmek-(m) A rite whereby young children are placed on the hip of the mother and walked around the kitchen table—three times for females to represent the three rocks of the cooking fire and four times for males to represent the four points of a milpa
Huipile- (sp) Traditional dress for females. In Yucatán, it is white, ankle length, and usually with flowered embroidery around the bottom and the neck
Ik’-(sp) Mayan wind god
Jarana-(sp) Traditional dance of the Yucatán region. Performed at fiestas, ceremonies, and events
Joven-(sp) Youth
Kaaj-(m) Community
La Misión-(sp) The Mission neighborhood of San Francisco
La Villita-(sp) The Little Village neighborhood of Chicago
La Voz de los Mayas-(sp) The Voice of the Mayas
Las maneras del norte (sp) The ways of the north
Latifundio-(sp) Large-scale land holdings by opulent elite prior to the land reform of the Mexican revolution
Maquiladora-(sp) Contemporary transnational factory in the context of México or Latin America
Mestizaje-(sp) The term for the balkanized groups with mixed ancestry of indigenous and European origin in México. Also the ideology of Mexican nationalism
Mestizo/a-(sp) The person of any of the groups in mestizaje above
Nah-(m) House
Naj de paja-(sp) Traditional Yucatec-Mayan house
Naranja Agria-(sp) Sour orange used for cooking
“No sé, me supongo mi familia”-(sp) “I don’t know, I suppose my family”
Obrajes-(sp) Colonial mill or small shop
Pachuco-(sp) Paz’s (1950) Term for a Mexican-American punk, torn between two cultures. Paz describes this cultural character as being represented by a subcultural style of clothing and exaggerated masculinity
Paja-(sp) Tree fronds used for traditional Yucatec-Mayan house construction
Panuchos-(sp) Traditional Yucatec dish consisting of turkey, cilantro, habanero and pickled red onion on top of a black bean stuffed, deep-fried corn tortillas
Participaciones-(sp) Political favors for a constituency
Pasear-(sp) Promenade through town typically occurring between lunch and dinner and near 8 pm.
Pepita-(sp) Pumpkin seed paste used in traditional Yucatec-Mayan cooking
Poc chuc-(m) Roasted pork
Pocho-(sp) Slang for a Mexican who sells out and acts like an American. Also synonymous with “asshole”
Porfiriato- (sp) The administration of Porfirio Díaz, which lasted from 27 years from 1884–1911
Pozole-(sp) Pork soup with lime and tortillas
Promesa-(sp) Literally “promise.” A gift of a cow to be used in the fiesta bullfight
Pueblo-(sp) A town or village
Pueblos fantasmas-(sp) Towns or villages nearly evacuated from extraordinarily high
immigration levels
Que será, será. (sp)- What will be, will be
Quinceañera-(sp) A 15th birthday party for a young girl. An important coming of age
party which can be just as, if not more expensive than a wedding
Relleno negro/pavo relleno-(sp) “Stuffed black or stuffed turkey.” Traditional
Yucatec-Mayan dish consisting of turkey stuffed with boiled egg and marinade made
of a burnt, black, chili árbol sauce
Restaurante-(sp) Restaurant
Salas-(sp) Living room
Salbutes avispas-(sp) Yucatec-Mayan traditional dish consisting of wasp larvae and
condiments on top of deep fried corn tortillas
Sangre de indio-(sp) Expression meaning “indigenous blood”
Sancho/a-(sp) Slang term for the person who your spouse or lover cheats with while
you are away
Secundaria-(sp) Though not exactly equivalent to the U.S. system, this is the
secondary level of school from 7th grade to the end of high school
Selva-(sp) Forest
Sistema de Radiodifusoras Culturales Indigenistas-(sp) Cultural Indigenist
Broadcasting System
Solar-(sp) Backyard living area between the buildings that make up a household’s
living space
T’ho-(m) The ancient Yucatec-Mayan city that is now Mérida, the capital city of
Yucatán State
Tamales colados-(sp) A Yucatec-Mayan tamale that is quite larger than other
varieties. This variety is wrapped in banana leaves, has the consistency of a gelatin or
firm pudding. It is usually stuffed with a small amount of shredded chicken and
covered with a mildly spicy tomato puree
Taquerias-(sp) A “taco diner” or restaurant, usually serving daily specials, tamales
and other various cuisine
Tejano-(sp) Music originating from south Texas, popular in Latin America
Tequios-(sp) Involuntary work duties informally required of the citizens of certain
rural Mexican towns
Tienda-(sp) Store
Tiendas de los articulos Mexicanos-(sp) A store that sells Mexican cultural items such
as clothing, candles, music, calling cards, etc.
Tiendas de las comidas Mexicanas- (sp) A store that sells Mexican food items needed
for special dishes and at times, a lunch counter. This store typically has a range of
Mexican and Latin spices and resources not available at mainstream stores
Tranquilo-(sp) To be calm, relaxed, and at ease. To be “chilled out”
Troca-(sp) Slang alternative word for camioneta, borrowed from English for truck.
Literally a Spanish sounding version of “truck”
Tropicale-(sp) Afro-Caribbean music popular throughout Latin America
¿Tu’ux ka’ bin?-(m) Used for “How are you?” “Where are you going?” or “Where
are you heading?”
Vaquería-(sp) “Cowboy’s dance.” Nightly dance after the bullfights during the week-long fiesta
Way k’óol -(m) Mayan cornfield spirit
¿Xi’ik kaah que tu?-(m/sp) A blend of Yucatec-Mayan and Spanish: “Are you leaving town/im/migrating?”
Xi’ix-(m) Fresh slaughtered, deep-fried cow fat from the bull killed in the fiesta bullfight. Served with fresh squeezed lime juice
Xtabentun-(m) Traditional Yucatec-Mayan liquor made of fermented honey and anise flavorings
X’ta baay-(m) Evil spirit in the shape of a beautiful female who lures drunken men into a trap and kills them. X’ta baay serves as a form of social control and prevents men from straying into infidelity
Zocalo-(sp) Town square
Appendix B: Data Summary

