

Master's Research Project: Transient Migrations and Responses to Effective Change for Mixtec Indigenous Youth

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research was developed not knowing the outcome.

The primary goal was to find an indigenous group that resided in the Monterey Bay region of the Central Coast of California. Thanks to the Pajaro Valley Unified School District's Migrant Education Office, this goal was accomplished by the introduction of the Mixtec culture of Oaxaca, in Southern Mexico.

The research began by 'hanging out' with the Mixtecs at Adult Education English class building a trust and familiarity. Their primary language is Mixteco. Lessons were in Spanish to learn English. The project all fell into place after being introduced to Lucia, a trilingual 25 yr. old Mixteca.

The secondary goal was in understanding their environmental relationship to identity. Since the Mixtecs are immigrants it was necessary to 1) get acquainted with their history, and homeland 2) attempt to understand purpose and risks to 'sneak across the border 3) adjustment to life in California.

Eight interviews were performed. Seven interviews were in their native language, Mixteco. Lucia's interview was in English and Spanish. A hand held device recorded the interviews. All interview questions were formulated in a partnership with Lucia. The translations are composed genuinely from her indigenous perspective.

To acquire first hand photos, three cameras were used by the informants as they worked 'on the job' in the agricultural fields. The interviewees from their personal files donated pictures of their Oaxacan villages.

Common themes were identified and are summarized in this report. The data was collected and compiled.

The research brought forth a narrative nonfiction, young adult book, requested by the Mixtec students, as the rest of this project lays it out.

CHAPTER 1. Meeting the Mixtecs

TRANSIENT MIGRATION and Responses to Effective Change for Mixteco Indigenous Youth

“Indigenous people have traditionally formed a bond with the land and environment in which they live and this bond has shaped much of their ways of knowing their worldviews and forms of consciousness that make up their indigenous knowledge systems which underlie cultural traditions and practices.” (Barnhardt)

The above statement is what I have always maintained as a passionate interest in directing my life and immersing my chosen field of Cross Cultural Studies.

As a self proclaimed geographer/cartographer from my undergraduate work, I have always been fascinated by the statement, “man/peoples and their relationship to their environment.” I have planned my studies, my career and my travels around the notion of indigenous peoples and how important the influences of the natural environment as the basis for identification in all realms of culture.

As life unfolded for me, I have been given numerous opportunities to test out this theory. Naturally, when I was a village teacher in Anvik (Iditarod School District), Kake (U.S. Forest employee in Tongass National Forest) I received first hand knowledge of the environmental influence that the Athabascan and Tlingit cultural groups, through what seemed to be osmosis, maintained their identity. It was exciting to live amongst the ‘romanticized’ awe of their subsistence lifestyle. It was indeed a pleasure working with the Tlingit and logging students as I lived in my tipi on the USFS helipad. (I still recall when the oldest Tlingit in Kake came up to the tipi and stated, “I have been Indian all my life and never seen a tipi!” Ha!) In Anvik, my Athabascan friends would laugh at the thought of me owning a dog team...when they were all hip with the latest snow machine.

Eight plus years later, circumstances beyond my control lifted me out of Alaska and back into my home state of California. I held a longing to be immersed somewhere in the Golden State that would duplicate the sacred flow of culture with the land and values that I had experienced in rural Alaska. Living with the Tlingit and the Athabascan people established within me high ‘standards’ of cultural ecological expectations. This strong passion has led me to cling to the UAF Cross Cultural Studies Masters program all these years. I had finally found my fascination to the ‘truth’ in cultural identity and the invisible reality of environmental influence. The humanness of one’s worldview had seemed to be distinguished by isolated, remote wilderness type land. (without neighboring ranches, as seen here in California)

Unfortunately, the romanticized fascination I had for indigenous people living in their pristine environment is not what I encountered here in California. The idea of ‘one with the environment’ shifted drastically with the American Indian tribes.

I worked years with 52 tribes at the American Indian Center in an urban setting and then a few years on an isolated reservation with the Pomo Tribe. I couldn’t help but notice that perhaps the remote environment of the Alaskan Natives played a major role in comfort and identity. I

believe the ability to choose a lifestyle of generational subsistence played a remarkable role in the Alaskan Natives integrity of choice. I recall sitting through many online graduate classes listening to the analysis of the Alaskan Natives. I could not help but think that because they were protected by wilderness and a grand historical reference to place that they were 'better off'. The indigenous people I was surrounded by were consistently adapting to place but in a way that was not soothing or if I dare say, full of integrity.

For example, when I served as the American Indian Education Director and American Indian Outreach Specialist, in San Jose, California,

I encountered the sad story of these indigenous peoples shaking off their Native American identity (due to the Relocation Act of the 1950's Lakota Sioux are predominate) Many of the tribal people were often pretending they were LATINO, because it was safer and easier. The purpose of the American Indian Center ironically, was to build tribal identification.

Years later while working in the environmental field (EPA-Environmental Protection Agency) on the Hopland Band Pomo Indian Reservation in Northern California the opposite realization came true. On the Rez, the Pomos had inter-fighting regarding roll numbers based on generational speculation within the tribal families. There was a common belief that certain members did not belong on the 'Rez' because they were 'really' Mexican. Skin color played a big part in this discrimination. It is interesting to note that all the tribal members had Spanish last names. Now here was a 1000+acre oak woodland rolling hills reservation where the tribe chose not use their natural environment. Except for a couple of young adult pot growers in the backcountry the tribe used only about 25 acres for roadways and neighborhood regions. My role, as EPA Acting Director/Coordinator was to be out daily in the field monitoring streams, fish counts, water quality and solid waste sights and year round. I never encountered tribal people.

My point is that the indigenous interactions of the Urban Indian who feel like maintaining a mask of Latino to 'fit in'; to a Pomo on their reservation accepting food weekly from a delivery truck and not choosing to use the land..... have led me to question what is it that distracts indigenous peoples from their 'oneness' with the environment and essence of self?

From all the Cross Cultural graduate classes, this observation of transient

patterns while maintaining oneness to the land is seemingly only decided by individual character of self. My inquiries can only begin to rely on the natural form of learning and the individual's choice of changing their environment for the notion of a better lifestyle regulated by monetary gain. It is curious to me that indigenous people are choosing to surrender their relationship to generational land and their cultural 'comfort zone'/integrity.

This is why I have chosen the Mixteco people out of Oaxaca, Mexico for my project. They appear not to carry any blame or 'attitude' toward others of their cultural group. The Mixtecs seem to be full of immense gratitude. Does history, geography or environment explain this attitude? Or is it because they are survivalists? These indigenous peoples are illegal immigrants and somehow assimilate their identity to consistently changing environments. I want to inquire

about their “relationship of the exterior landscape with that of their interior sacred place of a familiar landscape of memory”. Kawagley/Barnhardt)

My focus will be including the relationship of their experience from a naturalistic point of view. “Native thinking is acquired, as intuitive, as a learned behavior from the culture, family and environment.” (Kawagley/Barnhardt)

If family, land and identity are truly gifts based down from generations and influence than what of the immigrants that chose to leave behind their generational familiarity? For many immigrants knowledge is based on season and place. Often the new place is an unknown for the Mixtecs as transient immigrants.

What I would like to do for my Masters project is to create a children’s book or an easy reader for and about the Mixtecs Indigenous youth. (Intersections of Worldviews) These indigenous young adults come from numerous villages throughout the state of Oaxaca primarily during February and March. Their plight is to immigrate to the United States as teenagers, work and begin families. They choose to create a lifestyle in conditions that are not pleasant and below poverty level. In the agricultural industry, here in California, these young Mixtecs (Oaxaquenos) are at the ‘bottom of the totem pole’. The Mexican-Spanish (Mestizos) immigrants are considered at the ‘top of the ladder’ in the farm worker hierarchy.

I want to take the naturalistic approach in the book and reveal how the experiential experiences of effective change has influenced or designed a modern Mixtec group while still maintaining their genuine understanding of indigenous ‘roots’. What is this intuitiveness of the Mixtecs’ adaptive integrity? These trans-cultural influences are serving as foundations of individual behavior duplicated through place names.

Kawagley spoke of the ‘natives mind as a living being’. After working with the Native Americans and now the Mixtecs, I find that in contrast to Kawagley, depending on the individual natives place, that the native powerful mind is not nurtured daily by the individual to earn gifts from the Creator. Kawagley’s notion is defined profoundly in isolated remote locations, and abundant in subsistence opportunities. Has the pristine environment of an isolated wilderness served to sustain the Alaskan/Canadian natives culturally due to subsistence, diet, lack of adjustment and only working with familiar resources and generational identity?

The natives I have worked with do not, if I dare say, have this daily ambition for wisdom to be obtained. My experiences lead me to argue that the humanness of the worldview does not maintain the ‘harmony, peace and balance’ without the rich land base to invite the influence of balance. Now I do believe that as humans anyone by choice can balance and align their mind, body and soul. The Urban Indians and Pomos for example, carry a festering or unrest to strive for recognition of identity through historical guilt or blame as a ‘well deserving’ of social services handouts, or carry a bitterness motivated by distractions of depression.

I want to discover what it is about the Mixtecs that make them practice pure humbleness through the art of gratitude.

I believe that I am comparing the land of rural Alaska with the entire native landscape of the continental United States and the definition of adaptive integrity.

The Mixtec students that I have been working with are from the Adult Education English class, (18-21 yrs. old) and Out of School Youth (OSY) (13-21) English class. These students are all foreign born. Approximately 90% of these young people were born in Mexico or Central America. As of the year 2005, there are about 300,000 immigrants in California that are not enrolled in school. They arrive here only to work in the agricultural fields. (broccoli, artichokes, strawberries, brussel sprouts, lettuce, chard, kale-coastal crops)

This is the population I plan to focus on in my Master's book project. The vision I have for the possible Intersections book is that it will contribute to these Mixtec youths cultural practices multi dimensionally.

First, it will allow their story of transient migration to be understood and appreciated by all who offer services to this population throughout the state of California. It is my hope that the distribution of Intersections will reach the various associated agencies, including teachers.

The second part of cultural practices will be implemented by the sheer joy of getting their story told.

The OSY Mixtec students I have been working with are absolutely fascinating! These ambitious students nearly know three languages, Mixteco, Spanish and English! When I am in the classroom with them, they are so dedicated to learning English, even though they have been working all day in the fields. They come to night school two days a week. It is my hope that they will not loose their native language and by our creation of their cultural storybook, in their three languages that these students will hopefully evolve towards a proud remembrance and character of a reflective self evolution. With the OSY students their 'intellectual capacities of everyday survival' will be written in a survival mode of existence. Even their teachers and administrators are eager to hear and see their students' voices produced.

With the Mixtec students there is a strong survival mode. Many are untruthful about their age so that they may obtain work. Naturally, the field owners or 'jefes' know not to inquire about any farm workers age. There are also some of these young adults who choose to deliberately get pregnant even as young as thirteen. Services for these 'anchor babies' and youth range from health care, nutrition, education and housing assistance.

My plan is to interview a group of Mixtec students. I then plan to create this book, Intersections beginning with their tales about leaving their villages in Oaxaca and coming to the United States. My goal is to share, through their stories, how long they knew growing up in their villages, that they would not be spending their teenage life amongst their 'safety net' of their Mixteca environment. The courage that it took for these young boys and girls to pack up and leave their homes is truly amazing! I want to capture their stories so that they can be proud of who they were, and are becoming. Upon interviewing these students it is my hope that they will explain their worldview before and after life in the United States, hardships leaving their mountain valleys of family/home and learn from them their motivational endurance to

continually seek out towards the unknown. I would like to reveal where exactly is the intersection of adaptive integrity?

The book hopefully will contribute to their cultural practices by empowering the students to maintain their indigenous roots of strength as they gain new insights. Once again, the Mixtec students will create this book about their life. These Mixtec teenagers are thrilled to be able to share their stories to the world of educators and fellow students. Everyone has a story, but not everyone feels unique in the story of a transient lifestyle and environment. These young teens have experienced amazing physical, environmental, mental, spiritual feats and dangers. Do their 'whys' of encouragement run deep within each individual's soul? Perhaps this is where Kawagley and Barnhardt meant when they mentioned, "Native's mind is a living being".

The INTERSECTIONS book will reveal their version of multiple land changes and how their strong bond was shaped with these varying landscapes in Oaxaca and California...as transient immigrants. Was there a Mixtec worldview passed down to the kids or is it lost via migration at such a young age? As one student, Jesus (21 yrs. old) told me, he wants to share his story so that other students younger than him will not have to go through what he experienced by coming to the U.S. He wants to pass on his story so that other young Mixtec can learn from him.

