

Cahiers **DIALOG**

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INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN URBAN CENTERS: TRACING MOBILITY IN A POST NAFTA WORLD

Edited by M. Bianet Castellanos and Ivonne Vizcarra Bordi

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DIALOG — Aboriginal Peoples Research and Knowledge Network — is a space for innovative discussion and exchange between First Peoples and academia. DIALOG is designed to enhance research, facilitate the co-production of knowledge and foster the development of just, egalitarian and equitable social relations. DIALOG is an interuniversity, inter-institutional and international network created in 2001 and based at Institut national de la recherche scientifique (an academic branch of Université du Québec), Québec, Canada. Funded by the Fonds québécois de recherche sur la société et la culture and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, DIALOG brings together more than 150 people from various universities and Aboriginal organizations and communities. DIALOG works closely with many Aboriginal partners and universities.

DIALOG members come from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds, pursue varied practices and research interests, and share the common objective of advancing knowledge in view of a more egalitarian society and the full recognition of the cultures, rights, values and visions of the world of the First Peoples. Through its scientific activities, its programs in support of collaborative and community-partnered research, training and publishing, its knowledge mobilization initiatives, its dissemination mechanisms and its interactive data banks, DIALOG is contributing to the democratization of knowledge relating to the Aboriginal world on both the national and international levels. In today's knowledge society, DIALOG is helping to promote cultural diversity and the recognition of such to encourage the harmonious living together of diverse peoples. DIALOG's mandate is fourfold:

- **Fostering** constructive, innovative and lasting dialogue between the academic milieu and Aboriginal organizations and communities in order to revitalize and promote interactive and collaborative research.
- **Contributing** to a better understanding of the historical and contemporary social, economic, cultural and political realities of Aboriginal peoples and the dynamics of their relations with non-Aboriginal people by emphasizing the co-production of knowledge and by helping to make research and public policies more responsive to Aboriginal needs, approaches and perspectives.
- **Supporting** university students' training, guidance and supervision, particularly for Aboriginal students, by associating them with the network's activities and achievements and offering them financial assistance programs and excellence grants.
- **Increasing** the scientific and social impact of research relating to Aboriginal peoples by developing new knowledge tools in order to promote and disseminate research findings in Québec, Canada and worldwide.



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| Introductory Remarks |

This *Cahier DIALOG* contains papers presented during the Indigenous Peoples in Urban Centres: Tracing Mobility in a Post-NAFTA World session of the 110th International Conference of the American Anthropological Association, held in Montréal (Canada), November 16-20, 2011. It describes the research carried out by members of the trinational (Mexico, United States, Canada) working group *Identity, Migration and Cultural Changes Among Aboriginal Women / Identidad, migración y cambio cultural entre las mujeres autóctonas*, associated with the DIALOG network.

This session focuses mainly on the conceptual challenges involved when tracing indigenous peoples' mobility and their presence in cities. The number of Indigenous People in cities has grown significantly in recent decades, but we still have little knowledge about the dynamics that instigate, underlie, and result from their presence in cities.

Although anthropological analyses of Indigenous Peoples in Mexico, United States and Canada differ, there are many similarities in the concrete conditions involved in rural-urban mobility in the North and South. We therefore propose that it is both possible and desirable to compare the concepts and methodologies used in each one of these countries in order to pose innovative questions that reach beyond the differences in our vocabularies. In an attempt to merge research traditions in Mexico, Canada and the United States, the panel focuses on the concept of mobility, broadly defined in terms of the processes that make it possible for things, ideas and people to circulate: a definition that includes the notion of migration but also goes beyond this to encompass experiences of displacement and relocation. In so doing, we address the following questions:

- How do we situate the study of aboriginal/indigenous peoples in cities from the perspective of the relationship between the local and the global?
- What relative importance should we respectively give to the place of origin and the destination point in the building of a new space—or a new territory—and new alliances that go beyond borders and in which indigenous peoples' culture and aspirations are respected?

The papers in this session address these questions by focusing on two aspects of mobility. First, M. Bianet Castellanos, Lourdes Gutiérrez Nájera, Cristina Oehmichen Bazán, and Alicia Re Cruz examine the processes of circulation within indigenous communities. Castellanos suggests that new Maya subjectivities emerge that disrupt narratives of stasis and progress within urban translocalities. Through a study of Aboriginal migration to cities, Oehmichen Bazán calls into question assimilation models that erase the processes of uncertainty and rupture that are central to cultural change. Gutiérrez Nájera examines the role technology plays in shaping indigenous transnational identities. Re Cruz examines the tensions between local and global processes through a comparative analysis of indigenous migration and Mexican immigration.

Second, Ivonne Vizcarra Bordi and Carole Lévesque focus on the outcomes of these circulations within urban centres, namely through health outcomes and community partnerships. Vizcarra Bordi discusses how urban and migration processes transform indigenous bodies through an analysis of changing food and consumption practices. Given that indigenous peoples throughout the Americas have formed political organizations in urban centres and established relationships with universities, Carole Lévesque suggests it is critical that we also examine research alliances between indigenous organizations and universities. Thus this session reminds us that tracing these new urban geographies and mapping out research alliances can lead us to new methodological and epistemological challenges that go beyond mere studies of living conditions.

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Section 1: Tracing Indigeneity in Cancún: Maya Subjectivities, Urban Migration and Translocal Spaces

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Introduction

War, poverty, natural disasters, and land usurpation have displaced indigenous peoples across the Americas. This displacement has resulted in the concentration of indigenous peoples in urban centres and led to a reconfiguration of indigenous notions of land tenure, gender roles, and spirituality. Tracing these shifts and new emplotments requires rethinking anthropological concepts and methods that have traditionally been used to study indigenous communities. This paper focuses on the concept of mobility because it provides a conceptual lens that challenges ideas of authentic, isolated cultures, bounded communities, and assimilated Indians. Rethinking mobility disrupts narratives of stasis and progress and thus produces new ways of knowing and calls attention to the emergence of new subjectivities and social formations that result from displacements.

In this paper, I examine how migration to urban centres transforms indigenous practices among Maya migrants from Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula. Specifically, I ask how indigeneity, which was previously rooted in rural Maya culture, circulates in urban spaces. What particular challenges does the process of urbanization present to indigenous peoples' sense of connection to their customs, families, and sense of self? These questions come out of my preoccupation with popular understandings of what it means to be "Indian" and how development happens. I am frequently asked by colleagues and the general population whether Maya migrants and their children who have settled in cities will eventually be transformed from "Indian" to "mestizos" as they become urbanized. Here urban is associated with a process of assimilation and acculturation. I am never asked whether Maya peoples living in rural spaces are becoming less Indian because the countryside in this region continues to be associated with ancestral lands. I wish to unpack the assumption that to be urban means to be less Indian, that to be rural means to be more Indian, and that progress, assimilation, and Mexicanization are contingent on urbanization. To do so, I draw on an ethnographic case study based on my research with Maya migrants in Cancún, Mexico. The bulk of this research took place from September 2000 to September 2001, but since then, I have returned continuously to this region to conduct follow-up research.

A Wedding

In the summer of 2001, I was invited to attend a wedding in Kuchmil, a pseudonym for a rural Maya village located in Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula. Given the village's size of approximately 123 inhabitants, weddings tend to be festive affairs attended by everyone in the village. The ceremony is usually held in the small Roman Catholic church located on the main plaza. Since Kuchmil's congregation is too small to sponsor its own priest, the priest from the neighboring parish is invited out for the day to preside over the ceremony. Occasionally the weddings are held in the neighboring town's large colonial Catholic church. The bride and

groom dress up in typical Western wedding fare: a white gown and tuxedo. Afterward, the guests are invited to eat and drink at the groom's house. This was the type of wedding I expected that summer.

Instead, this ceremony was held not in a church but in the father of the groom's house and my invitation came with a dress code. All guests were asked to dress in typical Yucatecan clothing: a *huipil* and *terno* for the women and a white *guayabera* shirt, white pants, leather sandals, and a Panama hat for the men. Javier, the groom, explained that since the bride Eloisa was not Yucatecan or Mayan, she wanted to experience what a "traditional" Mayan wedding was like before the ceremony became westernized. She wanted it to be "authentic."

The bride looked lovely in her huipil and wore fresh flowers in her hair. The ceremony was led by an elder, who reminded those present that it was their job to support this union during stressful moments. The ceremony ended with the couple holding up their marriage license between them and posing for pictures. The entire ceremony was videotaped. Afterward, guests were invited to bowls of *relleno negro*, warm *tortillas*, and bottles of Coca-Cola and beer. A couple of weeks later, Javier and Eloisa held a second even grander ceremony in a Catholic church in Cancún. This ceremony was modeled after the typical Western wedding and concluded with a live singing performance by a drag queen.

I share this event for two reasons. First, this ceremony calls attention to the role the imagination and global processes play in constructing indigeneity. What Eloisa imagines to be a traditional indigenous practice is in actuality part relic of the past, part invention that is being reenacted by this Maya community for her family's consumption. Even in the 1960s, Kuchmil weddings involved "modern" sensibilities. In one wedding photograph from the 1960s prominently displayed in a home in Kuchmil, the bride wore a white huipil, but had her hair styled in a beehive. Second, this event illustrates how indigeneity circulates and gets reproduced within a migrant circuit. Although Maya families in Kuchmil expect their children to marry someone outside of their village, eligible mates usually come from the same region and ethnic and class origins. But as young Maya men and women have begun to spend most of their adulthood in urban centres like Cancún, ideas about marriage have become more closely linked with a global discourse of romantic love (Juárez 2001) and the commodification of the "white wedding" celebration. Potential life partners are no longer circumscribed to similar ethnic origin and geographic region.

Reconceptualizing Difference

Thus as migration and displacement blur the edges of concepts previously considered to be bounded categories such as the pueblo, the city, and the nation, Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1992) suggest that we pay attention to the hierarchical relations between these concepts and spaces, particularly as they become "reterritorialized" and reconceptualized with time, and as a result of changing practices. "For if one begins with the premise that spaces have always been hierarchically interconnected, instead of naturally disconnected, then cultural and social change becomes not a matter of cultural contact and articulation but one of rethinking difference through connections" (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 8). Migration in Mexico has become part of the rural experience, making the ciudad central to the rural imaginary, not only as a foil to the rural, but as an expanded sense of place. Considering that "place" is a mediated experience, forged out of the social relations through which it is understood (Massey 1994, Olwig 1997), claims to geographical distinctions, particularly between the rural and the urban, need to be re-evaluated.