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HSp (1)

300
Appendix C: Interviews

English Concepts

Individual Identity [English=I, Me, Myself]
Familial Identity [English=We, Us, They, My Family]

English Interview: México

1. How old are you?
2. If you were not born in Madrina, where are you originally from?
3. What is your type of vocation or work?
4. What do you feel are the most vital characteristics of your self-identity? In other words, if you were to describe what makes you you, what would it entail? Why?
5. What language/s do you speak?
6. Which language is most important to your self-identity?
7. At what age did you first seriously consider immigrating to the U.S.?
9. How many times have you immigrated to the U.S.?
10. How many times have you immigrated to southwest Michigan?
11. Did you immigrate by yourself or as part of a group?
12. What was the longest amount of time you lived in the U.S.?
13. While in the U.S., what kind of employment did you engage in?
14. Did you attempt to learn English before or during your stay in the U.S.?
   a. If yes, do you consider yourself fluent in English? How did you learn? Why did you learn?
15. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
16. Has anyone else in your family immigrated to the U.S.?
   a. If yes, who and for how long?
17. Are you married?
   a. If you are married, has your spouse and/or children ever immigrated with you?
18. What is the primary reason you returned to Madrina?
19. What ethnicity or culture do you identify with primarily?
20. How important is that ethnicity to your self-identity?
22. In what ways has immigration changed your family’s life? Explain.
23. In what ways has immigration changed life in Madrina? Explain.
24. In your opinion, why are others from Madrina immigrating to the U.S.?
25. Overall, do you feel immigration is a positive or negative reality for you, your family, and Madrina? Explain.
26. Do you feel that immigration has changed your ethnic identity?
   a. If yes, in what ways? b. If no, why not?
27. Do you feel that immigration has changed your family's ethnic identity?
   a. If yes, in what ways?
   b. If no, why not?
28. Do you feel that immigration has changed Madrina's collective ethnic identity?
   a. If yes, in what ways?
   b. If no, why not?
29. Do you have any family who live in the U.S. permanently or who are U.S. citizens?
   a. If yes, how has that affected you and your sense of ethnic identity?
30. Do you have any plans to immigrate to the U.S. again?
31. If you had the opportunity, would you consider living in the U.S. permanently? Why or why not?
   a. If yes, under what conditions?