These transitional immigrants are strong, humble and stout! This book is needed to describe their journey. Mixtecs are all over the U.S., but their story from their point of view is not known. By producing their insights as children growing up in mountainous pueblos surrounded by a familiar landscape and knowing they would be leaving as teenagers is a new and important story, especially to the students. Unschooled intelligence brought on by intuition, which Gardner believes, begins at home. Well, I believe that the Mixtecs will be explaining if their courage is a god given power or a coping device.

There are only six children's books written on the Mixtecs most are about legends. The Mixtec organizations and community will understand their worldview through commonality of their regional homeland. By depicting their stories visually they will not only have a bond of cultural bearing, but, a sameness of purpose and well being. The shame that is often associated with illegal immigration, as an indigenous person, will be smothered with strength and veracity of character by reading Intersections. Subsistence takes on another form of reference in their plight. These young adults are choosing to live in a below means of subsistence, existing out on the desert where lack of safety and no protection is found except by paying a 'coyote' thousands of dollars. An adaptive integrity of the Mixtecs will be uncovered, deciphered and explained as many of the individuals stories will be compared and contrasted.

The following quotes jumped out at me and are inspiring me to seek what I believe. "Indigenous people have traditionally acquired their knowledge through direct experience in the natural world."....."the 'laws' are continually tested in the context of everyday survival."
(Indigenous Knowledge Systems-Barnhardt/Kawagley)

The Mixtec youth are tested in competency by their relationship to daily survival. "Tested in a real world context." (Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Barnhardt/Kawagley 2005) "...where a

lifeway that goes beyond making a living can be restored.” Kawagley-A Yupiaq Worldview (1995)

“I tried to gain a better understanding of how the Yupiaq and modern ways of knowing and doing are made to work together in everyday life and whether compromises are made between them or one is favored over the other.” Kawagley

If we look at Native intelligence of knowing, harmony and peace, I have observed that the Mixtecs are not into power or dominance, especially out in the agricultural arena. They are such a softspoken people. Kawagley states, “words shut us down.” Their intuitive knowing “feels right” and is received. The Mixtecs listen well. This is easily accomplished because they are in environments where English and Spanish are spoken. Most all Mixtecs speak their native language of Mixteco.

What is the Mixteca environmental way of thinking if the environment maintains a type of intelligence of its own in transition?

The Mixtecs are in the same category as the Maoris article by David Thomas, where “living in a society dominated by other ethnic groups whereas the ethnic minority status is a stressor (ex. jobs) and provision of services and social support are run by the dominate group and the (Mixtecs) are invisible and underrepresented. Localization is used to refer to the process of elaborating psychological concepts derived from the cultures of indigenous peoples and non dominant peoples whose conceptions of psychological processes are usually invisible to the dominate groups in their societies.” (David Thomas, 1986).

I am attempting to find at what point the cultural shift takes place...what is the known intersecting point of surrendering?

To Surrender and thus Allow.....allow the absorption of place to take hold and transform.

INTROSPECTIVE SUMMARY

In closing, since I have been in this Master’s program my view has expanded tenfold. It has felt so good to consistently read about the efforts and sameness of my above simple fascination and to be immersed in the world of literature and peoples. It is as if we have our own culture within world cultures.

It has definitely been a detriment that I have not been in Alaska and have taken so long to complete this degree. I have learned that my vocabulary has become outdated in the field. (Place based education vs. outdoor education, responses to change vs. adaptation, naturalistic intelligence vs. love of the outdoors etc.) I would love to have been surrounded by all of you and fellow colleagues to bounce off ideas and questions.

CHAPTER 2. Understanding the Mixtecs

For a long time, I thought it impossible to study indigenous people in Santa Cruz County.

For a long time, I have rode my bike past miles of strawberries and brussel sprout fields surrounded by spectacular ocean views and rolling hills.

For a long time, the often bent over farmworkers have kept me company on this isolated roadway.

For a long time, I have waved at the farmworkers and wonder what their lives were all about. I often pondered, with a tinge of embarrassment; about the recreational pleasure I was experiencing compared to their menial laborious work.

I would never have guessed that the simple act of a wave would connect me to this Master's research, coincidentally.

After this Literature review, I now ride by with a more thorough understanding and appreciation of the Mixtec farmworkers. I also now wonder if any of them are my Mixtec contacts.

I began this research in the Chicano section of the San Jose University library. I found lots of Mexican border crossing and farmworker history and less about indigenous. This void of information was the beginning of a search for understanding in the role of the Mixtec throughout time.

I could only speculate, at this phase of research, that it may be because we are in a period of transition in the farmworker identity between the Mestizos and the Mixtecs.

The Mixtecs are now the migrant farmworkers and the Mestizos carry seniority in the stable jobs. Also, Mixtecs are not Chicano.

RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHED

Alvarado, Arturo Rocha. (1977). *Cronica de Azatlan- A Migrant's Tale*, Octavio Romano V. Ph.D. (Ed.). A Quinto Sol Book.

Even though this book is very outdated, its' story is still very alive! It is written in bilingual (Spanish/English) and represents a book similar to what I hope resembles my final project, *Intersections*. Written from the first person Alvarado, a Texas Mestizo farm worker, places the reader in direct relationship with his peers in the Rio Grande. The tales describe the hardships, their way of life, and the vital role they play in bringing food to all of our tables. He describes the migrant workers' having an 'unfailing spirit of hope' and depicts them as "philosophers in their own right and their struggles for justice". Alvarado accentuates life of the migrant worker with the long winters on the road traveling the back of a truck searching for work, or dealing with an illness in a strange town; frustrating efforts to obtain better working conditions, and

difficulties of obtaining a decent education for their children. He writes, “There is another type of hope one cannot help but feel upon, and that is seeing a strawberry plant grow or an artichoke ripen, the geese flying south for the winter.....the hope or dream of characterizing oneself as a “dropout from the Migrant Academy”. We are an indentured people who ransomed our lives to survive, so we can make payments home. As migrants we attack the fields like the cavalry and yet, our field is a ‘prison without walls’. (pp.39) It is intriguing to remind oneself that Alvarado and his peers are not Mixtecs, yet, as Mestizos they once experienced what the Mixtecs are now encountering.

Bade, Bonnie. (n.d.) *Alive and Well: Generating Alternatives to Biomedical Health Care by Mixtec Migrant Families in California*, Fox, Jonathan and Rivera-Salgado Gaspar (Eds.), *Indigenous Mexican Immigrants in the United States* (pp.205-247).

Regents of the University of California, Center for U.S. – Mexican Studies and the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at the University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, CA.

Ms. Bade uncovers the Mixtec medical culture as the means to supplement the insufficient access to clinical care in California. By the Mixtecs relying on medicinal plants, sweat baths, healers/ceremonies she notes that this reaffirms community membership. It also is enforcing a cultural distinctiveness that defies ‘melting pot’ assimilation theories yet, provides increased alternatives for their health problems. She outlines factors that contribute to their health issues. Stress from not picking fast enough, old people fired because they are too slow and are not bending easily (ex. strawberry picking) the type of junk food served on the lunch wagons, working in fields full of pesticides with ‘unbelievable chemical smells’. “As one worker states, he often stands up to get away from the smell on the lowlying strawberries, “I would probably make more money if I did not worry about dying.” (Bade 1989:52) (p. 213).

She also goes into depth outlining unhealthy living conditions such as a junk yard. Bade outlines barriers as to why the Mixtecs are not better cared for in the states. She lists what medical care is allowed ie. Pregnancy related care, immigration status grant programs such as Healthy Families as examples, but chronic illness and primary care do not receive attention. The author’s hope is that one day Oaxaca/U.S. will have medical indigenous programs, practitioners, and trilingual clinicians that will serve in a social and political significance of trans medical health care programs.

Boone, Elizabeth. (2000). *Stories in Red and Black-Pictorial Histories of the Aztecs and Mixtecs*, University of Texas Press, Austin

With much detail and elaboration Boone compares the Aztecs and the Mixtec histories through the interpretation of codices, screenfolds and tiras. She places Mixtec histories in real time date at A.D. 950 between classic politics and postclassical structure. Boone describes the Mixtec as documenting their royal families as a priority rather than communities. This family power she notes, often reveals a supernatural ancestor with that of a biological descent in its genealogical

interpretation. With her compilations she is able to transcribe the creation of the Mixteca region and the founding of the various community kingdoms. These kingdom pictures record the Mixtec key rulers (such as Lady 6 Monkey and Lord 4 Wind) along with multiple genealogies that carry the dynasty forward. Boone writes that a common pictorial Mixtec pattern is the emergence of their culture from a great tree in the Mixteca region. Three similar themes are noted with Aztec scenarios: origin, continuity of the family or line of rule and founding of their *altepetl* (local, ethnically based, political entity). Many pictures are shown in detail of the ceremonies for their *altepetl*. Her conclusion points out that up into the 11th century the Spanish conquest was not noted in any of the Mixtec works.

Cross, Harry E. and Sandos, James A. (1981). *Across the Border-Rural Development in Mexico and Recent Migration to the United States*, Institute of Governmental Studies University of California, Berkeley

This book covers the history of migration through the rebellions, revolutions, civil war and on. The years covered range from 1880-1940 for rural development in north central Mexico. Although very fascinating, it did not include the southern state of Oaxaca. I did learn about similarities with migrant treatments and their hope for a better life. One similarity revolves around the money that migrants and long-term residents' dispatch back to the 'sending states' in Mexico. The immigrants do this on a regular basis as it is used largely for individual and family survival. Apparently, the money may provide up to 10% or more rural per capita income in the 'sending' states. Unfortunately, the sending regions' local economies are not equipped to use the capital as funds to create renewable resources.

Kresge, Lisa. (2007). *Indigenous Oaxacan Communities in California: An Overview* by California Institute for Rural Studies

Kresge's work encompasses the many outreach barriers that occur between the indigenous Oaxacan people, once they have arrived to California, and connecting them with health and social. Kresge outlines the entire state describing features that are unique to each region. For example, the Santa Cruz area, (Central Coast), appears to have the most diverse indigenous groups out of Oaxaca. She continues to describe that the outreach efforts therefore have a more difficult time due to the diverse indigenous languages in Santa Cruz and Santa Clara regions. One of her suggestions for increasing access is that since the Indigenous communities are known to have strong social networks and organizing skills that agencies contact indigenous leaders and attempt to build trust. Kresge believes once trust is established, efforts for outreach will progress. She outlines various outreach strategies that can occur. Some of her suggestions include the hiring of interpreters, attaining information for cultural nuances, and creating pamphlets that are visual and not written to meet the style of their verbal indigenous language. Kresge believes that these communities will be served in a more compassionate manner compared to harsh lifestyle of an immigrant farmworker.

Kusnierz, L. (Ed.). (1994). A Survey of Oaxacan Village Networks in California Agriculture. Davis, CA.: California Institute for Rural Studies.

This book entails historical arguments of numerous researchers from the 70's to the 90's with focus on the migration of the Mixtec peoples both in Mexico and U.S. By reading this survey I am able to not only understand how researchers generalize but most importantly compare and contrast clearly the migration scenario of the Mixtecs from the 70's to present day. They still need to 'duck and hide', but, the sophistication of the illegal crossings comparatively, appears to be, if I dare say, sophisticated. The most interesting debate involved a researcher, Robert's back in the 70's who claimed there are three barriers to the migration of the Mixtecs. Barrier 1- distance from the US Mexican border. Barrier 2- Indians do not migrate to the US.; Barrier 3- Low income demands. Twenty years later, in the 1990's, researchers Kearney and Runsten corrected Robert's findings revealing there were no barriers for the Mixtecs to migrate. (Roberts focused only in western Mexico) Barrier One: Oaxaca's (Mixteca region) distance from the border and overall, poverty of the region are valid reasons why migration occurs. Their migration did slow down by large numbers after the end of the Bracero Program, yet, the Mixtecs are still consistently migrating to Northern Mexico for agricultural work. In this larger region, they acquire information about more opportunities and connections to cross over the border and into the U.S. Kearney and Runsten called this *Network Migration*. Farm labor contracts from California and Oregon were also recruiting during the 1970's. Barrier Two: Mexico has a history of migration of indigenous peoples throughout its borders. Barrier Three: continual migration of indigenous peoples within Mexico demonstrates a need for cash and insufficiency of natural resources in the sending areas (Mixtec villages) to sustain local population.