Yet binaries (tradition/modernity, rural/urban, Indian/non-Indian) serve as central tropes in theories of migration. These categories, however, are fraught terms because they reinforce a racialized discourse that presumes that these categories are natural and spatial (Gupta and Ferguson 1992) and that one can become more or less Indian based on distance traveled. Being Maya, however, is not based on living in a particular place or location, but is grounded in the social and historical relations and collective experiences of a particular community and people (see Castellanos 2010, Castañeda 1996, Re Cruz 1996). As indigenous peoples move to urban spaces, social scientists should be less concerned with processes of acculturation and more concerned with how these new articulations disrupt naturalized categories and create new categories of difference.

Circulating Indigeneity

In the United States and Canada, indigeneity is marked by blood quantum and/or tribal affiliation. In Mexico, indigeneity is marked by language, not by blood. Officially, a Yucatec Maya speaker (age 5 and up) is recognized as an indigenous person by the Mexican state. Unofficially, a person is marked indigenous by language, physical traits, and/or dress. How do Maya migrants mark indigeneity and get marked as indigenous in Cancún? How does migration disrupt this category of difference?

During my time conducting field research in Cancún, the male migrants I spoke to frequently joked that they or their friends had dated *gringas*, slang for white American women, but that it never worked out for various reasons: Because they did not know how to cook Yucatecan food, because they didn't eat meat, because they were lazy, or because *no se entendieron*. (They didn't understand each other). I bring up these discussions of racial/cultural miscegenation because they highlight some of the tensions Maya migrants experience living in urban centres. They also call attention to how indigeneity travels within migrant circuits.

I was jokingly asked by my Maya informants why after many years in the field I hadn't married a "Yucateco." The young men would adopt a thick Yucatecan accent when asking this question, thereby invoking the negative stereotype of the simple Maya peasant. I was always troubled by this pejorative reference because I knew that these men were proud of their fathers, who were Maya peasants. I now see the use of this stereotype as a trope by which Maya migrants coped with their own discomfort with race relations in Cancún, where indigenous peoples continue to be placed at the bottom of a racial, social, and economic hierarchy. References to the stereotypical Yucateco allowed these migrants to distance themselves from indigenous practices (coded as rural practices), such as a thick accent, a particular dress style, and the daily use of the Maya language, that marked them as "other" in Cancún. Yet, it also allowed them to retain other customs, like participating in village fiestas and rituals, that were given greater prestige within a tourist industry that revolves around Maya culture.

In Kuchmil, I was constantly asked when I would marry but I was rarely asked if I would marry a Yucatecan or a local. As a woman who traveled across the globe without a chaperone and who struggled to master the basic chores assigned to any female in a rural household, I did not make an ideal mate. In contrast in Cancún, where these types of skills were obsolete, the majority of the population was not Maya, and being accompanied by chaperone was difficult, if not impossible, a *gringa* was not such a bad choice. Yet, while a few men married women who were not Yucatec Maya and were born and raised in Cancún, no one married a *gringa*. In the end, the cultural, racial, economic, and spatial divide was too great for them to imagine

and forge this type of union. The city and hotel zone have been designed to control and limit local/tourist interactions. Not surprisingly, the majority of the male migrants and all of the female migrants married partners who originated from rural Maya households or from Maya families residing in towns settled in the *zona maicera* of the states of the Yucatán Peninsula, a region renown as being the epicenter of rural Maya culture.

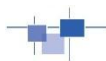
Women who were not Maya and who married Kuchmil migrants battled against the stereotype that they were lazy and of questionable moral virtue. They were considered lazy because they were not accustomed to the early to rise-early to bed schedule regulating farm life and to the demanding chores typical of rural households, such as pulling water from the well, making *nixtamal* for tortillas, and cooking over an open fire. During their trips to Kuchmil, their efforts to help with meal preparations were restricted to light household work. Their inability to cook Yucatecan food spoke to the arduous work and specialized knowledge involved in making *tamales*, *relleno negro*, *cochinita pibil*—knowledge that was passed down from one generation to the next and involved using products collected from a family's rural garden. Their virtue was questioned because they spent most of their youth wandering around the city without a chaperone and/or hanging out in discos or dances on weekends, the most common form of entertainment for young people in Cancún.

Conclusion

I would like to end by returning to the ceremony in Kuchmil with which I opened this paper because it offers an example of the complex ways Maya migrants negotiate the power hierarchies situated within local, regional, and international spaces. Javier's parents were delighted by their daughter-in-law's respect for Maya culture and by Javier's interest in staying connected to his roots. The wedding ceremony in Kuchmil reinforced the value of indigenous practices to Kuchmil residents and Cancún migrants. But this event also reminds us that indigeneity is continually being reworked to help people make sense of their lives. As indigenous migrants move between rural and urban spaces, they must forge a new space that makes possible a sense of rootedness, a connection between the past and the present, the rural and the urban, Indian and non-Indian, and the local and the global. Mobility then allows migrants to construct new subjectivities that engage with these new geographies and translocalities. Although these new subjectivities are grounded in racial, economic, cultural, and spatial divides, they also challenge and contest the boundaries of these categories of difference.

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Section 2: Reconstructing Zapotec Transnational Identities and Localities in a Virtual Environment

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Introduction

On October 28, 2010, a cold damp Thursday morning, Yalálag's rain-soaked hillside, in the mountains of Oaxaca, crumbled and gave way to a massive mudslide. It took with it homes, crops, and destroyed the road that connects the town to the capital city. Residents were left stranded without access to water, food, and other supplies. Additionally, one home collapsed from the pressures of the rain and mud claiming the lives of an elderly couple. Yalaltecos, as people from the town of Yalálag are called, gathered to comfort each other, and began to survey and document the devastating via photographs and videos. They also turned towards the internet to reach out to *paisanos* living Oaxaca and Mexico City, as well as Los Angeles, California. At first photographs and news of the event began to circulate via email. In perhaps, an unexpected turn, Yalaltecos in the hometown and satellite communities began to post messages and circulate photographs via Facebook. As I was told by a friend in Yalálag, Facebook allowed for news to spread more quickly and the ability to post multiple photographs through its interface made the downloading process easier.

Not knowing how long loved ones would be stranded without provisions, Yalaltecos joined forces to secure provisions and mobilize other resources. Within five days migrants living in Los Angeles alone had raised \$50,000 to buy food and water to be airlifted into their hometown. In Oaxaca and Mexico City, urban migrants had also organized and were able to secure emergency supplies from the government, within days of the disaster. Beyond the immediate state of emergency, this crisis cemented their communal identity as Yalaltecos. More importantly, were it not for Facebook and the Internet, resources would not have reached them so quickly.

The circulation of ideas has played a critical role in the production of transnational social fields. But little attention has been paid to *the flow* of "ideas" and "things" in the scholarship on transnational migration (Appadurai 1996, Velez-Ibañez 2002). In recent years scholars have begun to turn towards more systematic analyses of the circulation of cultural productions, including music, dance forms, and art. Still, the emphasis within the scholarship on Mexican and Latino migration remains on the circulation of people. Also, while there is much written about economic remittances, much less is known about the emotional resources that are important to the construction and maintenance of social networks sent back and forth (Castellanos 2009, Levitt 2004).

Technology and Multimedias

In this short paper I highlight the role that technology and media play in the reproduction of transnational indigeneity within a transnational social field that extends from the rural town of Yalálag in the mountains of Oaxaca to Los Angeles. Migration between these two locations began in the 1960s but increased significantly since the 1980s with Mexico's growing

economic crisis. Today roughly 2000 Yalaltecos reside in the hometown and 4000 live outside it in various locations including Mexico City, Oaxaca City, and Los Angeles. I suggest that while a communal identity across national boundaries maintained through material bonds, it is also produced through affective ties mediated by visual media technologies that include not only the Internet but also more traditional visual media like photographs and video. The messages conveyed are of a more intimate nature, and their circulation aids in the reproduction of a collective indigenous identity and shared sentiment of belonging, despite separation across geographic space.

The opening vignette points towards the importance of the use of computer technology, and in particular the use of social media, for maintaining and mediating ethnic identity. Among Yalaltecos in Los Angeles, it is common to post images of the natal community—a way of connecting to the hometown. A common type of photograph displays the lush and verdant landscape (a consequence of the rainy season) with comments like “mi Yalálag.” “How I wish I were there.” And, “my beautiful home.” There are also photographs of festivities accompanying patron saint celebrations, which invite conversations and memories about floodways and other cultural traditions. Others display pictures of loved ones who they have left behind, parents, grandparents, siblings, and children inspiring a myriad of personal responses. While many of the photos and comments conjure up nostalgia for the place they have left behind, there are other types of messages as well. These latter types of exchanges focus on the re-establishment of family ties. One example of this type of exchange occurs between acquaintances in the discussion threads that follow postings. In a recent thread, for example, someone named M. Ruiz responded to my friend’s posting. Mr. Ruiz always addresses her as “your cousin.” Having seen this common salutation, another female cousin living in L.A. engages in an exchange with Mr. Ruiz. “Mr. Ruiz, who are you? You call yourself her cousin but I don’t think I know you. Where do you live? Are you a cousin through her mother’s side or her father’s side?” M. Ruiz responds that he was a relative through her maternal grandmother’s family and that he lives in Mexico. She then confirms this new relationship. Another example of the ways that Facebook has re-established family ties are as follows: My friend Marta was recently introduced to her nephew through posted images on Facebook by her sister in Oaxaca. My friend in return posted new images of her daughters, with a comment saying, “I am happy that even though I could not be present for your son’s birth, I can come to know him through this medium and you can see your beautiful nieces too!” These latter types of exchanges focus on the re-establishment of family ties.

A New Virtual Identity

YouTube, with a longer history of usage among Yalaltecos, also appears to play an important role in reinforcing ethnic identity. While Facebook is used consistently by Yalaltecos, distributed widely throughout its diaspora (in Veracruz, Puebla, Chiapas, Oaxaca, Mexico City, and Yalálag) YouTube appears to be a medium primarily used by urban migrants in Oaxaca City, Mexico City and Los Angeles. Another distinction is that Facebook users appear to be more widely distributed across age groups from young teens to people in their mid-sixties whereas, YouTube is a tool used primarily by youth in their late teens to early thirties. Last, YouTube users appear to be more concerned with cultural and ethnic production.

If one types in “yalálag” into a YouTube search, he will find hundreds, if not thousands, of video clips, mostly of patron saint celebrations throughout the Yalaltecos and diaspora. In particular, footage of traditional dancing and music dominate the landscape. Scanning

comments left in response to videos, it is not uncommon to find threads by youth about who they are, where they are located, and their motivation for placing videos on YouTube. I have found that members of “youth based cultural associations”, though not exclusively, are placing these videos as a way to demonstrate pride in their ethnic identity and culture. When I asked a 25 year old Yalalteco living in Mexico City about his motivations for placing videos on YouTube he told me that, as a child he participated in traditional dances during patron saint fiestas but that it was in his youth that he began to really take pride in his ethnic identity. He uploads videos to showcase his culture. The positive responses he receives from Yalaltecos inspire him to continue to place them on the Internet. In Los Angeles, footage of fiestas is also placed on YouTube by migrants. For first-generation migrants, YouTube provides a quick way to share visual representations of events. One young man in Los Angeles in his thirties has used YouTube to place oral histories and interviews he has conducted among older generation Yalaltecos on Facebook. For him, it is a demonstration of pride in his rich cultural heritage. He tells me that it was only recently that he began to reflect and really appreciate his indigenous ethnic identity. He considers himself fortunate to have recognized it early enough and is actively seeking to become fluent in Zapotec.