Temas en Español

Identidad Individual [Spanish=Yo, mí, mi]
Identidad de la Familia [Spanish=Nosotros/as, Ellos/as, La Familia]
Identidad Étnica [Spanish=Raza, Identidad Étnica, Creencia, Hábito, Herencia, Mores, Tradiciones, Rituales, Prácticas, Convenciones, Origen de la Familia, Manera de la Vida]

Entrevista en Español: México

1. ¿Cuántos años tiene Ud?
2. ¿Si Ud. no nació en Madrina, dónde nació Ud?
3. ¿Qué es su trabajo?
4. ¿Qué piensa son las características más esenciales de su propia identidad?
   ¿En otras palabras, si puede describir quien es Ud, que sería? ¿Por qué?
5. ¿Qué idiomas habla Ud?
6. ¿Cuál idioma es más importante para su propia identidad?
7. ¿Cuántos años tiene Ud cuando consideró, seriamente, inmigrar a los Estados Unidos?
8. ¿Por qué inmigró a los Estados Unidos? ¿Parientes? ¿Trabajo?
   ¿Oportunidades? ¿Educación? ¿Otra razón?
9. ¿Cuántas veces ha inmigrado a los Estados Unidos?
10. ¿Cuántas veces ha inmigrado a la suroeste de Michigan?
11. ¿Ud inmigró solo o en un grupo?
12. ¿Qué es el periodo de tiempo más largo que Ud vivió en los Estados Unidos?
13. ¿Cuando Ud estaba en los Estados Unidos, qué tipo de trabajo tenía?
14. ¿Ud. trataba aprender Inglés antes de o durante de su tiempo en los Estados Unidos?
a. Si dice que “sí”, ¿puede hablar Inglés con fluidez? ¿Cómo? ¿Por qué?
15. ¿Cuántos hermanos/as tiene Ud?
16. ¿Hay otras personas de su familia que inmigraron a los Estados Unidos?
a. Si dice que “sí”, ¿quién? y ¿por cuántos días, meses, o años?
17. ¿Ud es casado?
a. Si dice que “sí”, ¿su esposa/o o sus niños han inmigrado con Ud. también? Explique, por favor.
18. ¿Qué es la razón primaria que Ud regresó a Madrina?
19. ¿Con qué étnicidad Ud se identifica? a. ¿Ud identifica con otras étnicos?
20. ¿Qué importancia esa étnica tiene o esas étnicidades tienen para su propia identidad?
21. ¿En qué maneras la inmigración ha cambiado su vida? Explique por favor.
22. ¿En qué maneras la inmigración ha cambiado la vida de su familia?
Explique por favor.
23. ¿En qué maneras la inmigración ha cambiado la vida en Madrina? Explique por favor.
24. ¿Para Ud, por qué hay otras personas que están inmigrando de Madrina a los Estados Unidos?
25. ¿En general, piensa que inmigración es una realidad positiva o negativa para Ud, su familia, y Madrina? Explique por favor.
26. ¿Ud piensa que inmigración ha cambiado su identidad étnica?
a. Si dice que “sí”, ¿en que maneras?
b. Si no, ¿por qué no?
27. ¿Ud piensa que inmigración ha cambiado la identidad étnica de su familia?
a. Si dice que “sí”, ¿en que maneras?
b. Si no, ¿por qué no?
28. ¿Ud piensa que inmigración ha cambiado identidad étnica de Madrina?
a. Si dice que “sí”, ¿en que maneras?
b. Si no, ¿por qué no?
29. ¿Tiene parientes quienes viven en los Estados Unidos permanentemente, o quienes son ciudadanos de los Estados Unidos?
a. Si dice que “sí”, ¿cómo ha afectado a Ud y su identidad étnica?
30. ¿Tiene ganas de regresar a los Estados Unidos otra vez?
31. ¿Si tiene la oportunidad, Ud consideraría vivir en los Estados Unidos permanentemente? ¿Por qué o por qué no?
a. Si dice que “sí”, ¿en qué tipo de circunstancias o qué tipo de situación?