Lopez, H. Felipe and Runsten, David. (2004). Mixtecs and Zapotecs Working in California: Rural and Urban Experiences. Fox, Jonathan & Rivera-Salgado Gaspar (Eds.), *Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States* (pp.249-278). San Diego, California: Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of California.

This chapter spoke about the Mestizos and how there seems to be a pattern of abuse towards both indigenous groups from Oaxaca, the Mixtecs and Zapotecs. It primarily compared and contrasted the different lifestyles and treatment that each group encountered in the U.S. Interestingly, Zapotecs tend to migrate to the urban centers and work in the hospitality industry and the Mixtecs migrate to the rural regions. It seems to be a worse problem of abuse for the Mixtecs as there is more competition for the farm work between Mestizos and Mixtecs. Once again, from the reading I learn how the farm contractors will choose the more vulnerable group. The Mixtecs maintain their indigenous identity, especially through language whereas Zapotecs pretend they are not Oaxacan., rejecting their "indianness". It was mentioned that the Mixtecs are using their 'indigenous vulnerability' (lack of language, lower wages, poor housing etc.) so they can get work. The Mixtecs do not seem to care if it causes rifts with the Mestizos,

Murillo, Huizar Juan and Cerda Isidro., (nd.) Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the 2000 Census: “Hispanic American Indians”. Fox, Jonathan and Rivera-Salgado Gaspar, (Eds.), (2004). *Indigenous Mexican Migrants in The United States*, (pp.279-302) Regents of the University of California, Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at the University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, California.

The authors, Murillo and Cerda, offer an explanation as to why the Census 2000 displayed a dramatic increase in the Native American population nationwide. The census added two new categories: self -identification and race. The chapter further explains how many of the Indigenous peoples felt comfortable choosing this new category choice as Hispanic Native American. Apparently, the 2000 census made advanced improvements for the Indigenous migrants, as this category helps to make what was once invisible groups now much more visible. Allocation of public services and resources for these now recognized communities are now being distributed.

Stephen, L., (2004). Mixtec Farmworkers in Oregon: Linking Labor and Ethnicity Through Farmworker Unions and Hometown Associations. Fox, Jonathan & Rivera-Salgado, Gaspar (Eds.), *Indigenous Mexican Migrants In The United States* (pp.179-202) Regents of the University of California, Center for U.S. – Mexican Studies and the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at the University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, CA.

This chapter takes an ethnographic approach to understanding the many ways that the Mixtec farm worker families have organized collectively. Stephens focuses on one union PCUN (Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United) out of Salem, Oregon. She claims that in 2002, Oregon agriculture was significantly Mixtecs families of amnestied workers coming to the states to be reunited. Unions became interested in the plight of the Mixtec because their multiple legal statuses represented undocumented, legal residents, citizens, low wage agricultural workers unveiling significant facets that the unions supported. Stephen’s also reminds the reader that the Mixtecs do not fit as original native people in Oregon (Coquille, Grand Round) with indigenous politics or diversity categories of Latino or Mexican qualify. She writes about the formulation of hometown associations, crediting Kearney (1998), as creating visible forms of Mixtec self -differentiation, thus distinguishing them from US Native Americans and Latinos. These associations present a public self-consciousness about their identity. She continues to point out that their hometown associations allow the Mixtec to focus more centrally on the numerous links to Oaxaca, which include linguistic, cultural identity, and transnational status. “When I get together with other men and talk in Mixteco, I feel different. (Victor Leon Gomez, age 55) pg. 193 Stephen’s outlines clearly how the Mixtecs have transformed what was once alienation (racism) into a benefit of empowerment, utilizing human rights as a cultural group.

Stout, Robert. (2008). *Why Immigrants Come to America: Braceros, Indocumentados and the Migra*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut

This book covers the history of the author growing up in Wyoming as a son of a Wyoming beet farm contractor. (not specifically Mexicans) The book is compassionately written as he describes the immigrants' experiences. The migrant's stories seem to emit an understanding as to how they live, why they come, and what choices they encounter. Stout attempts to solve the immigrant's 'problems' by suggesting solutions regarding their desperate migration. This book resembles what I envision for my final project, *Intersections*.

Zabin, C., (Ed.) (1992). Workshop Proceedings from California Institute for Rural Studies and Center for Mexican Studies '90: *Mixtec Migrant Farmworkers in California Agriculture – Dialogue Among Mixtec Leaders, Researchers and Farm Labor Advocates, San Diego, California* (n.d.)

This research reveals how the Mixtecs were treated as farmworkers compared to Mestizos during the 90's. I enjoyed reading about that era, as it clearly revealed to me the progress that the Mixtecs have made as immigrants in today's economy. The workshops cited numerous examples of abuse and extortion the Mixtecs have encountered. Examples given for abuse were: constantly threatened with deportation; told that if they wanted to be hired they had to work two weeks with no pay. Also, they must constantly move/migrate to other regions of state be it California or Mexico for work. Due to racism, it is the Mestizos that are granted stability, not Mixtecs.

It was noted that this wrongful treatment toward the Mixtecs is because they are extremely humble and patient as a cultural group. This cultural style allows them to be very vulnerable as a people. Also, the Mixtecs are monolingual speakers of "Mixteco" and are often in disparate economic situations and thus, experience racism from both the Anglos and Mexican born workers who deride them for their darker skin and "backwards" culture and language.

Zabin, C. & Kearney, M. & Garcia, A. Runsten, D. & Nagengast, C., (1993). *Mixteca Migrants in California Agriculture: A New Cycle of Rural Poverty*, California Institute for Rural Studies, Davis, CA.

This book reminds us of the historical mistreatment that a variety of cultures are experienced in the U.S. as farmworkers. Apparently, it is the Mixtecs turn, to be the most impoverished farmworkers in the United States. "Mixtecs are the recurrent cycle of ethnic replacement in a contemporary manifestation. " (Zabin, Kearney, Runsten & Nagengast, p. 36) The California farmworkers have been successively Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, "oakies" and mestizos/Mexican workers (mixed European and indigenous heritage). Employers have always taken advantage of the 'new group' as it prevents lasting improvements in the farm labor markets. The authors cited numerous examples of Mixtec mistreatment such as working with pesticides and yet, no water is provided for washing hands to eat lunch, cheapest work force and

willing to live in “spider holes” (holes dug out in dirt with branches placed over). The authors also discover that the Mixteco language is causing an ethnic antagonism between varying ethnic groups due to a lack of communication.

The book ends with a guided hope as to how the Mixtecs are taking these ‘disadvantages’ and turning them into ‘assets’. They have become united as a nation of Indigenous peoples from Oaxaca. (Zapotecs, Triqui) The author discusses the Mixtecs having a list *pliegos* of demands to the governments of both nations, Mexico and U.S. The authors believe, “the Mixtec identity is a transnational phenomena-an identity that is not just in a spatial state but, in a historical sense, an identity which struggles to escape the domesticating power of two nation states, and constitutes itself out of and beyond nationalistic projects.” (Zabin, et. al., p. 154) During the time of this writing, self help Mixtec nonprofit centers were springing up all over California. Mixtecs are today utilizing life in the U.S. to speak their agenda of human rights violations in two nations.

CONCLUSION

These materials were all chosen specifically to review the historical treatment of the Indigenous Mixtec people as migrant farmworkers crossing into the United States from Oaxaca, Mexico. While realizing that quite a few of my selected references are over 10 years old, I found it very beneficial to compare the past and present experiences of the Mixtecs. This literature review outlines their migrating time of over 70 years +. My attempt is to better understand the evolution of the Mixtec as a migrant culture. My goals are to gain clarity about their sense of place, adaptive integrity and their cultural bonds between two nations.

I noticed throughout the history of their migration, reoccurring themes. There is a common working assumption that the migration of the Mixtec was provoked in large measure by ecological disaster and economic stagnation back in their home settings of Oaxaca. Unfortunately, another common theme is their continued life of the transference of rural poverty, be it in Oaxaca or U.S. Compared to the average farm worker, the Mixtecs do work in more lower paying and short term jobs, migrate more and are the victims of nonpayment and other labor law violations. These themes of mistreatment, however, revealed the Mixtecs are becoming empowered and their united efforts are slowly dissolving these patterns of abuse. The Indigenous Oaxacans, (Zapotecs, Mixtecs and Triqui) have begun to unite and are recognizing themselves as an indigenous transnational community. These attitudes have triggered a positive sense of choice with regards to human rights and a variety of developing services. Although there is a long way to go, it was refreshing to read about the Indigenous Labor movements, and how more indigenous leaders are speaking out on behalf of their ‘dignity’ as a people.

While I realize there are more books, magazines and newspapers to read; perhaps even visit four Mixtec Centers throughout California in search of more clarity, I must say that I envision this review as a great tree trunk; a foundation for my project/book, *Intersections*. I have conducted six interviews with Mixtec young adults as migrants. I imagine each interview as the fruit of their tree...each with its own blossoming tale. They are indeed, a gracious group of people to work with, maintaining an integrity full of patience, durability and dreams.

CHAPTER 3. Discovery and Transitions

The purpose of my project is to attempt to trace the Cultural Ecology of the Mixtec Indigenous people from Mexico to their migration into the U.S. It is my hope that I can discover a thread of social learning traits or axiology that is common within each of their varied environments. I am also seeking to understand what 'it is' that allows them the courage and motivation to be an illegal immigrant.

Their regional homeland of the Mixtecs is primarily Alta and Baja Mixteca in the state of Oaxaca, Southern Mexico. The Mixtecs originated in small isolated highland villages where local production is limited to corn, squash and beans on rain fed plots. Yields are so low that the region has experienced massive waves of outmigration since the 1940's both to other states within Mexico and the U.S.

The location in the U.S. that I have been involved with is the cluster of Mixtecs living in California's central coast agricultural town of Watsonville. My storyline's primary place is the international border of Mexico and the United States. Mixtecs flock as illegal immigrants to search for jobs as agricultural workers especially in February and March.

For my project, I interviewed young adult Mixtecs, ranging from 15-25 years old. I met them at an English class at Adult Education night school. After recruiting volunteers, we met and had delicious feasts together to interview and plan their book, my project. Together we relived their courageous journey of survival as illegal immigrants. They spoke in their native language Mixteco. My trilingual translator, Lucia, is a 25yr. old Mixtec. She asked them questions in Mixteco and Spanish and then translated their recordings in English while listening to the tape. The students I have been working with grew up watching in their pueblos, the limits of rich soil, rain and food.

My interview questions were pretty basic, for ex. "Please describe your pueblos' environment"; "when did you know you would not be growing up as an adult in your pueblo region, but instead be sent to the U.S. as a teenager? My purpose was to attempt to connect the influence of leaving a stable environment to the transition of deliberately choosing to immerse oneself into a seasonal lifestyle in an unfamiliar place. This land of the unknown will be continually changing and often unpredictable. What is the impact on their ways of being or epistemology as they choose to become immersed and absorbed into other cultures? Are their worldviews continually changing with regards to their place(s) as immigrants? What is it that maintains their calm, humble and gracious mannerism? How do they maintain traditions, language, beliefs, medicinal practices and customs? Why do they continue to migrate knowing their life, as an illegal immigrant, will be part of ongoing abuse and a continual cycle of poverty? What is their intersecting point of surrender? What 'is it' that keeps them going?

Perhaps it is because "Oaxaca has the second lowest per capita income of all states in Mexico. Fifteen indigenous groups live in Oaxaca and 40% of the Oaxaca's population is indigenous compared to 10% in the nation as a whole". (Barabas and Bartolome, 1986) Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) data shows a steady increase today of a 'deepening and

broadening' into the U.S. bound migration from Oaxacan pueblos. "The Mixtec identity is a transnational phenomena-an identity that is not just a spatial state, but, in a historical sense, an identity which struggles to escape the domesticating power of two nation states and constitutes itself out of and beyond nationalistic projects. Mexico itself labels the Mixtecs' as peasants, indigena and proletarian. "(Zabin, C. and Kearney, M. *Mixteca Migrants in California*) as do the Mestizos (Mexican-Spanish illegal immigrants) from Mexico. In the U.S. they are underpaid, mistreated and experience unsafe living and working conditions

There is no doubt that Mixtec culture has experienced consequences of major social transformation. But, why and what keeps the Mixtecs seemingly humbled and grateful especially through unbelievable consequences and a lack of being understood or accepted?