Ethnic identity is (re)produced through YouTube and internet social networking sites like MSN Messenger and Facebook. Yet the lack of universal access to the Internet in Yalálag limits the use of these sources. Thus, the circulation of visual footage, first through VHS cassettes, now with DVDs, continues to serve as an important medium through which information is conveyed (Michaels 1994) and Yalaltecan identity is reinforced.

Elsewhere I explore the production and circulation of DVDs between Yalálag and Los Angeles to illustrate more precisely how they become part of the material culture through which Yalaltecos reconfigure a sense of ethnic identity. Digital recorders are commonplace in both Los Angeles and Yalálag and most events are recorded, often by more than one camera. Yalaltecos routinely send copies of DVDs to relatives who reside elsewhere. Importantly, those who produce recordings for their family or send them as gifts often do so as acts of love, just as those who transport the videos to relatives across national boundaries do so as acts of familial devotion and care. Thus, even in their circulation, affective bonds reinforcing familial and ethnic relations are associated with these objects. In the process of being passed around from person to person, these recordings flow throughout the various social fields contribute to the maintenance (and sometimes rupture) of intimate bonds between people as well as facilitate the creation and maintenance of a Yalaltecan identity.

The circulation and consumption of recordings assumes a Yalaltecan audience who will be able to receive and engage with their content. Some DVDs reconnect residents in Los Angeles to a wider transnational public through the presentation of social and religious events that serve to remind them of their connections to family and hometown. A comment about the peaceful atmosphere of the mountains, the smells and sounds of Yalálag, or the words from a loved one serve to reproduce connections throughout the transnational community. Nostalgia often runs deep as people reminisce about place, events, and loved ones left behind. These observations serve as reminders that it is not the videos but the feelings and emotions attached to them that are important.

But it is not only the affective response that reinforces an ethnic identity, but also the social context in which media are consumed. In Yalálag, DVDs may be given to relatives visiting Yalálag on holiday. Upon arriving in Los Angeles, they invite friends and family members to watch the videos before passing them onto other kin and community members. It is in these

intimate settings that Yalaltecos view and discuss videos together. These examples above illustrate how Yalaltecos in Los Angeles reconnect with family and friends in their hometown through various media. As they come together to watch and discuss them, whether in a physical location as with the videos or virtually through discussion threads, they reinsert themselves into a larger Yalalteco imaginary. They may speak nostalgically about the *pueblo* reminiscing about childhoods spent there, *fiesta* celebrations, and family left behind. In personal conversations, I am often reminded of their enduring attachment to the Sierra and their pueblo. It is through these mediated interactions facilitated by the Internet and digital media that they reassert their ethnic identity as Zapotecs. Yet, I should stress that even as migrants in Los Angeles imagined themselves part of a much broader Yalaltecan locality, there are multiple ways of expressing their ethnic belonging, their ethnic identities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are multiple mechanisms for creating transnational localities across spatial divides. I have suggested that the use of visual technologies and Internet social based media contribute largely to this process. I have also illustrated how the circulation and consumption of these evoke affective responses from viewers reinforce both familial and indigenous ethnic identities. In fact, Yalaltecos use their knowledge tactically to produce emotive responses that foster and cement linkages between migrants living in urban centres and residents in the hometown.

However these constructions of transnational localities, as demonstrated in my broader study of Yalálag, are not always premised on the same form of nostalgia nor achieved through harmonious processes. While feelings of nostalgia and love, awakened through various media, effectively contribute towards imagining oneself a part of a wider, cohesive locality with common ideals, in a context where factionalized politics prevail, fragmentation prevails. Even within the imagined locality, affective responses might express not only nostalgia and love but also anger and disappointment. Hence, at a moment when Yalaltecos on either side of the political debate are prompted to imagine themselves part of a wider transnational locality, they continue to produce a fragmented or conflictive expression of locality.

While not fully developed in this paper, my research suggest that technology and media play an important role in maintaining affective ties that are key to continual migrant social and economic involvement with the hometown. If we are to better understand formation and maintenance of transnational localities and ethnic identities, we must pay attention to the ways that such resources impact these processes.

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Sección 3: La migración y el principio de incertidumbre para el estudio del cambio cultural

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Introducción

En la última década, los estudios sobre migración, comunidades y procesos de identidad social que emergen del cruce de fronteras (étnicas, nacionales, de clase, de género) han cobrado un renovado impulso. Los flujos migratorios derivados de los procesos de globalización han puesto de manifiesto, por un lado, la constitución de las fronteras étnicas y nacionales que impiden o limitan el acceso de los migrantes a la plena ciudadanía en los lugares de acogida. Por otro, se pone de relieve la persistencia de formas de organización social tradicional de los migrantes en los lugares de destino y su prolongación en más de una región, y en más de un estado nacional.

Diversos estudios han demostrado que los emigrantes no rompen necesaria ni irremediamente con sus lugares de origen. Tampoco buscan invariablemente asimilarse a las sociedades de acogida y, cuando así sucede, éstas no siempre muestran su disposición a eliminar las fronteras que los distinguen de los inmigrantes y de otros “extraños”. En numerosas regiones del mundo, los inmigrantes viven procesos de exclusión que se expresan en formas más o menos sutiles de discriminación, hasta llegar al hostigamiento, las prácticas racistas, la agresión y el ejercicio de otras formas de violencia.

La asimilación de los inmigrantes a las sociedades que los hospedan se dificulta en momentos de crisis y desempleo, como había sucedido antes y como se agudiza ahora después del crack financiero de 2008. Si bien este tipo de problemas se presentan en las relaciones entre inmigrantes internacionales y sociedades receptoras, un fenómeno parecido se presenta en el caso de los indígenas inmigrantes.

La discriminación de la que son objeto y las condiciones de pobreza en la que viven miles de indígenas en las ciudades mexicanas, hacen que las relaciones comunitarias y de parentesco se mantengan como uno de los principales capitales sociales con los que cuentan los migrantes. En ese sentido, planteo que para el estudio de las migraciones y el proceso de integración de éstos en las sociedades de acogida, hay que partir del principio de incertidumbre con el fin de romper con las nociones que consideran que los migrantes habrán de asimilarse, necesaria e irremediamente, a las sociedades de acogida.

En esta ponencia me propongo explicar la manera en que intervienen las relaciones de parentesco en la reproducción y la re-significación de los símbolos étnicos que operan entre un grupo de indígenas inmigrantes en las ciudades mexicanas. Asimismo, me refiero a los atributos que definen la pertenencia comunitaria, los cuales se relacionan directamente con la filiación parental. Para ello me respaldo en el trabajo empírico realizado en dos comunidades de inmigrantes mazahuas radicadas en la Ciudad de México.

La pertenencia comunitaria más allá del lugar de origen

Al igual que otros migrantes indígenas, los mazahuas han extendido su comunidad más allá del pueblo o localidad en la que tradicionalmente se han asentado. Con su emigración han conformado nuevas comunidades en los lugares de destino, a la vez que mantienen vínculos con quienes permanecen en el lugar de origen. Los emigrantes y los que viven en el lugar de origen conforman una comunidad extraterritorial, es decir, una colectividad cultural cuyos miembros comparten un universo simbólico, un sistema de obligaciones y reciprocidades, y una orientación común hacia la acción.

La comunidad extraterritorial se integra, así, por quienes residen en el lugar de origen y por quienes han emigrado. Todos pertenecen a la comunidad, sin embargo, dicha pertenencia está regulada por todo un sistema de clasificaciones y distinciones reguladas por el género.

Por lo general, en las comunidades indígenas de origen mesoamericano, el individuo adquiere la membresía comunitaria desde su nacimiento debido a que su pertenencia a una familia lo relaciona con todos los demás miembros de la comunidad. Dicha pertenencia se expresa por la filiación, misma que proporciona los símbolos de cohesión más importantes en la construcción de la identidad étnica. En el caso de los mazahuas inmigrantes de segunda generación radicados en la Ciudad de México, no importa si el individuo ha nacido lejos del lugar de origen de sus padres o abuelos, o si ha dejado de hablar la lengua materna para ser reconocido como miembro de la comunidad. Adquiere la membresía comunitaria con todos los derechos y obligaciones que ello entraña, debido a que la consanguinidad se convierte en uno de los atributos más importantes de identificación.

El lugar de origen, se encuentran los ancestros comunes, las tradiciones compartidas y la lengua, aspectos todos ellos que constituyen los elementos distintivos que permiten a los miembros de la comunidad constituir un “nosotros”. De esta manera la autodefinición de las fronteras del grupo étnico suelen corresponder con las fronteras del parentesco, precisamente porque se trata de identidades prevalentemente orientadas hacia el pasado, donde los símbolos de ancestralidad entran en relación con otros elementos simbólicos, como el hecho de compartir un lugar de origen común, una historia y antepasados también comunes.

Mantener y reproducir los vínculos de parentesco en contextos migratorios entraña normas y reglas que obligan a los miembros del grupo a la unidad y a la reciprocidad con los miembros de la comunidad. La eficacia de este tipo de vínculos, radica en el hecho de que la parentela legitima la pertenencia a la comunidad, define la adscripción del individuo al grupo y opera como un adhesivo que naturaliza el vínculo social.

Asimismo, la colectividad étnica se reproduce por medio de las relaciones de afinidad. El matrimonio endogámico evita la dispersión del grupo, cierra las fronteras hacia el exterior, reduce el número de antepasados y propicia la reproducción de la comunidad de manera transgeneracional.

Los mazahuas que radican en la ciudad de México, así como aquellos que se ubican más allá de las fronteras nacionales, reconocen a un gran número de parientes ascendentes, descendentes y colaterales. En esta amplia red se encuentran los miembros de la comunidad que radican en la Ciudad de México, pero también en sus pueblos de origen y en Estados Unidos. La comunidad extraterritorial es el soporte más firme de los inmigrantes en

la Ciudad de México, aunque también es una de sus principales fuentes de conflicto. Ello se expresa claramente cuando los emigrantes compiten por el poder político local o por los recursos comunales en los lugares de origen. En esos casos se abre una arena en donde se disputa la pertenencia comunitaria. Los que tienen el poder político en el pueblo de manera frecuente se niegan a reconocer los derechos políticos y económicos de los que han emigrado y de sus descendientes. Por su parte, quienes han salido señalan que los “caciques” del pueblo “no son nadie” para definir la pertenencia comunitaria.