U.S. Interview: English

1. How old are you?
2. If you were not born in Madrina, where are you originally from?
3. What is your type of vocation or work in Madrina?
4. What do you feel are the most vital characteristics of your self-identity? In other words, if you were to describe what makes you you, what would it entail? Why?
5. What language/s do you speak?
6. Which language is most important to your self-identity?
7. At what age did you first seriously consider immigrating to the U.S.?
9. How many times have you immigrated to the U.S.?
10. How many times have you immigrated to southwest Michigan or the San Francisco area?
11. Did you immigrate by yourself or as part of a group?
12. What was the longest amount of time you have lived in the U.S.?
13. What is your type of work here in the U.S.?
14. Did you attempt to learn English before or during your stay in the U.S.?
   a. If yes, do you consider yourself fluent in English?
15. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
16. Has anyone else in your family immigrated to the U.S.?
   a. If yes, what relation and for how long?
17. Are you married?
   a. If you are married, has your spouse and/or children ever immigrated with you?
18. Are you thinking of returning to Madrina? If so, why?
19. What ethnicity do you identify with primarily?
20. How important is that ethnicity to your self-identity?
22. In what ways has immigration changed your family’s life? Explain.
23. In what ways has immigration changed life in Madrina? Explain.
24. In your opinion, why are others from Madrina immigrating to the U.S.?
25. Overall, do you feel immigration is a positive or negative reality for you, your family, and Madrina? Explain.
26. Do you feel that immigration has changed your ethnic identity?
   a. If yes, in what ways?
   b. If no, why not?
27. Do you feel that immigration has changed your family’s ethnic identity?
   a. If yes, in what ways?
   b. If no, why not?
28. Do you feel that immigration has changed Madrina’s collective ethnic identity?
   a. If yes, in what ways?
   b. If no, why not?
29. Do you have any family who live in the U.S. permanently or who are U.S. citizens?
   a. If yes, how has that affected you and your sense of ethnic identity?
30. If you returned to Madrina, would you immigrate to the U.S. again? Why or why not?
31. If you had the opportunity, would you consider living in the U.S. permanently? Why or why not?
   a. If yes, under what conditions?
U.S Entrevista: Español