Have the various forms of the natural environment served as their safety net? They work out in the fields and seem to maintain a calmness of appreciation. Since culture has so much to do with our state of mind this attitude appears to maintain a peaceful balance and a belonging to the universe. My students informed me that their 'art of subsistence' refers to belongings, where needs and wants takes on an entirely new form as immigrants. Ideas of logical comfort such as "bare minimum", simplicity, less is best, do not need much because of lack of living space or continual mobility refine their desires. The daily existence of these students is felt in a world full of syncretism with many combinations and fusions of values and behaviors from the opportunity of choice and self -identity.

My cultural documentation and research issues revolve around Oaxaca's geography, historical sequence and Mixtec language and poverty.

How does their historical past with relation to their environment tie into their world of today? Is it the actual lay of the land of the Mixteca region that dispersed their culture? Is it the lack of vital resources? Isolation? Why is the Mixteca Tierra unproductive? Most indigenous systems are a fusion of different mixes of Pre Columbian, colonial and modern forms. Historically, the Mixtec ethnology in Mixteca began to take shape more than 3500 years ago. It was also about 3500 years ago that the human impact on the environment intensified when the "transition to sedentary agricultural villages throughout most of Mesoamerica became an anthropogenic landscape of agricultural fields, terraces and settlements."....."stark reddish landscape that is the result of 1000's of years of natural and anthropogenic erosion, which removed much of the topsoil and cut into the underlying beds." (pps. 38, 40 *Mixtecs, Zapotecs and Chatinos: Ancient Peoples of Southern Mexico* by Arthur Joyce, 2010)

Originally, like so many indigenous people, they were hunters and gatherers. They then 'graduated to become forage farmers which began the era of sedentism with crops of beans, squash and maize. (8000-1900 B.C.) An interesting Mixtec story about the beginning of agriculture states, "the Mixtec nobles were forming a covenant with the powerful deities of earth and sky that would allow people to practice agriculture. The covenant was necessary because the turning of the soil, and the harvesting and consumption of maize, the daughter of earth and rain, caused the deities great pain. In return for being allowed to practice agriculture, the deities required that humans sacrifice their bodies in death, going into the earth where they are

assimilated by the gods”. “*We eat the earth and the earth eats us.*” (Monaghan, 1990: pp, 562-3) After this covenant was established the first sunrise of the new era began.

Despite the abundant rainfall and warm temperatures, the lack of fertile soil limited agriculture fertility. In Oaxaca, the geography is such that the fertile lands are only in patchy distribution separated by high mountains. Also, ecologically, there is the lack of availability of water due to the semi arid climate. Farmers often rely solely on rainwater. Dry years produce low yield crops. The wet and dry seasons in large part determine the slash and burn agricultural cycle. “Fields are usually cultivated for one or two years before productivity falls. Today, fallow periods last from 2-5 years in fertile floodplains and as long as 6-10 years or more in mountains.” (Pg. 50, Mixtecs, Zapotecs and Chatinos: Ancient Peoples of Southern Mexico by Arthur Joyce, 2010) The Mixtec crop harvest lasts maybe only 4 months. Today, the old soil conservation technique of *lama-bordo*, terracing along hillsides and gullies, continue to be used as a means to prevent erosion.

The word Mixtec is derived from the Aztec word *Nahuatl*, and denotes the people of Oaxaca as people of the rain, people of the clouds. The Mixtecs are a healthy adaptability from the Maya and Aztecs and are proud to mention that their culture “stood up” to both the Aztecs and the Spanish conquests with determination. Does this stamina of the Mixtecs reveal the beginnings of an epistemological foundation that could be correlated to today’s course of perseverance as illegal immigrants?

Another geographical factor of the natural landscape is the isolation between pueblos. This factor of the ‘lay of the land’ has produced intense localism amongst pueblos with strong cultural and linguistic diversity. It is interesting to note here that in California, the fact that people from neighboring pueblos are fellow indigenous peoples has united not divided the Mixtecs,, even though they are of different dialects. The pueblos themselves have binomial names having a saint’s name and Aztec. For example: Santa Maria Zaniza. Their communities were “circumcised by territorial boundaries’ by the Spanish and the distinctive micro socio cultural communities became micro-socio cultural communes/universes. The Mixtecs then perceived themselves as being surrounded by enemies of their own kind. Land and resources in one’s town became their main source of personal reference other than their family. This is example as to why there are 150 plus Mixteco dialects.

Another cultural documentation issue that I discovered was the age group of my informants. With this age group there appeared to be a gap. I couldn’t help but think it was because I was an outsider. Oddly, in conversation, it became necessary for me to inform them of their original Mixtec deity prior to their present day deity, Jesus. The students only were aware of a belief in Jesus. They also felt protected and guided by their pueblos’ patron saint because they knew their family back home was praying for them through the saint’s guidance. When I spelled out the Mixteco word for their god, they did however, light up and recollect bits and pieces of family stories. I quoted, “at the time of the Spanish conquest their religion was based on the belief of a vital force that animated all ‘living things’. The force was called “yii” or “ini” meaning wind, heat and heart. Within the Mixtecs themselves, the sacred force was concentrated in the heart and blood, which amongst Mixtecs today is “ anima.” Earth, mountains and rivers are not

considered parts of a physical environment separate from humans, but have agency and are connected with people and deities via the sacred force.” (Pg. 56 Mixtecs, Zapotecs, and Chatinos: Ancient Peoples of Southern Mexico, Arthur Joyce, 2010). All things except burnt rocks are considered animate. They unnecessarily thanked me for teaching them about their culture!

As I mentioned previously, “I want to inquire about their “relationship of the exterior landscape with that of their interior sacred place of a familiar landscape of memory.” (Barnhardt, R. & Kawagley, O.) I wondered, how can this relationship be revealed? When I asked about Shamans, one student mentioned the shamans attend the pueblo’s Catholic Church and are friends with the priest. Another student mentioned his Dad was always seeing the future in bodies of water be it puddles, lakes, rivers and also has the ability of reading peoples’ hands. Unfortunately his father is now deported as he received a DUI. What becomes of his special gift?

Now that we know the conceptual life of the Mixtecs, historically and spiritually, it seems as though there is an obvious paradigm shift of the Mixtec peoples. My motivation throughout this entire project has been from the following stimulating quotes, “Indigenous peoples throughout the world have sustained their unique worldview and associated knowledge systems for millennia, even while undergoing social upheavals as a result of transformative forces beyond their control. Many of the core values, beliefs and practices associated with those worldview have survived and are beginning to be recognized as having adaptive integrity that is valid for today’s generations as it was for generations past. “”The depth of indigenous knowledge rooted in the long inhabitation of a particular place offers lessons that can benefit everyone. (Barnhardt, R., & Kawagley, A.O .2005)

These quotes are so relatable and pertinent to the Mixtecs. They have maintained an adaptive integrity. For the Mixtecs it appears as though their axiology, core values and beliefs, have all survived in their chosen not forced emigrational way of life. Their language is not lost, unless by choice of the individual. Back in the pueblos the elders still teach younger children their traditional ways and at the same time prepare them for a migrant lifestyle. The pueblos have now become sending “locations”. For the Mixtecs living in the U.S, there is a connection to their families back in Oaxaca through the exchange of money and cultural products. There seems to be an understanding that at least 10% of the money earned in California will continually be sent to their pueblos and families. One of the students mentioned how their Oaxacan family sends them traditional food on a regular basis. There is a store here in Watsonville that sells Oaxacan ingredients. Many of the informants that I have worked with have purchased land in Mixteca. Some want to return to their old way of life. Lucia, my translator, told me her father, Francisco, after 20 years of working the fields in Watsonville, California is ready to return home to a slow life and raise his cows. He has three parcels of land. Unfortunately, he has never had a raise or a promotion from his field jobs in throughout California. He has however, watched the Mestizos ‘get ahead’. Mr. Mendoza’s success is measured in another manner. He and his wife have saved \$6000 per child for his four children to come to the states, illegally. Her parents left their kids back in their pueblo of San Martin Peras with family for years. Once their children reached the age to migrate, 13-15yrs. old, they would

send for them individually. The fee to be smuggled across the border via a ‘coyote’ is \$6000. The ‘coyote’ is the person families must trust to guide their family members illegally across the border.

The above story outlines only a fraction of hardships and determinism that the Mixtecs encounter as a way of life in California. They do not fit in the traditional way of life nor the modern. They have their own culturally designed voice. The students do not feel absorbed into the local California culture. They want this *Intersections* book printed to express themselves as people that want to be understood. They want to make it clear that they are not hurting anyone or taking jobs away. They are doing jobs that no one wants yet. Why then do they continue to experience, on a daily basis, abusive treatment, bad sneers, whispers and are labeled by unexplained stereotypes? They want people to feel okay with them living here in California. These students live in a multidimensional society with this portrayed sameness as viewed through their various perspectives. Physically, Mixtecs are very short in height and are easily identified. I am 5’4” and I stand a head taller than most of the men and women.

As far as gathering info, I am pleased to say that the dreams of accomplishment for this project seem to be on track. The students volunteered to work with me on selected questions. I was hoping for an illustrator amongst the Mixtecs students, but instead found photographers. A map will be included showing the various villages and images of what they remember about the environment they ‘left behind.’ We still plan to include a CD of the Mixtec language spoken by Lucia as she describes her story. This proposed plan has received approval from the Pajaro Valley School District Migrant Education Director, Mr. Farri. He often oversees the Mixtec festivals and celebrations.

What I am attempting to unfold through this project is similar to what Kawagley and Barnhardt discussed “survival of direct experience vs. competency. Do the Mixtec youth maintain a sense of community well-being during their relocation from camp to camp? When the Mixtecs attempt to speak as strangers to one another in the field do they build community? What was the level of community building/bonding that occurred when caught (busted) crossing the border and their loyalty to the ‘coyote’?”

I look back on my previous writing and notice that I now disagree with a statement I wrote. It was in regards to the following discussion. “Native thinking is acquired, it is intuitive.” (Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2005) or “Native mind is a living being”. I wrote, “After working with the Native American and now the Mixtecs, I find that in contrast to Kawagley, depending on the individual natives’ place, that the native powerful mind is **not** nurtured daily by the individual to earn gifts from the Creator. Kawagley’s notion is defined profoundly in isolated remote locations, and abundant subsistence opportunities.”

First of all, it is not my place to say what an individual’s mind is thinking/feeling, and second of all the Mixtecs must have a “mind that is a living being”, because of their overall spirit of existence. The immigrants do not have their lands, and Mixteca subsistence is next to nil. Their homeland is isolated and remote, so even though they maintain a connectedness to their pueblos.

There is still an indigenous spirit that keeps them going strong. I now feel a partnership with Kawagley when I write this form of “intuitive reasoning”. Since reviewing, *A Yupiaq Worldview*. I nod my head yes numerous times, just glancing at the writings to discover quite confidently the sameness in manners and virtues of these indigenous North American neighbors. I realized an important feature.....back to the basics of ego and dominance vs. indigenous oneness with nature.

What is this spirit? I started this project out of fascination for the Mixtec courage and now I feel I know what is it that keeps them going. “The mind is a living being....intuitiveness”. This level of ontological consciousness; this oneness of interconnectedness is to allow my intellectual reasoning to reach out to entirely new dimensions, the expansion of the universe. The only explanation and the word that keeps popping into my spirit is Faith. Kawagley and Barnhardt used the word “Intuitiveness”. Unfortunately, in my culture, Faith has received a bad connotation as a word that means what the church teaches. We know there is a force directing the Mixtec. Trust or intuitive faith is my perception connecting to their yii/ini anima? Both forces dissolve self, makes us small, teach us about presence, to let go, and to delve into a deep trust and a calming surrender. “This surrender can lead to a deep trust that the mysteries that surround us have meaning”. This letting go brings the experience of being tuned into our spirit and then begins to play a more conscious role in our lives.” (Thomas Moore, psychotherapist) Deep Faith “might be described as a faith in a self whom we have not met yet. It is because of this smallness that we can come to see and trust the greatness of God/Spirit within and around us. Faith is a force what we cannot control, what we do not see and what we cannot understand... we give up the anxious steering of our ship. (Franciscan Robert Rohr) Meditation, introspection, observation and silence play a big part in Faith something that comes natural to the Mixtec knowing and being. It is their anima, yii/ini.

Like so many indigenous people, the Mixtecs reveal a depth of resilience of the human spirit. The Mixtecs have always trusted that nature is cared for by these invisible forces/God. Faith, and intuitiveness are invisible forces with deities as our human focus.