El parentesco y la identidad comunitaria

Entre los mazahuas, el grupo parental funciona como un grupo de acción social que actúa hacia lo interno en dos sentidos: por un lado, constituye un grupo de ayuda mutua que se moviliza en los casos de urgencia y de extrema necesidad; por otro, fija las normas de la costumbre para regular, en lo posible, el comportamiento de sus miembros. Por ejemplo, interviene para ayudar a conseguir empleo y alojamiento a los que se incorporan a la urbe; actúa para sancionar a las mujeres cuando consideran que llevan una vida sexual promiscua; o bien, interviene para tratar de combatir la drogadicción entre los niños y jóvenes varones. La acción parental se encamina al mantenimiento de la cohesión grupal, al apoyo mutuo y al apego a las normas comunitarias. No obstante, sus mecanismos de control no siempre son eficientes para enfrentar los procesos anómicos que como colectividad viven en la Ciudad de México.

Hacia lo externo, el grupo parental actúa como un grupo de interés para solucionar problemas comunes, principalmente los que tienen que ver con el acceso a la vivienda y al trabajo, y con la procuración de justicia. Las redes de parentesco son el material con el que se construyen las organizaciones mazahuas de comerciantes en vía pública. Son, además, la estructura que les permite acceder a la vivienda y constituir vecindarios étnicos. El grupo parental también actúa políticamente en determinadas coyunturas, ya para demandar solución a sus problemas de vivienda, ya para obtener permisos para la venta, ya para sacar de la prisión a sus detenidos, o bien, para hablar de los derechos indígenas en la ciudad. Aluden a su etnicidad para ser reconocidos por las instituciones del Estado como un actor social colectivo con voz e intereses específicos.

Los mazahuas que radican en la Ciudad de México también actúan en el lugar de origen. Ratifican su pertenencia comunitaria a través de su participación en las fiestas que se realizan en honor al santo patrón de su comunidad, las faenas o trabajo colectivo, cooperaciones para la realización de obras públicas, entre otras cosas.

Las relaciones comunitarias que unen a los emigrantes con quienes viven en el pueblo de origen se reproducen y ratifican a través del intercambio matrimonial, con lo cual, el vínculo parental se reconstituye entre los emigrantes y quienes viven en el pueblo y, con ello, la vida comunitaria más allá de los límites físicos del lugar de origen. Ello incluye a los emigrantes de segunda y tercera generaciones.

La pertenencia comunitaria y las relaciones de género

Si bien la adscripción de los mazahuas está dada por nacimiento, conviene distinguirla según el sexo del individuo. Los hombres y las mujeres pertenecen al grupo del padre desde su nacimiento. Así reciben su nombre, su ubicación en el mundo y en la estructura de la

comunidad. Los varones mantienen durante toda la vida dicha filiación, no así las mujeres, quienes al unirse en conyugalidad pasan a formar parte del grupo, del barrio y de la comunidad de su consorte.

Las diferencias y desigualdades de género prescriben el mantenimiento de los patrones de residencia patrivirilocal. Aun cuando en la Ciudad de México las residencias son neolcales y muchos grupos domésticos tienen jefatura femenina, el principio que estructura la filiación de las mujeres está dado por los vínculos con un varón. Así, son adscritas al grupo parental de su cónyuge. La adscripción de las mujeres y de sus hijos se da por la vía patrilineal y los derechos de sucesión (del apellido, de los bienes, de la tierra) se transmite por vía paterna.

La membresía comunitaria muestra que el parentesco provee un sistema de distinciones análogas a la construcción cultural de la diferencia sexual. Así, provee jerarquías y estructura relaciones desiguales y asimétricas que posteriormente se expresan en otros ámbitos sociales y extra-comunitarios.

Las pautas matrimoniales

Las prácticas matrimoniales constituyen un mecanismo que permite a los grupos étnicos mantener sus fronteras más allá del lugar de origen. Entre los mazahuas existen una serie de pautas que prescriben el matrimonio. En su forma tradicional, éstas involucran el acuerdo entre los parientes de la pareja y la intervención de los padrinos de bautizo del muchacho. Una vez celebrada la boda, la joven pasa a residir a la casa de su marido, quien generalmente vive con sus padres, al menos durante los primeros años de matrimonio. Ella se incorpora a las labores del hogar y a todas aquellas tareas que requieran de su fuerza de trabajo. La suegra funge como una segunda madre de la nuera y la instruye en sus deberes cotidianos.

Las fronteras étnicas se mantienen y actualizan a través del matrimonio endogámico, aun en los lugares de destino de los emigrantes. Entre estas reglas está la prohibición que pesa sobre los y las jóvenes de unirse conyugalmente con individuos que no son de su misma condición social.

Los padres acostumbran aconsejar a sus hijos e hijas sobre la elección de su consorte. Ellos deben unirse con alguna persona de su misma condición social, a fin de no recibir maltrato ni humillaciones. Se considera que si una mujer entabla relaciones con un hombre “rico”, (muchas veces identificado como “blanco” o “urbano”) se aprovechará de ella y mantendrá su interés sólo para “burlarla”, para hacer “que fracase”. Si como resultado de la relación entre la mujer mazahua y un hombre “rico” hay matrimonio, se augura el sufrimiento de la mujer debido al menosprecio y la humillación de que sería objeto por parte del cónyuge y parientes afines, quienes terminarían por alejarla de su grupo parental.

Por su parte, los hombres prefieren unirse con mujeres de su comunidad pues consideran que las “urbanas” son mujeres “muy liberales, confunden la libertad con el libertinaje [...] Nosotros preferimos a nuestras mujeres no porque sean más tontas o más dejadas que las otras. No, no son dejadas [...] pero son las que mejor se adaptan a nuestra forma de ser” (señor Atanasio Benítez, de San Mateo).

La consideración de las mestizas como personas sexualmente promiscuas, contrasta con la apreciación que tienen de sus propias mujeres. Las mazahuas aparecen como más recatadas, buenas madres y esposas fieles

Las mujeres que buscan los varones mazahuas deben ser trabajadoras. Este es el atributo que más se estima de las mujeres y con el cual ellas se identifican y son identificadas por sus hombres. No sólo es su capacidad reproductiva lo que se valora, sino también su disponibilidad para el trabajo. Dicha imagen se corresponde con la autodefinición que los mazahuas hacen de sí mismos como “gente de trabajo” y como “gente hecha para el trabajo pesado”. Asimismo, es una imagen que se integra al universo simbólico con el que se distinguen como personas pobres. Los consejos y las percepciones que se tienen sobre los mestizos de la ciudad constituyen una regla implícita que presiona a los migrantes a unirse conyugalmente con alguna persona de su misma comunidad extra-territorial.

Con la migración, sin embargo, los límites de la endogamia se han flexibilizado. Existen diferentes niveles de endogamia funcional. El primer nivel se presenta cuando la pareja pertenece a la misma comunidad, independientemente de su lugar de nacimiento y o de residencia. Son frecuentes las uniones de emigrantes con residentes en el pueblo de origen. Los patrones de residencia patrivirilocal hacen que la mujer vaya a vivir al lugar de residencia de su marido. Si el hombre vive en el pueblo, la mujer tendrá que seguirlo allá. Si, por el contrario, la mujer es del pueblo pero el marido vive en la capital, ella irá a residir con el marido y la parentela de éste a uno de los cuartos de vecindad del centro o a una vivienda ubicada en la periferia, y también se integrará al comercio ambulante o a otras actividades económicas.

El segundo nivel de endogamia se presenta cuando la unión conyugal se presenta entre personas que no pertenecen a la misma comunidad, pero sí del mismo grupo etnolingüístico. Las personas que conforman este tipo de matrimonio afirman haber conocido a su cónyuge “en la calle”, ya sea porque se desempeñaban como vendedores en la vía pública, o en lugares de tránsito o de esparcimiento. Aun en el caso de las mujeres que trabajan como empleadas domésticas, hay quienes afirman haber conocido a su marido en alguna de las multitudinarias calles y avenidas de la Ciudad de México.

En tercer lugar se encuentran las uniones exogámicas. Las más frecuentes son las que se presentan en matrimonios interétnicos entre hombres y mujeres mazahuas con indígenas mixtecos, zapotecos y mazatecos. Se trata de uniones conyugales entre individuos de diferentes grupos etnolingüísticos que comparten con los mazahuas similares procesos de exclusión. Ello los conduce a trabajar en las mismas ocupaciones, a disfrutar en los mismos lugares de esparcimiento y a vivir en los mismos nichos ecológicos. Así, la ciudad misma genera los espacios de identificación entre los similares. Los mazahuas que no se casan con otros mazahuas, se unen conyugalmente con otros “indios”, es decir, se realizan matrimonios exogámicos que conservan la homogenia sociocultural.

Las redes matrilaterales del parentesco

Como en muchas otras comunidades indígenas, las comunidades mazahuas se caracterizan por un patrón de residencia patrivirilocal. Las comunidades de origen generalmente están estructuradas por barrios y manzanas. Cada barrio conforma una unidad socioterritorial fincada en relaciones de parentesco y establece relaciones con los otros barrios a través del intercambio matrimonial y ceremonial. Como indiqué arriba, cuando las mujeres se unen

conyugalmente pasan a formar parte del barrio o pueblo de su marido; es decir, cambian su pertenencia socioterritorial. Su adscripción está dada por la relación de filiación con la familia del padre, pero cuando se unen conyugalmente pasan a pertenecer al grupo parental del esposo.

Entre los mazahuas inmigrantes en la Ciudad de México, las redes matrilineales del parentesco han adquirido una nueva importancia, toda vez que las relaciones de las madres con sus hijas y los vínculos entre hermanas tienden a ser más frecuentes, cotidianas e indispensables para la sobrevivencia del grupo. Mientras que en el pueblo de origen los patrones de patrivirilocalidad alejan a las madres de sus hijas y distancian a las hermanas merced a sus diferentes adscripciones socioterritoriales, en el medio urbano los contactos entre ellas tienden a ser más frecuentes. La residencia en común en los vecindarios étnicos y el desempeño cotidiano en el comercio, hace que las madres, las hijas y las hermanas compartan tareas comunes. La necesidad de contar con el respaldo familiar y, particularmente, con el apoyo de otras mujeres para el cuidado y crianza de los hijos conduce a que los vínculos entre mujeres de la misma familia de origen sean más estrechos. A ello se suma la condición de pobreza, que las obliga a trabajar fuera de sus hogares, por lo que el apoyo que puedan obtener de otras mujeres de su grupo es indispensable.

Un hecho adicional es que en la ciudad, las relaciones entre madres y hermanas suelen ser más frecuentes e importantes que las que establecen los padres con sus hijos. En algunos casos los hijos no conocen a sus padres. El hecho de que sean precisamente las mujeres quienes se hagan cargo de la reproducción familiar -lo que entraña la crianza y el cuidado de los hijos—hace que las redes centradas en la madre y las relaciones de parentesco por vía materna adquieran una importancia vital para la subsistencia del grupo.