1. ¿Cuántos años tiene Ud?
2. ¿Si Ud. no nació en Madrina, dónde nació Ud?
3. ¿Qué es su trabajo allá, en Madrina?
4. ¿Qué piensa son las características más esenciales de su propia identidad?
   ¿En otras palabras, si puede describir quién es Ud, que sería? ¿Por qué?
5. ¿Qué idiomas habla Ud?
6. ¿Cuál idioma es más importante para su propia identidad?
7. ¿Cuántos años tiene Ud cuando consideró, seriamente, inmigrar a los Estados Unidos?
9. ¿Cuántas veces ha inmigrado a los Estados Unidos?
10. ¿Cuántas veces ha inmigrado a la suroeste de Michigan o el área de San Francisco?
11. ¿Ud inmigró solo o en un grupo?
12. ¿Qué es el periodo de tiempo más largo que Ud vivió en los Estados Unidos?
13. ¿Qué otros tipos de trabajo tiene en los Estados Unidos?
14. ¿Ud. trataba aprender Inglés antes de o durante de su tiempo en los Estados Unidos?
   a. Si dice que “sí”, ¿puede hablar Inglés con fluidez?
15. ¿Cuántos hermanos/as tiene Ud?
16. ¿Hay otras personas de su familia que inmigraron a los Estados Unidos?
   a. Si dice que “sí”, ¿quién? y ¿por cuántos días, meses, o años?
17. ¿Ud es casado?
   a. Si dice que “sí”, ¿su esposa/o o sus niños han inmigrado con Ud. también?
18. ¿Ud. está pensando a regresar a Madrina? Si dice que “sí”, ¿por qué?
19. ¿Con qué étnicidad Ud identifica?
   a. ¿Ud. identifica con otras étnicidades?
20. ¿Qué importancia esa tiene étnicidad o esas tienen étnicidades para su propia identidad?
21. ¿En qué maneras la inmigración ha cambiado su vida? Explique por favor.
22. ¿En qué maneras la inmigración ha cambiado la vida de su familia? Explique por favor.
23. ¿En qué maneras la inmigración ha cambiado la vida en Madrina? Explique por favor.
24. ¿Para Ud, por qué hay otras personas que están inmigrando de Madrina a los Estados Unidos?
25. ¿En general, piensa que inmigración es una realidad positiva o negativa para Ud, su familia, y Madrina? Explique por favor.
26. ¿Ud piensa que inmigración ha cambiado su identidad étnica?
   a. Si dice que “sí”, ¿en qué maneras?
   b. Si no, ¿por qué no?
27. ¿Ud piensa que inmigración ha cambiado la identidad étnica de su familia?
   a. Si dice que “sí”, ¿en qué maneras?
   b. Si no, ¿por qué no?
28. ¿Ud piensa que inmigración ha cambiado identidad étnica de Madrina?
   a. Si dice que “sí”, ¿en qué maneras?
   b. Si no, ¿por qué no?
29. ¿Tiene parientes quienes viven en los Estados Unidos permanentemente, o quienes son ciudadanos de los Estados Unidos?
   a. Si dice que “sí”, ¿cómo ha afectado a Ud y su identidad étnica?
30. ¿Si Ud. regresó a Madrina, Ud. inmigraría a los Estados Unidos otra vez?
   ¿Por qué o por qué no?
31. ¿Si tiene la oportunidad, Ud consideraría vivir en los Estados Unidos permanentemente? ¿Por qué o por qué no?
   a. Si dice que “sí”, ¿en qué tipo de circunstancias o qué tipo de situación?

México: English Sub-set Interview on La Misión Neighborhood

1. What year did you arrive in La Misión?
2. How many years did you live in La Misión neighborhood?
3. Did you live with other Yucatecos, friends, or your family from Madrina?
4. Were there other Mexicans or Hispanics in La Misión?
5. What other non-Hispanic racial or ethnic groups lived in La Misión?
6. How were relations between those groups and Yucatecos?
   A. Can you describe any positive or negative aspects of social life in La Misión?
7. What type of job/s did you have?
   A. Did the job/s exist in La Misión neighborhood?
   B. What other types of employment opportunities existed in La Misión?
8. Were your employers typically Hispanic or other racial/ethnic groups?
9. Was there competition between Hispanics and other racial and ethnic groups for jobs in La Misión?
10. Can you describe any positive or negative aspects of work life in La Misión?

México: Spanish Sub-set Interview on La Misión Neighborhood

1. ¿En cuál año llegó Ud a La Misión?
2. ¿Por cuántos años vivió Ud en La Misión?
3. ¿Vivía Ud con otros Yucatecos, sus amigos, o su familia de Madrina?
4. ¿Había otros Mexicanos o Hispanos en La Misión?
5. ¿Cuáles otras razas o grupos étnicos que no son Hispanos vivían en La Misión?
6. ¿Cómo eran las relaciones entre estos grupos y los Yucatecos?
   A. ¿Ud puede describir unos aspectos positivos o negativos de la vida social en La Misión?
7. ¿Qué tipo de trabajos tenía usted?
A. ¿Había empleos en el vecindario de La Misión?
B. ¿Cuáles otros tipos de oportunidades de trabajo existían en La Misión?

8. ¿Usualmente, sus patrones eran Hispanos o de otra raza o grupo étnico?
9. ¿Hubo competencia entre los Hispanos y otras razas o grupos étnicos para empleo en La Misión?
10. ¿Ud. puede describir unos aspectos positivos o negativos de trabajar en La Misión?
Date: February 6, 2007

To: Paul Ciccantell, Principal Investigator
    David Piacenti, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 07-01-07

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "The Ethnic Identity of Returning Immigrants to a Pueblo in Yucatan, Mexico" has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: February 6, 2008
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327


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