I ponder if a ‘stirring force’ within each individual is their motivation, no matter what negativity or suffering comes their way. I believe they have a God/Yii/Ini given force of surrender and trust to their old and new way of life. It is a perfect scenario, coming from my outsider point of view. Faith is having new eyes, a new way of seeing everything-even in our most painful suffering. With all they have experienced, I like to think this is their driving force for my understanding and they individually are following a spirit map at every intersection and each crossing is full of a trust and a surrender.

Nature and the simple life easily allow for trust. The Mixtec play no games, show no discrimination against those who discriminate against them or abuse them. It is part of faith to have faith in others. This is another intersection that makes them wonder why are they not respected. Their vital force of yii.ini would also explain the consistent characteristics I found in each one of them: humbleness, thankfulness and graciousness.

The simple belief in what you need is what you need. “Native thinking is acquired as intuitive. ... interior sacred place of memory.” (Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2005)

So when I attempt to find out the whys of the Mixtec and I correlate it with history, land deprivation, ecology, hard work, leaving loved ones, poverty, abuse and mistreatment I can now sink into the comfort of grace knowing, through their spirit guided indigenous intuitive anima, yii/ ini, that they are led to feel the stillness and interconnectedness with nature whom they groom on a daily basis.

CHAPTER 4. Book Proposal

SUMMARY

INTERSECTIONS OF MIXTECO WORLDVIEWS captures the first hand stories of indigenous Mixteco (“mees-tek-oh”) teenagers leaving their homeland of rural Oaxaca in Southern Mexico to become illegal immigrants as they cross into the U.S.

As children growing up in isolated villages, they knew one day they would need to leave the ‘safety net’ of their Mixteca landscape to set out on this journey.

It is time to capture their stories.

The shame that is associated with illegal immigration, as an indigenous person, will reveal to the reader a new understanding of the strength and veracity of the Mixteco worldview and character.

This book is written primarily for any social service, medical workers, educators, Mestizos (Spanish and American Indian) and fellow Mixtecos both in Oaxaca and in the United States.

The Mixtecos would like these professionals and the public to understand them more clearly as a culture and not as “misfits.”

Everyone has a story, but not everyone has the unique story of a transnational abusive lifestyle surrounded by consistent environmental adversity while living in the United States.

There are Mixtecos are all over the U.S., but their story, from their point of view, is not known.

OUTLINE & BOOK SPECIFICATIONS

The genre and target age range for INTERSECTIONS is preteen to young-adult, based on narratives by young adults. It is intended to be easy reading.

I envision this as narrative nonfiction, combining the scenes of Homeland, Journey and California with true Mixtec stories. Research will establish the credibility of the narratives with verifiable references.

The book will have these parts:

- Prologue
- Acknowledgements
- Narratives. Each interview in English and Spanish. These interviews in length are about 5 pages each.
- CD recording. The CD will have the same narrative told in Mixteco, English and Spanish by Lucia, a Mixtec woman. CD will be placed in the jacket of the back cover.

The purpose is to share the beauty of the languages to more students, Mixteco people, and professionals.

- Afterword
- References

Pertinent dates:

- Book Proposal, April 5, 2014
- First draft book: May, 2014
- Published book: June, 2014
- Distributed to teachers: August, 2014

Specifications:

- Word count: unknown
- Total pages: unknown
- Photos: 8-10 photos of the pueblos and jobs in the fields. Photos will be distributed through the book depicting both environments: Oaxaca and California's agricultural landscape. No names will be under the pictures of the immigrants, only the region where they are working in California. 90% of the photos came from the Mixteco students. I plan to work with the staff photographer of the local Watsonville newspaper, Registrar Pajaronian. There will be a photo or two with each interview and narrative.
- Layout-The English narrative will be first and the Spanish interview will follow. For example: Jesus' Spanish interview will follow his English narrative. Each Individual will be a chapter filled with photos of them or their subject matter.
- Art (including front and back cover): I plan to have depictions of Mixteco art as illustrations, with a Mixteco artist to be located through the Indigenous Club at Watsonville High School. The cover will be glossy with colors from photographs. I imagine an intersection across the middle of the cover circling to the back of the book. The top half will be a photo of Oaxaca and the bottom half will be present day life in the U.S.
- Maps: 4 maps in color. Maps will trace the various pueblos the interviewees are from and the path they took to come into the United States, and where they went from there. The four maps: one of the pueblos in Oaxaca; a map of Mexico showing immigration route to Northern Mexico; a map of the border crossing region and a map of California showing the settlements of the Mixtecos.

- Softcover/hardcover will depend on price. I really like the size and appearance of *Two Old Women* by Velma Wallis. I have no donations or contributors to this project as of yet. I will be approaching the Pajaro Valley School District Migrant Education Office for assistance on April 2, 2014
- Book size: 5 inches x 7 inches +/-
- Color: full color throughout

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Black and white vs. color costs may lead to changes in this plan prior to publication.

MARKET

There are only six children's books written on the Mixtecos, most are about legends.

The book design will be similar to *The Gospel According to Peter John*, edited by David J. Krupa; *A Yupiaq Worldview: A Pathway to Ecology and Spirit* by Oscar Kawagley and *Out-Of-School Immigrant Youth* by Laura Hill and Joseph M. Hayes. I would prefer the book to resemble the look of *Two Old Women* by Velma Wallis. *Two Old Women* style would seem more appealing for a teenage to read. The first three books mentioned are all a little over 100 pages and are geared for adults. This Mixteco book will not be 100 pages.

The biggest difference in my book is the genre will be young adult. This young adult focus will bring more photos, illustrations, personal stories of equivalent age group and color.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Maura Hennessey Darbro is a third generation Californian. Her parents raised her and her brother Sean among the orchards and flower fields of San Jose, California.

Maura has spent her entire life working for the environment and native cultures. She attributes this pathway to her childhood, when she witnessed the destruction of the countryside as it gave way to the development of new houses and roads. This happened as San Jose was transformed into Silicon Valley, the new hub for worldwide technology.

She holds an A.S. degree in Park Management, West Valley College, Saratoga, California, a B.A. in Geography/Natural Resources, Humboldt State University, Arcata, California, and a Teaching Credential, University of Alaska, Fairbanks. She has produced two videos that are in the San Jose Library system, titled *American Indian Experience*, 1 and 2. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree, also from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Maura's education has allowed opportunities to work throughout the United States with both national and state forests and parks, numerous outdoor education schools, village teaching in

Alaska, and a variety of environmental jobs with Native American cultures throughout California.

Maura's love of the natural environment led to a choice to live with and experience the subsistence lifestyle of the Tlingit and Athabascan Alaskan natives. This became her participation with the Cross-/Cultural Studies Master's program of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Her latest pursuit and Master's project is with the transnational Mixteco culture and their relationship to land, studying the courage and determinism it takes for these young indigenous people, as undocumented workers, to leave their homeland in Mexico and devote their life's purpose to working in California's agricultural fields.

She now lives in La Selva Beach, California with her husband Brad, their son, Joaquin, and the family dogs, Clifford and Mickey.

MY MASTER'S PROJECT

TRANSIENT MIGRATION AND RESPONSES TO EFFECTIVE CHANGE FOR MIXTECO INDIGENOUS YOUTH.

Indigenous people have traditionally formed a bond with the land and environment in which they live and this bond has shaped much of their ways of knowing,β worldviews and forms of consciousness that make up their indigenous knowledge systems which underlie cultural traditions and practices. --Barnhardt

From all the Cross Cultural/Indigenous Studies graduate classes, this observation of transient patterns while maintaining oneness to the land is seemingly only decided by individual character of self. My inquiries can only begin to rely on the natural form of learning and the individual's choice of changing their environment for the notion of a better lifestyle regulated by monetary gain. It is curious to me that indigenous people are choosing to surrender their relationship to generational land and their cultural 'comfort zone' of integrity. So, I ask, "Is this what is happening?"

This is why I have chosen the Mixteco people out of Oaxaca, Mexico for my project. They appear not to carry any blame or attitude toward others. The Mixtecos seem to be full of immense gratitude.

Does history, geography or environment explain this attitude? Or is it because they are survivalists? These indigenous peoples are undocumented workers and, amazingly, assimilate their identity to consistently changing environments.

I want to inquire about their relationship of the exterior to their interior sacred place, to cite the concepts of Drs. Oscar Kawagley and Ray Barnhardt.

My focus will be including the relationship of their experience from a naturalistic and experiential point of view. If family, land and identity are truly gifts and influences passed down from generations, than what of the immigrants that choose to leave behind their traditional familiarity? For many immigrants knowledge is based on season and place. Often the next place is an unknown for the Mixtecos, as transient immigrants.

The attempted focus here is the Mixteco worldview and how they are 'linked to' place(s). This book is needed to describe their misunderstood purpose as immigrants coming in to California.

HOMELAND

The Mixteca Alta and Baja are located in the State of Oaxaca in Southern Mexico.

This region was once known to its Indian inhabitants as "Nuu Savi" or "Land of Rain." More than five hundred centuries ago, the Mixteca was viable for the "cultura Mixteca"— a mosaic of rugged agricultural land.

Unfortunately, the Mixteca environment today is an ecological disaster.

Five hundred years earlier the conquering Spanish introduced goat herding to the region. Now centuries of overgrazing, combined with unsustainable agriculture and unfettered forest exploitation have left the Mixtecos with a land that does not produce a high yield— instead it offers hardship.

The students' interviews will begin with their worldview growing up in this Mixteca environment and describe their everyday life encounters and hardships leaving their mountain valleys of family/home.

This environment, although not prosperous today, has shaped a bond and formed the Mixteco worldview as an indigenous people. This relationship to the land has instilled in the consciousness of each Mixtec their cultural traditions and practices. Their homeland maintains within each individual indigenous roots of strength. This strength and veracity of character is an unschooled intelligence and intuition that begins with their sense of place from their homeland.

It is my intention, through the student's interviews, to show the bonds of their motivational endurance as they prepare to seek an unknown land to work in the California agricultural fields. Traditionally, at one time, they were an agrarian society, even though it was centuries ago.

JOURNEY

Everyone has a story, but not everyone feels unique in the story of a transient migrant.

These indigenous young adults come from numerous villages throughout the state of Oaxaca, primarily during February and March. Their pattern is to immigrate to the United States as teenagers, work, and begin families. Left behind in many of their villages are many young children and elders.

Throughout their border crossing journey subsistence takes on another form of reference in their plight. These teenagers are deliberately choosing a below means of existence out on the desert, where they lack safety with protection, except to perhaps pay a “coyote” thousands of dollars to cross over. These teenagers completely trust the unknown.

They are aware however that they are seeking a new lifestyle in conditions that will not be pleasant and that they will most likely live in “poverty level” once they are in the United States. It is the idea of a higher quality of life than that of what they left behind that seems to maintain their spirit.

These transitional young immigrants are strong, humble and stout. They have experienced amazing physical, environmental, mental, and spiritual feats and dangers. Their “Whys?” of encouragement run deep within each individual soul. This is truly an example of Barnhardt and Kawagley’s notion that it is the native’s mind that is a living being.

INTERVIEW PROCESS

The students are hard workers, and nearly all know three languages, Mixteco, Spanish, and English.

The interviewees spoke Mixteco and the interviewer, Lucia, translated the interviews into Spanish and English.

The three intersecting themes/foundations for the interviewees are: Homeland, Journey, and Life in California.

We first met in their English Adult Education (18-21 years old) night school and Out of School Youth (OSY) (13-21) English class at Pajaro Valley Unified School District’s campus in Watsonville, California. The entire room was filled with students from the Oaxaca region of Mexico. They were so dedicated to learning English, even though they had been working all day in the fields. They come to night school two days a week. There was a prerequisite to know Spanish to get into the class, as their teachers taught in Spanish.

I presented to the class, as a guest speaker in English about my project. It was translated by their Spanish speaking teacher. I was fortunate to receive six volunteers to interview. Before I did my presentation, I visited the classroom about 6-8 times to build a relationship with the students..... (hang out at breaks, sit next to them in class, work in groups, ask them English words in Mixteco)

I fondly remember visiting the classroom the night Obama won his reelection. We all celebrated together.

INTERSECTIONS will be in three languages. Mixteco is not a written language per se. A CD will be provided in the back cover for the reader to listen to Lucia tell her story in Mixteco, Spanish, and English.

All the young adults’ stories will be provided as a Spanish interview and an English narrative.