Las redes centradas en las madres permiten la reproducción de la comunidad fuera del pueblo de origen y normalizar las alianzas parentales en las que se sustenta el vínculo comunitario. La importancia que adquieren los vínculos de parentesco del lado materno constituye el soporte de las mujeres que son abandonadas por el cónyuge o que “se dejan” de sus maridos. Son las madres, las hermanas y los hermanos, y a veces hasta la abuela de la mujer los que acuden en su auxilio.

Conclusiones

El principio de incertidumbre en el cambio cultural nos permite romper con los determinismos que dan por descontada la asimilación de los migrantes a las sociedades de acogida. Asimismo, nos obligan a buscar nuevas vetas para analizar el cambio y entre ellas, están aquellos aspectos poco visibles en una primera aproximación etnográfica. Aspectos que tienen que ver con las relaciones de parentesco, las pautas matrimoniales y la filiación, con algunos de esos elementos invisibles que nos permiten explicar la existencia de procesos de integración o no, dentro de la sociedad receptora por un lado y, por otro, la existencia de las fronteras étnicas más allá del lugar de origen. La vigencia de las relaciones de parentesco en el mundo globalizado muestra su importancia de manera clara en los contextos migratorios. A través de estas relaciones se constituyen las redes a través de las cuales las colectividades étnicas se recomponen y reconstituyen en los diversos lugares de destino. El parentesco remite a los migrantes un origen e historia comunes; liga a los migrantes con un territorio que reviste un carácter de ancestralidad. El parentesco restituye un sentido de pertenencia e identidad social que porta una historia a través de las genealogías. Es por ello

que en los procesos de cambio y continuidad cultural, el parentesco muestra ser uno de las pautas más persistentes. Y por eso mismo, los vínculos de parentesco constituyen un factor re-agregativo que permite agrupar a los migrantes en los lugares de destino.

En los contextos migratorios, las fronteras étnicas pueden mostrar cierta flexibilidad. En el caso de los mazahuas, las fronteras se amplían para incluir a quienes se unen conyugalmente con integrantes de su grupo y también para crear nuevos vínculos sociales que no comprometen los valores más profundos del grupo. Asimismo, se observan algunas modificaciones que tienden a fortalecer las redes parentales centradas en la madre.

Entender la pertenencia comunitaria en el lugar de destino de los emigrantes, la manera en que reconstituyen su etnicidad y sus fronteras, nos lleva a analizar cómo viven la pertenencia comunitaria los hombres y las mujeres y, con ello, el estudio de las relaciones de parentesco.

El parentesco es tan importante para los mazahuas como seguramente lo es para otras comunidades que se han extendido más allá de una región y de una nación a causa de la migración. Es, por tanto, una veta interesante por la cual se pueden explicar diversos fenómenos socioculturales en el mundo contemporáneo.

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Section 4: A Conversation Across Rural, Urban and National Borders: a Comparison Between Maya Migration to Cancún and Mexican Migration to Texas

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Introduction

The first chapter of my anthropological career has a major character, the Maya community of Chan Kom, in which I studied the Maya migration movement to Cancún, where Maya peasants become the *obreros* (proletariat), mainly construction workers and laborers of the service sector. This chapter started in 1986, with annual short visits, followed by a two year period, 1989 and 1990, when I lived in the community and in the peripheral barrio of Cancún, the region 101. Since then, I have been following year after year the highly dynamic transformation processes of the community, mainly dictated by the trans-local migratory movement towards Cancún.

I started as a faculty member in the Department of Anthropology at the University of North Texas, in Denton, in 1992. Denton is part of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan area in north Texas. Precisely because of the training and knowledge on migration provided by my ethnographic experience in Chan Kom, I felt a strong commitment to work with the immigrant community in Texas, disproportionately Mexican in the area.

Starting the Conversation between Cases

While working with the Latino immigrant community in Texas, I had the chance to focus on a phenomenon that I could not fully devote my ethnographic attention to during my work with the Mayas, mainly in connection to Maya migrant women: conversion to Protestantism. Conversion to Protestantism among immigrant Latino women in Texas has been connected to the transformation of their socio-economic roles as very active members of the labor market. This process is very similar to what Maya women experience when they migrate to Cancún, where they need to complement husband's wages with their economic contributions mainly from the informal economy. The anthropological interpretation of this phenomenon *a la Marxist* evidenced the religious conversion as the ideological reading of the socio-economic transformations of either Maya peasants migrating to Cancún, or Mexicans crossing to the USA. The institutional patriarchal hierarchy that characterizes Catholicism, within which women do not play relevant roles, contrast with the female niches hold in Protestant charismatic churches, where women fall in trance, speak in tongues and serve as mediators between Jesus Christ and the people. Thus, Protestantism provides the ideological base to better conceptualize the women's transformation as social and economic agents in the labor market. For further ethnographic analysis and anthropological interpretation of this religious phenomenon associated to migration displacement among women, see Re Cruz 1998.

In addition to this religious affinity expressed in the Latino immigrant community in Texas, and the Maya migrant community in Cancún, there was another interesting connection linked to the level of formal education. This becomes an indicator of the type of employment available

for Maya migrants in Cancun or Mexican immigrants in Texas and it determines how competitive the individual would be in the labor market. Usually, Maya families or Mexican immigrant families assume the migratory experience as a strategy to protect and support their children's educational development. These families see in their trans-local or transnational displacement an "economic change" towards "the better". Women particularly identify the access to better education and the husbands' increased wages as criterias to *mejorar* or improve their lives. Employers, particularly in Cancún, select their employees according to variables like: ethnic background, gender, age and level of schooling. In capitalism, wealth can be accessed upon the control of the labor force, and there is a stratification of the labor force, based on this relation. Formal education, opportunities of the labor market and ethnic and cultural background determine labor mobility or stagnation of what is called "labor segregation". Societies construct their own forms of labor segregation based on their control mechanism and wealth distribution. The urban context, either in Texas for Latino immigrants or Cancún for Mayas, assigns them, based on their education and formative trajectory, a particular type of employment, according to the type of segregation that occurs in the city. Thus, Maya migrants in Cancún settle at the periphery, in the *areas populares*. In Texas, the urban areas with high concentration of Latino immigrants are apartment complexes and mobile home parks located in particular "ghetto" areas. In this way, ethnic and cultural origin, formal education and qualification of workers link them to particular labor markets, like construction work and less remunerated jobs. Schooling becomes a strategy to access better paid jobs in the labor market and it always appears in the migrants or immigrants discourse to justify the crossing of the rural/urban or the transnational border: they made the move seeking "the dream" to prosper, with opportunities to access better paid jobs and a better formal education for their children.

The Role of Education in Migration

Let me devote a few minutes to elaborate the role of schooling in the migration dynamics, particularly in the Maya case. Throughout my work with the Mayas in Chan Kom, I could identify a political clash between those who migrate to Cancún and those who stay in the community. *The Two Milpas of Chan Kom* (1996) provides a further understanding of the multifaceted social, economic and cultural manifestations of this internal community conflict. The leaders of these two groups, the peasants and the migrants, were in a constant struggle for political representation in the community. The migrant group leaders were Priistas (members of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, abbreviated PRI in Spanish), young Mayas drop outs, who left the community in the early seventies during the infrastructural building euphoria of Cancún as a tourist empire, and they became small business entrepreneurs. The Mexican government encourages Maya migration to increase the supply of cheap labor to feed the economic development of Cancún. We know that international tourism revenues, as much as the revenues of Mexican immigrants in the USA, constitute major avenues of capital flow in the country. Thus, these early Maya migrants in Cancún facilitated the Priista government's implementation of strategies to encourage Mayas to migrate. For instance, the government's aggressive campaigns trying to convince peasants of the use of herbicides and fertilizers in the *milpas*, aimed at Maya migration. In order to buy these products, the Maya peasant needs cash, difficult to have access to in a subsistence peasant economy. Then, migration, as a source of cash through wages, becomes the most accessible strategy to acquire the capital to buy the herbicides and fertilizers.

In addition, the leaders of the migrant group are the testimony that through migration, “the dream” of economic prosperity can be achieved. For that, formal education is not required, as those early migrants who “made it” demonstrate. In reciprocity for recruiting Maya migrants, the Priista government greatly supported the political leadership of those early Maya migrants. They became to monopolize the political cargos in the community, bringing to Chan Kom a social irony that continues until today: these migrants, business entrepreneurs in Cancún are the political leaders of Chan Kom. On the contrary, most of those who stay in the community are affiliated to the PAN party; their leaders are intimately connected to the world of formal education: they are teachers in public schools (elementary and high school) and in the adult education programs. Actually, they use their education forums to spread their political and ideological campaigns against the PRI, against the world view and life style promoted through migration to Cancún.

Although we do not have the time to explore the phenomenon in Texas, I would just like to mention the abundant scholarly work on the connection between the immigrant Mexican community in Texas and the under-performance of Latinos in the school system (high rate of drop outs, school absenteeism, teen pregnancy, “truancy”, etc.). All of us are aware of the multiple and complex schooling political and policy strategies conducive to the discussion of “deficit theory” (Foley 1991, Olmedo 1997), or “subtractive schooling” (Valenzuela 1999), positions which openly show the institutional neglect, discrimination and stereotyping of our Latino students as disruptive underachievers in need of a behavioral discipline which rather erodes their social and cultural lives, castrates their dreams of social mobility, and channel their future aspirations towards the labor supply of the global capitalist endeavor. In this regard, we need to consider that the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan area is the fifth largest urban region in the nation, the largest and most diversified economy and the home for thousands of immigrant and refugees, an extraordinary supply of cheap labor.

In sum, as both cases indicate, Maya migrants in Cancún or Mexican immigrants in Texas, lack or deficient formal education becomes a major weapon that maintains these displaced communities in constant check mate without possibility of labor mobility and in a permanent stage of vulnerability subjected to exploitation. However, I would not like to reinforce the line of analysis that renders the migrants or immigrants “voiceless”, without opportunities or possibilities to reply, resist and respond to this economic and ideological “vulnerability”. Let me go very briefly over two ethnographic examples that evidence these resistance-responses to the exploitative effects of (im)migration.

Resistance Strategies

In Cancún tourist border zone, the characters are in and out: the tourists coming for leisure time and looking for exoticism and then leaving, and the natives, coming to work looking for cash income, and then, going back to their *barrios* at the periphery of town. Tourists exercise their power by promoting, constructing and packing a Maya culture, marketable enough to be consumed in multiple ways. Mayas in this tourist scenario recognize the Maya culture that has been manufactured and prepared to be sold for the tourist consumption. Mayas learn not only how to package the “true”, “authentic”, “ancient” Maya culture for the tourist consumption, but also they identify skills, strategies, dexterities to succeed in the market tourist economy. That is, their “in-and-outs” of the Cancún tourist scenario as proletariat promotes their investment in human, social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1986).

I conducted a Summer Ethnographic Field School in Chan Kom in 2007. I took this opportunity to update the information regarding plans to develop an ecotourism project in one of Chan Kom's *comisarias*, Muchucux. A cooperative of 42 families in Muchucux, a village of approximately 350 people, was working on this ecotourism project, as they called it. It integrated a set of five traditional Maya stick-and-thatch houses with a big central kitchen and communal bathrooms. This complex is located near a cenote (cave). The cooperative leader is a forty-year-old Maya with long experience as migrant in Cancún working in restaurants and hotels; the accumulated social and cultural capital while working in Cancún was invested in the organization of this cooperative. In his own words, "keeping the land is much more satisfying than keeping to the solid roads of Cancún."

We conducted surveys with their *secundaria's* students mainly to identify students' expectations when they graduate. Preliminary analysis of these surveys indicated that most of Muchucux's students expressed interest in working locally rather than migrating to Cancún.

Because of time constrains, I will just mention one case of resistance movement among the Latino community in Texas. Following the massive worksite raids in 2007, Latino students demonstrated an unprecedented walkout, protesting against discriminatory immigration policies. Latino youth in Denton demonstrated their civic involvement and their awareness of the national and local debate on immigration.

Some Concluding Notes

In an era of globalization and within the framework of translocal/national movements, this ethnographic comparative exercise pays special attention to the relationship between new societal forms and "place" and the theoretical implications of our understanding of an "ethnographic site". The analytical lynchpin of transnationalism has been "dynamism", "movement" and "fluidity" of people, capital, information, goods, in order to demonstrate how the phenomenon works. It has been my argument that "place" is quintessential for global ethnographers in which they can explore the sociopolitical dynamics that are re-constructing the social and political relations

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Section 5: Interconnectivity of Past and Present: Eating and Redefining the Indigenous in Mexico

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Introducción

Tanto en la antropología como en la sociología, se observa una creciente preocupación por las relaciones y vínculos existentes entre un proceso que ha venido conceptualizándose bajo el nombre globalización y los cambios en las formas culturales de las sociedades locales e indígenas.

Entre lo que llama la atención son las rutas metodológicas para apreciar la complejidad de las relaciones humanas y socioculturales de una localidad, no sólo enmarcadas en un proceso globalizador sino interconectadas en múltiples expresiones, manifestaciones, relaciones y acciones conscientes e inconscientes. Sin duda se ha superado el debate que considera la pertinencia de luchar por la preservación de la diversidad cultural para hacer frente al impacto de la globalización sobre las formas locales de existir, es decir resistir. Esto, a través de preservar saberes y practicas locales, desde una visión humanística, costumbrista y horizontal (Boisier 2001).

Lo cierto es que los procesos económicos, sociales y culturales actuales, gravitan sobre las comunidades humanas diversas, con identidades múltiples, condicionando constantemente a las nuevas formas de organización y de redefinición tanto en contextos locales como en sistemas más amplios de pertenencia. De algún modo entendemos que lo tradicional anclado a la cultural local debe adaptarse y reformularse constantemente, en su interconexión con otros procesos globales. Se trata de crear un diálogo consciente de interconectividad, donde resaltan mutuas relaciones de poder y de resistencia y se deja atrás el estudio de cómo uno afecta al otro y viceversa.

Al explorar las formas actuales de valorar los orígenes, de recuperar el sentido de orgullo, de redefinir la pertenencia y la identidad, nos confrontamos a nuevos retos metodológicos y antropológicos en esta era de la interconectividad con procesos globales. Una forma que aquí se propone es a través de diálogos entre tres aspectos que definen identidades: Huellas; Marcas y Legados.

Ahora bien, el tema de nuestra mesa trata de indígenas en centros urbanos después de la apertura de mercados (NAFTA) en América del Norte, y que mejor acercamiento a la post-cultura que estudiar la interconectividad entre el pasado indígena y la modernidad de los modos de vida de las poblaciones indígenas atrapadas por el crecimiento urbano y la globalización en México.

Así entonces, mi propuesta es abordar la interconectividad a partir de Huellas, rastros en las marcas y en los legados de la comida actual del pueblo otomí de la ciudad de Toluca.

Entre las huellas trataré de discutir las relaciones sociales y de género que persisten en la responsabilidad de obtener y preparar alimentos para el hogar, a pesar de las transformaciones sociales que trae consigo los procesos de urbanización, de inserción de las mujeres al mercado laboral, y la implementación de programas sociales antipobreza y la retracción del Estado para implicarse en programas de desarrollo rural y agricultura periurbana.

En las marcas o los rastros de marcas en los cuerpos, nos reflejará las conexiones de estas relaciones con los alimentos que provienen de la tradición campesina e indígena como el maíz, y que conforman las dietas tradicionales otomíes, y los alimentos procesados que se han incorporado a la dieta diaria de los hogares. Me refiero a las marcas que se registran a través de la desnutrición, la obesidad y la diabetes que caracterizan a estas poblaciones.

Aunado a lo anterior, subyacen los legados indígenas que constantemente se ven amenazados a desaparecer ante el consumo masivo de bienes, marcas tecnologías que corresponde a estilos de vida urbanos y modernos, por lo que surge la necesidad de recrear nuevos campos de análisis para re-definir a los pueblos indígena en un gran espectro de identidades posibles, y comprender en ellas, nuevos y viejos fenómenos ligados a las desigualdades sociales.

Los Otomíes

La mayoría de la población que se autodefine como otomí, conservan espacios ecológicos vitales, para seguir desarrollando la agricultura de subsistencia (donde predomina el cultivo de maíz criollo o nativo), el asentamiento de zonas industriales y urbanas en sus territorios originales, han captado la mano de obra local, y por otro lado, el establecimiento de desarrollos residenciales (habitationales), conforman cada vez más el paisaje otomí rur-urbano o periurbano (Barrientos 2004). Estos procesos de expansión urbana, hacen que los indígenas estén en constante redefinición social, cultural, política y económica. Creandose a su vez, nuevos espacios sociales relacionados con la identidad indígena, siendo la alimentación, uno de ellos.

Una de las características de las poblaciones periurbanas otomíes en el Estado de México, son que los altos y medio índices de marginalidad y pobreza no se diferecían a los encontrados en las a la poblaciones indígenas rurales. Por lo que nos interesó explicar este fenómenos a través de nuestro estudio sobre seguridad alimentaria y transiciones epidemiológicas en San Andrés Cuextotitlán (SAC) del municipio de Toluca (estudio realizado de septiembre 2009 a mayo de 2011), cuya población se estima de 10 mil habitantes, distribuidos en 8 barrios.

Huellas

La mayoría de los hogares otomíes de SAC, aún conservan tierra o parcela para cultivar maíz principalmente. Desafortunadamente ésta es cada vez más pequeña debido a la construcción de viviendas de los propios lugareños, aunado a la presión del crecimiento urbano, que conlleva al establecimiento de tiendas o comercios, escuelas etc. En promedio percibimos que ha habido una reducción de 5 hectáreas por parcela a 1 ½ en 25 años. En definitiva la productividad de maíz no es rentable, por lo que su producción es únicamente de autoconsumo.

Pese a ello, el cultivo del maíz en la zona requiere de uso intensivo de mano de obra, casi siempre familiar (incluyendo mujeres y niños). Además de que las mujeres se les ha asignado el rol de cuidadoras de las parcelas ya que la mayoría de los hombres trabajan en otras actividades no agrícolas, ellas siguen realizando las labores de preparación del maíz en nixtamal para hacer tortillas a mano. Lo que cambia con las localidades rurales, es la molienda que ahora se realiza en molinos semiautomatizados.

El proceso tradicional requiere de 5 horas diarias para tener tortillas calientes y frescas todos los días. En SAC, las mujeres invierten dos horas para ello, lo que no significa que exista una liberación de cargas de trabajo doméstico.

Sabemos que la asignación del trabajo doméstico y la división sexual, ha sometido a las mujeres a profundas desigualdades entre los géneros y sociales a través de la historia. Entre las que destaca, el bajo o nulo reconocimiento social del valor de su trabajo. Tampoco tenían acceso a la educación ni a los recursos productivos y naturales. En suma, el cultivo del maíz nativo sostenía sistemas patriarcales, donde las mujeres sufrían discriminación, explotación y exclusión.

En la última década, la mayoría de las niñas estudian en esta comunidad. El 30% de los hogares tienen jefatura femenina y el 40% de las mujeres entre 15 y 40 años de edad trabajan en mercados informales y precarios (con bajos ingresos y nulas prestaciones laborales). Solo el 20% de las jefas de hogar, anunció que eran propietarias de su casa, pero no tenían parcela.

Dos mil hogares se benefician del Programa Oportunidades (Programa de corte “asistencial” o compensario, focalizado que da apoyo directo condicionado a las mujeres madres, a través de transferencias monetarias). En promedio cada hogar recibe entre 1000 y 2000 pesos cada dos meses, y en general lo usan para comprar alimentos, vestido y zapatos o para pagar deudas familiares (inclusive deudas escolares). Debido a que el monto varía dependiendo del número de hijos e hijas en edad escolar, se puede decir que la deserción a nivel primaria es baja. Sin embargo, observamos que en la secundaria, existe más deserción de mujeres que de varones. Esto por dos razones principalmente: una por que se embarazan y otra porque tienen que trabajar para traer más dinero al hogar. Es de notarse que el crecimiento urbano residencial de Toluca demanda sobretodo fuerza de trabajo femenino.

Al parecer, las mujeres otomíes terminan haciendo tortillas a mano, y empleándose en trabajos domésticos a pesar de su avance educacional. En comparación con lo que sus madres y abuelas hicieron y tuvieron, las diferencias no son sustanciales. Ahora existe un gran número de madres solteras, lo que les exige a emplearse en trabajos precarios, poco estables e inseguros.

Además, vale la pena mencionar que SAC es considerada como una comunidad con alta prevalencia de violencia de género y se caracteriza por su peligrosidad debido a que existen varios grupos de jóvenes reveldes llamados “banda” o panadillas otomíes, lo cual no significa necesariamente que todos se dediquen a delinquir, aunque entre la población meztiza toluqueña se tiene la idea de que los otomíes son necios, rebeldes e idomables.