It has been a pleasure working with the Pajaro School District Migrant Education and Adult Education staff, not only for their belief in this project, but, also because the student's teachers and administrators are eager to hear and read about their students' lives.

PURPOSE

Mixtecos are all over the U.S., but their story from their point of view is not known. By producing their insights as children growing up in mountainous pueblos surrounded by a familiar landscape, but knowing they would be leaving as teenagers, is a new and important story, especially as told from the student's point of view.

The Mixtecs will explain whether their courage is a 'god given power or a coping device'.

Was there a Mixteco worldview passed down to the kids or is it lost via migration at such a young age? As one student, Jesus (21 yrs. old), told me, he wants to share his story so that other students younger than him will not have to go through what he experienced by coming to the U.S. Jesus wants Mixteco youth back in Oaxaca to learn from his story.

INTERSECTIONS will contribute to these Mixteco youths' cultural practices multi dimensionally.

First, it will allow their story of transient migration to be understood and appreciated by all who offer services to this population throughout the state of California. It is the students' request that the distribution of INTERSECTIONS reach the various associated agencies, including their teachers.

The second part of cultural practices will be implemented by the sheer joy of getting their story out to the public, with their purpose of being understood.

Another important factor of INTERSECTIONS is that it is geared toward reaching the Mixteco organizations and community themselves. Here is a book for and about them in whatever language they speak, reiterating their changing worldview through commonality of their regional homeland. By depicting their stories visually they will not only have a bond of cultural bearing, but also a sameness of purpose and wellbeing.

Their stature as undocumented indigenous workers will be spoken about in a new light.

After reading INTERSECTIONS all illusions of misunderstandings should disappear and instead be replaced with a new admiration. The Mixtecos dignity will be uncovered, deciphered, and explained, as many of the individuals' stories will be relatable to all who read this material, no matter what their cultural background.

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PROLOGUE

Libro yo'o kaá xa'a ndo'o nduu nda'vi, nduu kuu indigena, nu nakoonduu ñuu nduu ra kixaa nduu inka xiyo yo'o. Kaá xa'a ntsi'i tondo'o ya'a nduu nu kee nduu ñuu nduu, nu ya'a nduu yu'kuu ra ntsiaa nu kixaa nduu yo'o.

This book talks about the challenges that we, indigenous people, have to overcome when we leave our hometowns to come to the United States. It tells everything we have to go through, from our departure to our journey crossing the border to get here.

El libro habla acerca de los retos que nosotros los indigenas tenemos que superar al dejar nuestros pueblos de origen para venir a los Estados Unidos. Cuenta todo lo que tenemos que pasar, desde nuestra jornada al tratar de cruzar la frontera hasta llegar aqui.

Written by a Lucia Mendoza, a Mixtec woman, in Mixteco, English and Spanish

California has over 150,000 indigenous agricultural workers from Oaxaca, Mexico. Many of these immigrants cross illegally into the U.S. in their teenage years to seek a better life. But, do they experience a better life? Their worldview weighs the ongoing life of poverty back in their isolated pueblos against a continued cycle of poverty here in the states.

INTERSECTIONS captures the real life stories of seven Mixteco teenagers, six female and one male.

I first met the Mixtec students in the Adult Education English night class in Watsonville, California. Six students volunteered to tell their story. After phoning all the volunteers with my intermediate Spanish skills, we decided to all meet in El Centro in the plaza of downtown Watsonville. It did not take us long to realize it was too cold to hang outside. We walked across the street to the nearest restaurant, El Aleno.

All of us were finally together, warming ourselves up from the cold. We were also warming ourselves up to one another in this beautifully decorated Mexican restaurant in downtown Watsonville. It was a symphonic atmosphere with our three languages, speaking all at once, all the while exchanging and sharing stories through our translator, Lucia.

When we all first arrived, we were the only customers and the owners were just hanging around waiting for more of a crowd. It took us a while for all us to warm up to one another, primarily because of the language difference. I decided to buy everyone a meal. It was a pleasure having dinner together. We also were able to make the waitress happy by not using her table just for shelter from the cold outdoors.

After many bowls of chips and salsa and water later amid the noisy clanging of the utensils against the dinner plates, chairs scraping on the tile floor as they were pulled in and out for sitting, we noticed the Latino music was slowly getting louder as more customers entered for dinner.

It was during this time, Lucia decided to talk to the group all at once in Mixteco. That interchange, and the interviews that followed, are the essence of this book.

The reader is invited to walk beside each immigrant and experience firsthand a journey of courage, hardships, and perseverance. It is unfathomable that children this age choose to endure it. Their stories are unbelievable. They speak of a depth of hopeful dreams, with unknown factors of place, language, belongings, hygiene, food, work, and home.

These young adults set out speaking neither Spanish nor English, only have the clothes they are wearing, and experience environmental change that is not at all similar to the landscape they grew up in.

This book is intended to be easy reading for all who encounter life amongst Mixteco people. It should serve to gently guide readers to understand the very nature of emotion, compassion, strength, and courage of this amazingly gracious culture. Mistreatment is not a part of their way of life.

This book is not only written for professionals, but, for young Mixtecos back in Oaxaca who know that one day they will be venturing north to the U.S. Perhaps INTERSECTIONS will serve as a guide for them....to live for the unexpected, but to maintain trust in oneself.

It is my hope that they will not lose their native language and by creating a cultural storybook the students will evolve towards a proud character of self origin.

TERMINOLOGY

Since this book is written in Spanish and English it is important to clarify the proper variations in bilingual terms when speaking about the Mixteco culture.

CULTURE

Spanish is “La cultura Mixteca”

English is “Mixteco”/“Mixtec” culture

INDIVIDUAL

In Spanish an individual is referred to as “Mixteco” or “Mixteca,” depending on gender

In English there is no gender, so “Mixteco” or “Mixteca”

REGION

Spanish is “La Mixteca”

English is “The Mixteca”

The region is divided into three sub regions.

Spanish: “Mixteca Alta,” “Mixteca Baja,” and “Mixteca del la Costa”

English: “Highland Mixteca,” “Lowland Mixteca,” and “Coastal Mixteca”

LANGUAGE

Spanish is “Mixteco”

English is “Mixtecan”

NARRATIVE ONE: JESUS

AUTHOR’S NOTE: There are additional narratives – the four included here are representative.

My name is Jesus Perez. I am 21 years old and come from San Martin Peras in Oaxaca.

I lived in the south side of the town, just behind the cemetery. When I was living there, my house was made of adobe, a type of a brick made of soil. My parents are building a new house made of red bricks that look newer and fancier than those before, but back then the house was of adobe. And the only thing I had to do was going to school. I used to walk about ten to fifteen minutes to get there. It wasn’t that far for me.

My parents only had cattle and when I was out of school, I helped my parents to take care of them. I also helped them to sow corn because that is the type of labor they do in the town.

I worked only in the afternoons when I was out of school and also in the weekends. I helped my parents with the field labors and taking care of their cattle. I used to see people passing by the streets of the town with their cattle and donkeys and I always had fun watching them passing by. I always wanted to do the same with my parents’ cattle, but I never did it.

My parents weren’t mean with us but a little strict. They taught us that we should be prudent and not to talk when we were not asked to. We were not allowed to label people with nicknames; to be cautious when talking to other people and to respect everyone around us. That was mostly what they kindly taught us but without being hard on us.

What mattered most to my parent was having us going to school and study, but as you may know, kids are kids and when we get along with other kids, we just don’t care about school. I used to skip school along with my friends. I liked school just a little bit. The thing is that I befriended kids that would rather be playing and hanging around than being in school, so I just followed their steps. However, we were going to school sometimes.

I don't have anything negative to say about my parents since there are many kids that blame their parents by not letting them study or they don't get any support from them. My brothers and sisters were all treated equally by my parents. They never made any difference toward any one of us. They did not stop my sisters from attending school when they reached puberty, by expecting them to do house chores and get married. No. They never thought that way. I have older sisters that I don't really understand why they quit school. Maybe they couldn't attend it, or it was difficult for them. I don't really know the reasons they stopped going to school since my parents always wanted us to study and be better persons. That was my sisters' choice. I have two younger sisters, almost of my age, that are still attending school and they are doing well. I don't have too many brothers, I only have one. Well, I had others, but they already passed away and have some sisters. I have six sisters and my other brother passed away too. So, we are seven.

When I was about sixteen years old just finishing middle school, I saw all of this migratory movement going around me. My classmates were all leaving the town to come to the USA. This movement drove me to make my decision. I left San Martin Peras with one of my cousins. I dropped out of school because almost all of my classmates left the town, and I felt alone in the school, so I decided to leave the town as well.

When I was living in the town, five years ago, people said it was very difficult to get here, and when I came by myself, I learned it was hard but not impossible. It was maybe because there was not too much control in the border as now.

We entered the border in San Luis Rio Colorado and then arrived in the United States, which I don't know the name, where one of my cousins picked me up and took me to Oxnard, California.

The route we took was in the desert and we spent two and a half nights to walk it. We walked during the nights and rested in the days in warm weather.

I don't really know why we walked only in the nights. I do know that most of the people that were coming with us knew the reason why, but I think that is because there is more vigilance during the day than in the nighttime.

I brought water and some food, but it was mostly water, about three gallons and some tostadas. It was just the right amount to supply my needs.

There were five of us. Not all of us were successful in crossing the border. An uncle of mine was left behind when we took our first ride. I think he didn't have enough money to afford the journey because he returned to Oaxaca after the first attempt.

It was warm weather because we came in the month of April, almost summertime.

We arrived at a small town near the border, but didn't really know where it was. I only know that after we were picked up at the small town, we then landed in Oxnard.

This journey lasted around two weeks since I left Oaxaca and arrived here, maybe less than that.

I first went to Oxnard because I was coming with a cousin of mine who already had her family living there, so I just tried to stick with her because I didn't have any idea of where I was. I only knew that I came to work.

I came to Watsonville because one of my brothers in law went to Oxnard to pick me up and then brought me here.

Now, I am here in Watsonville and I work in the fields, picking strawberries. I pick them, I pack them, and sometimes I do some weeding. It is a bit hard, but as with everything, I got used to it.

I only had what I was wearing when I arrived here and a small amount of money and then my sister bought me some new clothes. Being here in California is the same as I imagined it would be in Oaxaca. I was always realistic about this country, and as everyone says, life here is harder because we have to work in the fields to earn money, but after all, we get used to it.

As a Mixteco person the hardest thing for me I think is the language because I don't understand English, and I can't communicate with people as I would like to. I want to learn English someday.

Spiritually, since my childhood my family had taught me that god exists; however, as a child, I never paid attention to them. It wasn't a subject that mattered to me until now that I want to learn more about it. I would say that I'm a believer, and I want to learn more about the Bible which is my favorite book now.

With regards to shamans, witchcraft, and supernatural things even though people say that those kinds of things exist, I don't believe in it. I think that it depends on the beliefs of each person. I only believe in God.

I don't really know if people believe in those things in San Martin Peras. I can't say that they do or they don't because I'm not capable to judge them and point them by their religious beliefs.

Coming here to California, I changed nothing about myself. I do have many plans however, and one of them is to play music. I like all music genres. I like to play the digital organ and guitar.

I want the readers to make their own opinions of the book, and if I talked too much, or if my words didn't make sense to them, I want them to excuse me. Otherwise, if they learned something positive about us, I just would like to thank them for taking their time to read my story.

NARRATIVE TWO: CARMELA

My name is Carmela and I am 18 years old. I was born in San Martin Peras, in Oaxaca, Mexico.

I was raised in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua. We returned to San Martin Peras once when I was five years old, and then when I was fourteen years old. We stayed about a year there, in a small village called La Escopeta. It is a beautiful village. We didn't use to do anything there. We didn't go to school or work, we were just hanging out.

I did attend school in Cuidad Juarez until I finished which was in sixth grade. I only finished sixth grade because that is when we moved to Oaxaca. I was enrolled in the school in San Martin Peras but I didn't like it. I don't know why I didn't like it.

We had no animals, but my grandparents did have some cattle some cats. We moved between the towns of Cuidad Juarez and San Martin Peras because of the migration movement. The movement offered jobs in places like Culiacan, Baja California and Northern Mexico. My whole family used to migrate to Ciudad Juarez, but, I didn't work with them nor did I help them. I attended school instead. My parents never used to ask me to work. They are now living in San Martin Peras again. I do not know what they are doing there because they just returned back to there. They were living in Aguascalientes and returned to Oaxaca about two weeks ago.