Ideas que también se transmiten en los discursos de las dietas campesinas tradicionales, las cuales se relacionan con sus claras consecuencias de su marginación al progreso:

desnutrición, altas tasas de mortalidad materno e infantil, analfabetismo, baja esperanza de vida y altos índices de morbilidad. Razones que equivocadamente construyeron una identidad falsa al relacionar la dieta tradicional o mono-dieta con la pobreza indígena y campesina. Esta es otra huella que se sigue sosteniendo en los discursos a pesar de que se ha demostrado que el origen de las desigualdades sociales no estriba en la cultura alimentaria tradicional, sino en su interacción con sistemas de dominación más amplios como es la expansión del capitalismo en su aserción neoliberal.

Marcas

Sin duda, todos los hogares de SAC dependen hoy en día del ingreso para comer y desafortunadamente, estos ingresos son siempre insuficientes para sobrevivir con dignidad, pues la pobreza periurbana o rural ahora tiene otros rostros, y muchos de estos, contradictorios a la idea de estar bien y que se inscriben en los cuerpos, dejando marcas profundas y degenerativas.

Los alimentos tradicionales derivados del maíz principalmente, subsisten pero con la conjunción de otros de origen multinacional, que junto con la expansión de productos electrónicos y telecomunicaciones no solo han ido modificando poco a poco la capacidad de los pueblos para reproducir sus tradiciones culinarias, sus modos de vida, y el medio en el que habitan, sino que han supuesto para la salud de la población; más problemas que ventajas. Uno de los efectos más visibles de estos cambios se inscribe en los cuerpos mal nutridos.

En efecto, la dieta campesina tradicional ha tenido severas transformaciones, afectando directamente la salud general de su población, pues por un lado prevalecen las enfermedades asociadas a la pobreza e inseguridad alimentaria, y por otra sobresalen las enfermedades crónicas degenerativas no contagiosas o no transmisibles que van de la mano con la globalización tanto alimenticia como de los estilos de vida. Estas enfermedades son las principales causas de muerte en todas las entidades federativas de México.

A consecuencia de los avances de la medicina como las vacunas, la promoción y prevención se han visto superadas las enfermedades infecciosas transmisibles en las comunidades indígenas, por las no transmisibles, llamadas “enfermedades típicas del estilo de vida” (Ramírez, 2005). En México estas enfermedades de origen metabólico son Obesidad y Diabetes Mellitus 2, las que ocupan primeros lugares de causa por morbilidad y mortalidad respectivamente.¹

El Estado de México, siendo la entidad federativa con mayor número de habitantes del país, este problema se acrecienta. De los un millón 642 mil 572 infantes entre 6 y 11 años de edad, el 42% presentan sobrepeso y obesidad, es decir 12% más que el promedio nacional². Sin embargo, la prevalencia de obesidad en SAC en este mismo grupo de edad fue de 29% casi el mismo que el nacional.

¹ Un informe reciente de la Organización de Cooperación y Desarrollo Económico (OCDE) (Sassi 2010) alerta sobre los problemas que causa la obesidad y la diabetes mellitus tipo 2, como altos costos en sus tratamientos, tendencia a recibir menos salarios, pérdida de fuentes de trabajo, etc.

² Informe de la Confederación Nacional de Pediatría, disponible en línea <http://www.eluniversal.com...>, Consultado el 2011-09-23.

En definitiva, el consumo de alimentos con altos contenido de hidratos de carbono es un patrón alimenticio que caracteriza a los/las escolares sin importar el origen de los ingresos de los hogares. En promedio están consumiendo casi 600 ml de bebida endulzante gasificada por escolar, y consumen además de su dieta tradicional (tacos) otros alimentos preparados en la industria de las comidas rápidas como son sopas instantáneas.

Ahora bien, las diferencias por género indican que las niñas presentan ligera pero no significativamente, menos problemas de sobrepeso y obesidad con respecto a los niños sin importar la condición del hogar al recibir o no remesas. Esto se debe principalmente porque ellas realizan más actividades, asignadas a su condición femenina³. Ellas relataron que después de asistir a la escuela tienen que realizar una serie de actividades domésticas para ayudar a sus madres. Así mismo, señalaron que las cargas de trabajo aumentan cuando sus padres están en casa. Los niños que tienen menos obligaciones domésticas y con el abandono paulatino de actividades agropecuarias (donde antes participaban activamente) son precisamente los que presentaron los índices más altos de prevalencia de sobrepeso y obesidad (26.2 % para comunidades del sur del estado y 33% para comunidades periurbanas), los cuales son comparables con los de la media nacional en el 2006.

En SAC observamos que las mujeres entre 12 y 17 años presentan ligeramente más obesidad que los varones. Es decir que por cada 10 jóvenes con sobrepeso y obesidad, 6 son mujeres y 4 hombres. La prevalencia de obesidad en este grupo de edad reflejó la misma obtenida a nivel nacional: 32.5 % para 2005.

Por su parte en SAC se destaca en datos preliminares, que sin importar el estado nutricional de los niños(as) y adolescentes, 7 de cada 10 afirmaron tener un pariente cercano con diabetes, y todos los y las que presentaron obesidad tenían parientes con esa enfermedad o habían fallecido por causa de la diabetes, de las cuales el 80% era femenino (madres, abuelas y tías). La marca invisible es la secuelas de altos concentrados de azúcar en la sangre que junto con el sedentarismo, se obtiene una combinación perfecta para aumentar el riesgo de desarrollar diabetes mellitus 2.

Se sabe que la diabetes mellitus es una enfermedad metabólica que es provocada por el exceso de azúcar en la sangre. Ciertamente las personas adoptan estilos de vida que ponen en peligro su salud y la de sus familias, pero muchos de estos comportamientos están relacionados estrechamente con la percepción de inseguridad y pérdida del bienestar (perder o no tener empleo, ingresos volátiles, criminalidad, no tener qué comer mañana) (Castillo *et al.* 2006), los cuales conforman un perfil epidemiológico más complejo.

Legado

¿Cómo dialogar entre el pasado y presente y entre lo local y lo global, sin cambiar nuestros estilos de vida que buscan confort a través de bienes de consumo? Así que, llego a la última parte de mi exposición: La innovación, la invención de una gran fantasía: el regreso del maíz nativo; nuestro gran legado, en un mundo globalizado.

³ Para adentrarse a la asignación de roles según el género en el medio rural así como sus transformaciones, léase: Vizcarra y Marín (2006).

Pero es un legado que no debe confundirse con la trampa de la nostalgia la cual se alimenta del espíritu caído de todos los mexicanos ante la violencia, sin importar clase, etnia ni género. Una falsa nostalgia que se alimenta del supuesto vacío de alternativas y vías de salida de este esquema de las últimas décadas. El legado que se debe rescatar es el que construye el del desarrollo de la conciencia colectiva. Entendiéndolo como las creencias compartidas y las actitudes éticas y morales que funcionan como una fuerza unificadora dentro de la sociedad. Una de esas formas es avanzar en la revaloración del consumo local. Esto es de alguna manera, el efecto contrario del regreso al pasado. De hecho, evitar un regreso nostálgico al pasado, es parte del desarrollo de la conciencia colectiva. Se trata de entender que la vuelta al pasado no podría resolver el presente ni responder a los desafíos del futuro.

En segundo lugar, debemos conseguir que la intención del bienestar con nuevas relaciones sociales, humanas y ambientales sea compartida por una gran mayoría de las sociedades implicadas. El fin es construir el “imaginario” del consumo del estar bien o bien estar, pues nos permite entender desde la reflexión de la identidad a la reflexión sobre la riqueza de la diversidad, cuestiones que tienen que ver con la ética y la cultura. Se trata de cambiar las creencias compartidas que nos impiden observar de manera, consiente, razonable y sensata; que otra vida es posible.

Reflexión final

Los diálogos entre huellas, marcas y legados entrelazados en la comida actual de los otomíes periurbanos, ejemplifica la necesidad de recrear nuevos campos de análisis para redefinir a los pueblos indígena en un gran espectro de identidades posibles, y comprender en ellas, nuevos y viejos fenómenos ligados a las desigualdades sociales.

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Section 6: The Co-Construction of Knowledge in the Context of Studies on the Mobility and Governance of Aboriginal People in Québec Cities

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Introduction

Community-partnered research differs from more traditional research in that it requires, from the outset: 1) meeting various institutional actors; 2) mobilizing and interrelating people not only from academia but also from different bodies and organizations within society; 3) the complementarity of disciplinary and practical expertise; 4) the partners' collaboration on research questions developed collectively; 5) the partners' collaboration regarding societal challenges, also identified collectively; 6) the desire to share knowledge and experiences; 7) an openness in regard to the notion of knowledge and know-how; and 8) a continual concern with the social integration of knowledge. In its very definition, this type of research aims for social relevance, application, dissemination and mobilization of knowledge.

In a situation of community-partnered research, the conditions for producing new knowledge necessarily change. From this perspective, we can say that community-partnered research can become a tool for social change while contributing to the advancement and renewal of knowledge, whether in anthropology or other social sciences disciplines. Over the next few minutes, I'm going to present a specific community-partnered research experience—that of the ODENA Research Alliance—and then underline some of the methodological and theoretical effects of this type of approach.

Urban Aboriginal Population in Québec

The ODENA Research Alliance was set up in 2008. From an institutional viewpoint, it brings together Québec universities and organizations working for the welfare of the urban Aboriginal population, that is, Aboriginal people who don't live on reserves. In Québec, Aboriginal people live either in specially set aside areas commonly called reserves or communities (there are 56 such sites across Québec) or in urban areas, outside these specially designated areas. For a long time, most Aboriginal people in Québec lived on reserves. Today, it is estimated that more than 60% of the total Aboriginal population lives in Québec's cities; more than 45 Québec urban areas now include an Aboriginal population. Aboriginal people live in cities in order to study, find work, get health care, live with their families and raise their children.

Life in the communities is difficult and often constraining due to the lack of effective economic levers, resources and adequate services. For many people, leaving their community is the only way to survive. This migration from the communities to the cities has increased over the past twenty years. When Aboriginal people come to the cities, they face other difficult realities: unemployment, racism, discrimination, poverty, lack of services and lack of housing.

Beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, a distinct social movement gradually developed around this Aboriginal population on the move in order to compensate for the lack of services and

resources but also to support people leaving their communities of origin: that is how places offering services and sharing, which became known as Native friendship centres, were created in various Québec urban areas. This movement acquired a federative structure in the late 1980s: the Regroupement des Centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec.

Over time, Native friendship centres have become important learning and training organizations for thousands of Aboriginal people. Militating for Aboriginal peoples' rights and defending their interests, Native friendship centres work on a daily basis to foster a better understanding of the issues, challenges and problems of Aboriginal city-dwellers, not only by non-Aboriginal Québec citizens, but also by their fellow Aboriginal citizens living in the communities. Since their inception, Native friendship centres have spawned numerous initiatives that have led to the setting up of new programs and services for Aboriginal people who find themselves in cities. Native friendship centres have thus become, over the years, special places for the expression of the needs, aspirations and demands of Aboriginal people in cities.