When I was about fourteen, when I was living in San Martin Peras I thought the town was a little depressing. I only stayed there for two months and went back to Cuidad Juarez. When I got to Ciudad Juarez I was enrolled in school again.

I liked to attend school there. After that one of my uncles told us that he would come to the United States and then my brother and I came with him. I was already fifteen years old at that time.

When I was fifteen years old, I said goodbye to my parents in Aguascalientes and started my journey from Oaxaca to Watsonville, California. It was during the cold winter month, February.

Everyone told me that it was difficult to get here; however, I didn't struggle too much because my brother and the "*coyote*" helped me through all the way. It was good that I was crossing with three family members, my aunt, uncle, brother and two other people. We all walked for one and a half night and at the very moment when we were crossing a road the border patrol caught us and sent us back to Tijuana.

Then we tried another time but didn't succeed. After another unsuccessful attempt, we tried one more time. This time we walked for a night and slept during the day. Our route was rough. It was a little hard for me because it was rocky and steep terrain with some bushes and trees, but didn't see any kind of animals.

We had a small amount of corn tortillas and two bottles of two liters of water was enough for us.

The next night, we reached the place where we were to take the ride that would bring us to Watsonville. I don't really know the name of the city. We threw away the leftovers when we took the ride. I only had the clothes that I was wearing when I left Oaxaca and two hundred dollars.

We arrived in Oxnard, California and it took us about three hours to get there from that city. We went to Oxnard because we had another uncle living there.

Overall, it took us about a week and a half to get to Watsonville from Oaxaca. The jobs were scare in Oxnard, so we decided to come to Watsonville. We went to the house of one of my mom's sisters. This was in March.

I came to the United States to pick strawberries.

When I got here, as we all know that it is hard to earn money, I thought back in Mexico, that I was coming to work, earn money, save it, and then return to my hometown because I didn't think to live here forever. But now that I'm here I have a good living even though I don't have enough money.

This country is nice and beautiful, but at the same time it is hard to live here. We have to work hard to earn our own money; it is a lot of effort.

As a Mixteco person living in the United States, the hardest thing for me is that I can't have the same feelings for this country as I do with my country, and I am here because of a necessity and not a pleasure.

On the other hand, Anglo people discriminate us and don't want us here, but I think that there is a positive and a negative side of living here. The negative side is that every morning we wake up to go to work in the fields, but they don't appreciate the hard work we do and don't see or don't understand everything we had to go through to get here and want to get us out of this country. Every day, rain or shine, seasonally, I work in the fields picking and packing strawberries. Any kind of job is hard to do, and this is the only one I do here.

I spend all my money and do not save anything. I honestly don't even help my parents anymore.

I am getting use to this new life, but I really miss my family and my country. Coming to the United States, I had to give up my freedom. When I was in México, I was able to do anything that I wanted, and I can't do many of them here. Laws are very strict here when it comes to a drunk driver; for instance, if you are drinking and driving, the police will arrest you and then deport you to your country, and in México no one can tell you anything because it's your own town and you know how the laws work there.

Another thing is that if you have a pet here, I know because I have a dog, you must keep on track with its shots, to keep them clean and healthy while in México there is no need to do all of those things. You can have a pet there and nobody will tell you anything or complain about it.

I think that instead of improving my life, it is getting worse because when I was in México, my parents would do anything to give me everything I needed, and here, I need to work hard to have what I need. I regret that I didn't appreciate what my parent did for me.

I do not have any spiritual beliefs. Well, I do believe that spiritism and the supernatural does exist, but I don't wish to explore it deeper. It is not in my nature. I'm always cautious with everything I do to avoid anything bad to happen to me, but I don't seek for a shaman's help if I feel ill either.

In my future, I wish I can earn money quickly and return to my town soon and visit my family. I also want to build my own house with my husband's help.

I do want to learn English.

I want this book to show people that there is no need for discrimination against us as Mixteco people and to appreciate the hard work we do for them.

NARRATIVE THREE: REINA

My name is Reina and I am a twenty years old girl from Santos Reyes Zochiquilazala in Oaxaca, Mexico.

I was born and raised in Santos Reyes Zochiquilazala. I left the town when I was twelve years old, but there's the place where I was born. The town is beautiful after all, but I had to leave because of our need and because I wanted to improve my life.

I heard that there are only about three hundred habitants, so we are not too many. It's just a small village and is located up in a hill, and down where I live there are a lot of trees, rivers and everything that a rural town can have. That's what I like the most about my town; the trees, rivers, and the nature itself.

Our house is made of cement and the other houses are of the same material as ours now. Since I have memory, it has always been the same. There weren't too many adobe houses left. The streets they are still unpaved. The town it has everything. I don't remember which service is the only left, but we have water, electricity, almost everything.

My father didn't have any animals; he used to do other things. Well, since his childhood he had to come here, so we don't have any animals. Moreover, my father didn't want us to take care of any animal; instead, he wanted us to attend school. We only have hens and dogs.

My childhood was regular, a little sad because we didn't have enough money to buy books and notebooks that were needed to attend school; therefore, my father had to leave the town and go to seek for job to other places such as Ensenada and earn some money so we can buy our expenses, shoes, and everything we needed. That's why I think my life was a little sad.

When I lived in Santos Reyes Zochiquilazala I didn't work. I had to attend school, but I attended it for only four years and then dropped it and came to the United States. I was eleven years old. I wanted to come here, so I dropped school at the age of eleven and when I turned twelve, I left the village to come here.

I decided to come here because I wanted to earn more money to do the best improvements I could in my hometown. It was only my own decision. My father always used to tell me to keep studying.

I came with my father and I came with my parents, and my siblings. We all are nine. We are seven sisters and two brothers. My father was a good father to me and so my mother.

When we got here, we struggled to find rent because the landlords only wanted to rent to couples or only two to three people and we were too many for them. We could only find a garage where we lived packed as we could. Then, we found a house, but it was too big and

expensive and with our salary we couldn't afford to pay the rent because we also wanted to return to our village and we needed to save money to return as well.

So, we only stayed here for two years and then we returned to our village. When we were in the village, I already knew how the United States was and I knew that only here I could earn more money than just living in my village because there were not jobs and there was no way I could make money there. That's why I decided to come here again, and I've been here since then.

I was fifteen years old when I came back to the United States. It was a Saturday when we left Santos Reyes Zochiquilazala. We got to Tijuana on Monday. There we waited two days while we found someone who already knew the route to come to the USA. We found someone whom we came with; however, we couldn't make it to the United States because we were caught by the immigration patrol.

After that, we sought for someone else who knew of a different path to get to the United States. We found another person to come with, and he was successful in bringing us to our destination this time; however, while in our way, we were still afraid of getting caught by the border patrol again. It was a long way since we had to spend eight days in the mountains.

It took us so long because the route was long as well as also because our guide suggested that it would be better if we walked during the night and rest in the days, so we would avoid to get caught again.

The path was bad, I would say awful because there were a lot of fallen trees, and we had to step over them so that way we wouldn't leave any footprint. We had to erase every footmark we were leaving in our way to avoid being tracked by the border patrol. The land was woodland with many fallen trees.

It was located in Tijuana, in a place called "Nido del Aguila". Even though it was Tijuana, it was very far because we had to walk several days.

Our hope was to get here somehow.

For our journey we brought with us a kilogram of corn tortillas, however, we didn't eat too much because we were afraid thinking that we might be caught in some point of our way. We just carried tortillas and a little water. It was enough food for us because there were creeks in the mountain where we could supply our needs, so it was not necessary to take too much with us.

When we reached our first destination someone picked us up. When we got there, in the outskirts of a town, our guide had already talked with one of his aides who live in San Diego (as that is what he does for a living), to pick us up. Because the late already knew where our guide usually arrived with his people, he left a cell phone hidden in the area which our guide searched for and found in the middle of the bushes and then used to call him. When the aid arrived at the place, he picked us and took us to a nearby town. He took us to a park in an unknown small town where he left us.

There we had to find someone else who could give us a ride to come to Watsonville. The trip from that town to Watsonville took us the whole night, and I say the whole night because we departed from that town at around eleven p.m. and arrived here in Watsonville at 5:00 a.m.

When we got here, the city was new to us, the people, everything, we didn't know anybody but a cousin who was living in this city. We didn't know where my cousin was living; thus, we waited until dawn to search for him. We walked trying to find him. Even though we had acquaintances here, they were not our relatives, so they couldn't help us as much as we needed.

We finally found someone who knew of my cousin's whereabouts and asked him to tell us where he was living.

When we found my cousin's house, he welcomed us and then helped us to find rent.

We found a room and lived there. The only belongings I had were the clothes I was wearing because our guide didn't allow us to bring too many things such as clothing or shoes. We were only allowed to bring a backpack with some food. When we reached our first destination, we had to throw away all of the leftovers.

We had about sixty dollars left from our journey. We used it all once we got here to Watsonville. Then we borrowed two hundred dollars from my cousin to pay the rent. We did not lose any of our money during our journey.

We all arrived uninjured. We were four people plus the "coyote" guide. Overall, it took us about a month and a half to get here from Oaxaca. We left our hometown in mid-March and arrived here in late April.

We came to California because we chose it and because people always told us that there were a lot of jobs here. We came to pick raspberries and other agricultural jobs.

Now that I live here, I think about when I was in Oaxaca. I imagined that this town, Watsonville, was beautiful and with better opportunities, but, when I got here, I realized that I had to struggle more because even though there were many jobs, they were seasonal and didn't last so long. It was not hard to find a job when it was the season, but, when it ended, we struggled a lot to keep on track with the rent.

I think I struggle more now because I save my money and then send it to Mexico with the hope of building my own house in Oaxaca; therefore, when the winter arrives I need to have something to afford my rent and other expenses. It is hard sometimes, but, the good thing is that I have a job.

I am already adapting to this culture, as I know more about this country and its culture. Well, when I first got here, I didn't know this country and I struggled a little, but now I'm learning more about it, about its people, its laws, everything and I'm trying to adapt myself to the system even though I miss Oaxaca.

I do not feel welcomed in this country, I think there are people that welcome everyone to this country but, there are others that don't want us here for we are foreigners from other countries. That 's my own opinion.

I work picking raspberries since I first arrived to this country. I first wanted to work picking strawberries but my father didn't let me because he said it was a harder job as he saw how people remained crouched for long periods every day, while in the raspberry fields people would be standing at all times and that was easier.

I started picking raspberries although my salary was low and then I returned to Oaxaca.

When I came back, I switched to another company where I got a better pay than that of the first one. I picked raspberries there for a year and the second year they offered me a new position where I had to inspect the quality of the fruit that was picked.

I accepted the opportunity, and I've been doing that job since then. Moreover, I get better pay than what I got when I was a picker.

Well, pickers also earn well as long as they are fast. Unfortunately, I was slower than them and saw it reflected on my checks.

Now that I am an inspector, I earn more money; however, I'm thinking of seek for another job for these coming months because I'm working only three to four days a week, weeding the raspberry fields and is not enough to pay my expenses or if the season starts soon my employer calls me, then I wait.

I do want my story and this book to show our suffering during our journeys from Oaxaca to here and how we have to overcome these struggles.

As a Mixteco person, I do not have any spiritual beliefs to share.

NARRATIVE FOUR: HORTENCIA

My name is Hortencia and I am eighteen years old. I was born and raised in San Antonio de las Mesas. When I was two years old my parents and I move to Santa Cruz del Bravo to grow cattle so they can earn some money that they needed because we were very poor. When I was six years old, we returned to San Antonio and then my parents enrolled mi in pre-school. I went to school there, and I graduated from sixth grade when I was twelve years old.

San Antonio de las Mesas is located in Oaxaca, in Southern Mexico, near Santiago Tlalpancingo. San Antonio de las Mesas wasn't that pretty or ugly. It was just about. Life was normal there. We lived well, although we needed money to survive. We didn't even have an adobe house, we had a shack made of palm tree and people would criticize us because of that. The roads are still of dirt and the town is just a hill. It's not even a large town, it's a small town. We can say it's a village, but I don't know how many people live there. My parents had two

bulls, a donkey, two horses, three dogs and a cat. My brothers took care of them. We were only able to sow corn and beans for our needs.