Over the past few years, the centres have been facing new challenges: an ever-growing and increasingly mobile clientele whose needs are intensifying, the emergence of a new generation of Aboriginal people born in cities, the advent of a neo-liberal society that is transforming the labour market and deepening inequalities, and the state's disengagement from many social programs. The ODENA Research Alliance was formed in view of these considerations and concerns.

ODENA Research Alliance

Native friendship centres (and the provincial federative organization) thus became partners with four Québec universities in 2008. But over and above the institutions, the ODENA Research Alliance also brought together people representing these Aboriginal organizations (leaders, decision makers, practitioners), researchers from eleven social science disciplines and students from all university levels. All told, the ODENA Alliance includes about 40 people.

In terms of research, ODENA has two main objectives: 1) encouraging the joint production of new knowledge likely to support the social reconstruction and decolonization efforts undertaken by Aboriginal leaders and decision makers from the Native friendship centre movement; and 2) providing these leaders and decision makers with the tools needed to define culturally relevant public policies. "Culturally relevant" policies are programs and measures whose development is based on approaches and lifestyles specific to Aboriginal people as well as on social regulatory mechanisms that are more in tune with the internal functioning of Aboriginal societies, both modern and historic.

The partnership set up among all these actors is situated well "upstream" from the actual research activities: the creation of the partnership occurred before the research questions and their connections to societal challenges were defined. That is why, from the beginning of their activities, the ODENA Alliance partners developed a common charter that sets out the following ethical values: 1) respect; 2) equity; 3) sharing; 4) commitment; and 5) trust. These values were discussed by all the members of the Alliance on several occasions.

They also developed a governance structure representing the institutions concerned and the various categories of members: researchers, students and Aboriginal collaborators. This structure reflects the values and vision adopted collectively. Only afterwards a research

program was developed, as well as action plans for training, dissemination and mobilization of knowledge. In each case, however, we ensured that all Alliance members participated in one way or another in the various activities. For example, researchers don't only do research activities, just as Aboriginal collaborators are not confined to the other activities.

Obviously, researchers' primary contribution and expertise still lie in research and in their abilities to study and analyze social phenomena; but their involvement also includes student training and the dissemination and promotion of their work. Nowadays, most researchers incorporate these complementary activities directly into their practice, but these generally occur after the research activity. In the context of the ODENA Alliance, information isn't only disseminated after the research is completed, but circulates continually throughout the process.

In short, the main difference between a more traditional research approach and a community-partnered research experience like the ODENA Alliance ultimately lies in a single term: process. We are interested in research not as an end but rather as a process of understanding intended to respond to social needs of various kinds. We continually place the research function within the societal challenges that are mobilizing ODENA actors.

Methodological and Theoretical Effects

What can we say now about the effects of a research conducted within a partnership situation, from both the methodological and theoretical perspectives? Are these spin-offs different from those stemming from more traditional or individualized research practices that only concern researchers and their students? Is the scope of community-partnered research greater than in a more traditional research approach? If so, why and how? What are the advantages of bringing together researchers and collaborators from outside academia and having them work together?

From the methodological viewpoint, we can make the following observations based on the experience of the ODENA Alliance:

- Community-partnered research fosters the complementarity of methodological procedures and approaches.

Since researchers and their partners work together, the same research question may become the focus of a number of data collections. Various techniques and tools (in-depth interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, surveys, case studies and statistical analyses) can be combined, and several information sources can be used. The subsequent analyses allow for data triangulation as well as the production of a range of knowledge products stemming from the analysis.

- Community-partnered research allows important data validation stages to be incorporated into the research process.

These validation exercises allow comparing the analyses produced with the realities observed by actors in the field. They allow for a continual recontextualization of the information and for new light to be shed on this information by Aboriginal collaborators.

- Community-partnered research directly encourages interdisciplinarity.

The presence of researchers from different disciplines requires that several levels of questioning be considered. This also allows studying of various dimensions of the same phenomenon.

- Community-partnered research, in the context of the ODENA Alliance, directly encourages transculturality.

This is something specific to the area of research relating to Aboriginal peoples. We are in fact automatically faced with knowledge systems that differ from scientific knowledge systems. This situation, which also has intellectual repercussions (which I will talk about in a few minutes), requires that researchers show a special openness and ability to listen. Aboriginal collaborators can thus suggest new means of data collection and data access.

- Community-partnered research offers unique learning opportunities for students.

Given its pedagogical goal and its initial commitment to training, community-partnered research becomes an especially fruitful laboratory for students participating in ODENA Alliance activities. They can thus perfect their methodological training and are more quickly made aware of the advantages of interdisciplinarity.

- Community-partnered research encourages a variety of ways of interacting with Aboriginal actors.

In many disciplines, there is no automatic connection with the field (in an anthropological sense). One has only to think, for example, of law or political science, where research traditions are more intra-academic. Community-partnered research opens up new doors for these researchers and offers direct access to Aboriginal collaborators and partners. This is for many a new experience and an opportunity to compare their own research questions with Aboriginal realities.

From a theoretical and conceptual perspective we can make the following observations:

- Community-partnered research leads to exploring new questions and to defining of new concepts.

We developed a totally new type of questioning regarding the concept of an Aboriginal civil society, a concept that is entirely new in Québec and Canada. It was in fact our Aboriginal collaborators that created this concept, and asked us to document and characterize it. We also defined new mobility indicators in order to better understand not only the presence of Aboriginal people in Québec cities, but also the type of movement between reserves and cities, as well as the mobility dynamics specific to the urban Aboriginal population. Here again, Aboriginal collaborators and partners guided the researchers, as the existing notions did not answer their questions.

- Community-partnered research, again in the context of the ODENA Alliance, made the researchers more aware of the existence of Aboriginal knowledge.

For most researchers and students, the very idea that Aboriginal people might hold specific knowledge, organized into a system and passed on from one generation to the next, is

something completely new to them. In ODENA, they have the opportunity to learn about this particular universe of knowledge, and about different intellectual traditions. The transcultural approach that I mentioned assumes in this respect its full significance.

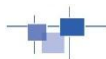
- Community-partnered research helps to document the development of culturally relevant public policies.

The idea of “culturally relevant” social policies already requires a type of conceptual gymnastics that cannot be avoided. In order to go beyond the declarations and even demands in this respect, researchers are being asked to create new reference corpuses that will allow us to better respond hopefully to urban Aboriginal people’s needs and thus directly improve this population’s living conditions.

In this respect, the approach of knowledge coproduction takes on its full meaning since the challenge is to combine the advancement of knowledge with the advent of a society that recognizes the “Aboriginal difference.” After centuries of colonization devoted to obliterating Aboriginal peoples’ lands, identities and cultures, the least that social research can do today is helping reducing this attempted obliteration or, in other words, contributing to the visibility of the Aboriginal world. Research could then truly become a tool for social change.

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| Final Comments |

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One of the strength of this session, without any doubt, rests in the attempt to deal with indigenous peoples in the three NAFTA countries (Mexico, United States and Canada). This trilateral approach has its origin in a research project carried out by Cristina Oehmichen with the support of DIALOG, the Aboriginal People Research and Knowledge Network, and which recruited most of the participants in this session. The original question was how come similar processes in the three countries such as “migration” are studied with different conceptual and methodological apparatus? Even more, we could ask, how come similar processes have different names in specific national research traditions? The aim of this session was not precisely to answer these questions, but the idea of revisiting the concepts of the methods certainly is one of its threads, moreover explicitly mentioned by M. Bianet Castellanos when she says that mobility provides a challenging conceptual lens.

Contrary to my colleagues, I am relatively new to the field of migration as an object of study but I do share an interest and some experience in trying to understand the specificities of being indigenous in times of globalization. I recently had begun a research on the integration of Yucatec Mayans in the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program, a bilateral program between Mexico and Canada. It is a research by which I hope to deepen our knowledge of the interplay of class, race, gender and generation with mobility in the context of neo-conservative capitalism. In the words of Altha Cravey (2005:378), I hope to show how the “regional, national, and transnational regulatory regimes intersect local and regional politics of work in ways that reinforce racialized wage differentials and therefore make transnational migration necessary and profitable”. It is with this framework in mind, a framework of political economy and intersectionality, that I have listened to my colleagues and that I am trying to share these comments.

Of course, mobility is central to all the papers in this session, all of them dealing with the mobility of persons. However this kind of mobility is only one among four, and all the papers have also dealt with other types as well, the second type being the mobility of goods both material and immaterial; the third type being the mobility of money and finance; and finally, the fourth type being the mobility of signs, symbols and norms. We could call this last type the mobility of ideas. This includes the mobility of, for example, indigeneity between the rural Maya culture and the urban spaces as dealt with by Bianet Castellanos; this also includes the mobility of research and knowledge, a point dealt with by Carole Lévesque showing that another type of research “with” the people and not “on” the people is possible moreover avoiding the paternalistic undertones of participatory research.

The use of the concept of mobility, because it has so many dimensions, is likely to have many methodological consequences, one of these being “uncertainty” as Cristina Oehmichen emphasized. In fact, each one of the mobilities I listed intersects with all the others. At the same time, these intersections can be examined on different scales, in different spaces and territories, including the body as Ivonne Vizcarra has done in her paper.

The landscape is complex as we have more here than the classical complementary opposition between the structural scale and the individual. At this point, we should ask what

are the methodological implications of all this? Should we consider the migration process on all the different scales at the same time? The answer is perhaps affirmative. Then, in the words of Alicia Re Cruz, how to analyze migration in constant flux? The answer, as she and others have demonstrated, lies in the fact that one of the scales for which anthropologists are especially well prepared still is the one of the lived experience. This means taking into consideration the experience of migration while applying the ethnographic method. In the words of Fitzgerald, “The ‘field’ of ethnographic inquiry is not simply a geographic place waiting to be entered, but rather a conceptual space whose boundaries are constantly negotiated and constructed by the ethnographer and members” (2006: 1, 3).

One could think that one of the results of these “negotiation” and “construction” in the case of indigenous people has been the importance given to identity as several participants have dealt with this today. However, listening to Lourdes Gutiérrez on the role of technology and media, I would tend to think that the result in methodological terms is the leveling out of the scales, as they tend to disappear in the virtual world. Perhaps we should add a new scale, a virtual one, which would include all the scales at once. The question here would be, do we really need a methodological device such as scales? If we remember, as Anna Tsing (2000) brilliantly stated, that scales are not real but rather are social constructions, perhaps we could get rid of them. But the fact is that even though they are not real, they have real effects. Even though we would try to get around hierarchies, they do hierarchize, as M. Bianet Castellanos demonstrated dealing with a migrant circuit situated within local, regional and international spaces. I think scales continue to be relevant from a methodological point of view provided we take them as metaphors for the construction of inequalities and the more so when we deal with people such as indigenous who are located at the intersection of so multiple hierarchies.

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