When I was twelve years old, I had to go to Chihuahua to work because of poverty. I liked school, I wanted to continue studying in San Antonio de las Mesas, but I had to drop it because of the lack of money. That's why I had to go to Chihuahua to work for eight months. After that, I returned to the town. I worked picking green chili. The minimum wage was of sixty-five cents a kilogram, and the full burlap contained about twenty-eight to thirty six kilograms. We were four workers in the family, so my father would earn between six hundred and seven hundred weekly for the four of us. That was for four of us because the ones that were working were my brothers, my father, and I. We earned too little. After eight months we returned to San Antonio. I stayed there for a year and then I came to the United States.

I came to the United States because of the same issue, poverty, and because I wanted to improve my life, and I wanted to help my parents. It was all my decision; my parents had nothing to do with it. I came for both things; to improve my life and to help them to improve theirs because they don't earn too much taking care of the animals since the employers don't pay enough to survive.

I was fourteen years old, and I came with two of my cousins and some other boys from the same town. My cousins and I took care of each other from San Antonio to Watsonville in the United States.

We spent three days on the road from Oaxaca to Tijuana because we were going to cross the border from there. When we arrived to Tijuana, we stayed there for two days which we use to go to buy our clothing and supplies. The next day, at two in the morning, we enter the border and ran about an hour without stopping. There were a lot of hills that we had to climb and there was also a river we had to cross. We stopped walking at about six in the morning to rest during the day. We resumed our journey at eight in the evening and at about one in the morning the border patrol caught us and kept us in a detention center for a minimum of five minutes, then they sent us back to Tijuana. There, they took my brothers and cousin's information and fingerprints. After the immigration service sent us back to Tijuana, I had to ask my brother to return to Oaxaca because he was not able to walk anymore since he had an injured knee.

I didn't give up after we failed because I really wanted to cross the border, so I tried once again. We took a break for two days then we headed again to our journey. At about one in the morning, we entered again the border. At the very entrance, we were assaulted by some robbers; they took all of our money and left us penniless. After such situation, we continued our way and thanks God we didn't face a similar situation again. We stopped at five in the morning to rest the entire day and at eight in the evening we continued our way, but things didn't turn well because it started to rain, so we had to walk under the rain. It was difficult to cross the border because it was raining and the other people didn't want to continue anymore.

It took me a day and a half to cross the border, but I can't tell how long it took me to get here to Watsonville, since I left Oaxaca. I remember that I left my town on February twelfth, and I arrived here at the end of the month.

We got to Los Angeles, I'm not sure of the place's name, but they said it was Los Angeles at two in the morning, and there we were picked up by some men in a truck. Then they took us to the bank of a river where there were three houses that were like small huts where they kept us the whole day.

In the morning they went to buy us some food to eat. At around two in the afternoon, one of my cousins arrived at the place and picked us up to take us to an unknown place where we stayed for a while. We departed from that place at seven in the evening and arrived in Watsonville at around two in the morning. Then, my cousin called my sister to come and pick me up; she arrived and took me to one of her friend's house where I lived for a while until my sister found rent for both of us. When I arrived here, my sister already had clothes and shoes ready for me.

I lived with my sister but not all of the time because she was living in a small studio with her partner and one of my brothers and there was not enough room for me; therefore, I had to live with one of her friend meanwhile she was looking for a larger place.

The most difficult thing for me is to live here as an undocumented Mixtec person is being afraid of getting caught at any moment by the immigration service.

However, I've had a good living here because I have everything that I need, I started to work, and I don't suffer from lack of money because I have a job to afford my expenses, a thing that I can't do in México.

We were very poor in México, my parents didn't have a job to maintain us; instead, they had to take care of their animals that's why I thank God that he helped me to get here and find a job where I can earn enough every week to sustain myself, pay my rent, and help my parents. And that is the change I have had in my life. I do not think my life has improved too much, maybe a little bit.

I went through many things in Oaxaca because my parents couldn't afford to buy me what I wanted. I used to live in a small hut made of palm tree, but fortunately, I worked hard all of this time to save money and build a new adobe house which I couldn't have when I was a child. Now that I already have a house, I'm thinking of buying my own piece of land.

When I was in México, people told me that the United States was beautiful and that there was no need to work here. They took pictures and showed them to me, I imagined that this country was really beautiful, and yes, it is beautiful, but when I got here, it was hard to me to realize that I was actually going to work instead of just having fun as they told me when I left my town. I thought I was coming for a kind of vacation, but they lied to me.

When I got here, I rested for a week and the next week I started to work in the fields picking strawberries, and I didn't wanted to do that, I didn't like to work. However, I got used to work little by little because it was for my own good and at the same time to help my parents. I did it for them and for myself.

I do know that spiritually speaking, I do not have a belief. I believe a little bit in shamans. Some of them can actually cure illness. I don't know if I would use a shaman if I were ill.

As far my future plans, I want to learn English. I also want to return to Oaxaca, buy my own land and start a farm with lots of animals. I also want to have a beautiful family with a good husband.

I realize it will take time to realize my plans.

The reason I came to the United States is because of the same; our poverty. I wanted to help my parents to improve our lives. So, I decided to leave the town and come here at the age of fourteen. I was fourteen when I started working in the fields picking strawberries.

SPANISH TRANSLATIONS

AUTHOR'S NOTE: The book will include the original interview in Spanish. Below is a representative translation of an interview.

JESUS' INTERVIEW IN SPANISH

Jesús Pérez de 21 años de edad nos hablara de su niñez en San Martin Peras.

Nos gustaría saber de dónde eres; aunque ya hemos dicho que eres de San Martin Peras, nos gustaría que lo confirmaras. ¿Cómo fue tu niñez en tu pueblo? ¿Cómo era tu casa? ¿Cómo era tu vida? ¿Cómo era tu pueblo? ¿Qué te motivo a venir a los Estados Unidos y cómo le hiciste para llegar aquí?

Cuando vivía en San Martin Peras, vivía en una casa de adobe, un tipo de tabique hecho de tierra y estiércol. Mis padres ahora están construyendo una casa de ladrillo rojo la cual se ve más nueva y mucho mejor, pero en aquel entonces nuestra casa era de adobe. Y lo único que yo tenía que hacer era ir a la escuela.

¿Tus padres tenían algún tipo de ganado tales como; reses, ovejas, chivos, caballos, o burros a los cuales tenías que cuidar?

Si, mis padres únicamente tenían reses y cuando yo salía de la escuela, les ayudaba a cuidarlos. También les ayudaba a sembrar maíz por ser ese el tipo de trabajo que hacen allá.

¿En qué área del pueblo vivías?

Vivía en el lado sur del pueblo, justo detrás del cementerio.

¿Quedaba lejos del pueblo?

No mucho, bueno, cuando iba a la escuela tenía que caminar entre diez y quince minutos para llegar, así que no se me hacía muy lejos.

Cuando ibas a la escuela, ¿también trabajabas durante el día o sólo en las tardes?

Trabajaba nadamas en las tardes y los fines de semana, cuando no iba a la escuela. Le ayudaba a mis padres con el trabajo del campo y cuidando su ganado.

¿Cómo era tu familia? ¿Qué tradiciones tenían? ¿Eran estrictos y regañones contigo, tus hermanos o con tus hermanas?

Ellos no eran regañones con nosotros pero si un poco estrictos. Nos enseñaron a ser prudentes, a no habla cuando no nos lo pedían. No nos permitían llamar a la gente por apodos, de ser cautelosos al hablar con los demás, y de respetar a todos. Eso era lo que cariñosamente nos enseñaron pero sin ser rudos con nosotros.

¿Qué era lo más importante para tus padres; que ustedes fueran a la escuela o que trabajaran para ellos?

A mis padres les importaba más que fuéramos a la escuela y estudiáramos, pero como tú debes de saber, los niños son niños y cuando nos juntamos con otros niños, ya no le damos importancia a la escuela. Con frecuencia me iba de pinta con mis amigos.

Entonces, ¿no te gustaba asistir a la escuela?

Un poco nadamas. El problema es que hacía amistades con niños que preferían andar jugando y sin hacer nada que ir a la escuela y yo seguía sus pasos. Sin embargo, algunas veces sí íbamos a la escuela.

¿Y tus hermanas? ¿Cómo las trataban tus padres? ¿Las trataban diferente que a ti y a tus hermanos por ser mujeres o las trataban de la misma manera?

Todos éramos tratados de la misma manera. No hacían diferencia hacia ninguno de nosotros.

Como ya debes de saber, muchos padres piensan que cuando una niña llega a su pubertad, ya no debe asistir a la escuela a causa de su edad, así que ella empezará a hacer los quehaceres del hogar y eventualmente se casará. ¿Tus padres tenían estas creencias?

No, ellos nunca pensaban de esa forma. Tengo hermanas mayores que yo que realmente no entiendo por qué dejaron la escuela. Tal vez ellas no podían ir o se les hacía difícil. No sé realmente la razón por la que ellas abandonaron la escuela si nuestros padres siempre quisieron que estudiáramos y fuéramos mejores personas. Esa fue la decisión de mis hermanas. Tengo dos hermanas menores, casi de mi edad, que siguen asistiendo a la escuela y les va muy bien.

¿Cuántos hermanos y hermanas tienes?

No tengo muchos hermanos, solamente tengo uno. Bueno, tenía otros pero ya fallecieron y tengo unas hermanas. Tengo seis hermanas y como mi otro hermano ya falleció también, entonces somos siete en total.

¿Tú también veías a la gente pasar por las calles con sus reses y burros? ¿Qué pensabas de eso?

Sí, siempre veía eso y me divertía mucho al mirarlos pasar por la calle. Siempre quise hacer lo mismo con el ganado de mis padres pero nunca tuve la oportunidad.

¿Por qué te saliste de la escuela?

¿Por qué deje la escuela? Pues, creo que es porque la mayoría de mis compañeros de escuela se salieron de y dejaron el pueblo para venirse a los Estados Unidos por lo que yo me sentí solo y decidí venirme también.

¿En qué grado estabas cuando te saliste de la escuela para venirte a los Estados Unidos?

¿Cuántos años tenías?

Apenas había terminado la secundaria y tenía dieciséis años de edad.

¿Tu motivación para venirte a los Estados Unidos fue porque te diste cuenta de todo el movimiento migratorio que estaba ocurriendo o porque así lo quisiste?

Sí, vi que todo esto ocurría a mi alrededor; mis compañeros yéndose del pueblo y el movimiento de emigración me llevaron a tomar mi decisión. Fue únicamente por ese hecho, así que no tengo nada negativo que decir de mis padres tal y como lo hacen otros muchachos que culpan a sus padres de no dejarlos estudiar o no recibir ningún tipo de apoyo de su parte.

¿Con quién te viniste?

Con uno de mis primos.

HORTENCIA'S INTERVIEW IN SPANISH

Hortencia de 18 años de edad hablara acerca de su vida en México.

¿Cómo te llamas y cuántos años tienes?

Me llamo Hortencia y tengo 18 años de edad. Nací y crecí en San Antonio. Cuando tenía dos años de edad, mis padres y yo nos cambiamos a Santa Cruz del Bravo para criar vacas y de esa forma ganar dinero porque éramos muy pobres. Cuando ya tenía seis años, regresamos a San Antonio y allí mis padres me inscribieron en el preescolar. Asistí a la escuela allí y me gradué de la primaria (sexto grado) a los doce años de edad.

¿Cuál San Antonio es?

Es San Antonio de las Mesas.

¿En dónde está localizado?

Esta localizado en Oaxaca, cerca de Santiago Tlalpancingo.

¿Cómo era tu vida en San Antonio?

Pues era normal. Vivíamos bien aunque necesitábamos dinero para sobrevivir. Cuando tenía doce años, tuve que ir a Chihuahua a trabajar a causa de nuestra pobreza. Me gustaba la escuela, quería continuar con mis estudios pero tuve que darme de baja por la falta de dinero. Por eso

tuve que ir a Chihuahua a trabajar por ocho meses. Después de eso, regrese al pueblo. La razón por la que me vine a los Estados Unidos es por lo mismo: por nuestra pobreza. Quería ayudar a mis padres a mejorar nuestras vidas. Ni siquiera teníamos una casa de adobe sino una pequeña choza hecha de palma y la gente nos criticaba por lo mismo. Así que decidí dejar mi pueblo y venirme acá a la edad de catorce años. Tenía catorce años cuando empecé a trabajar en el campo pizcando fresas.

¿Cómo era tu pueblo?

No era tan bonita, tampoco tan fea, estaba más o menos.

¿Cómo era? ¿Era una localidad rural, en transición, o urbana? ¿Tenía calles pavimentadas o eran de terracería?

Las calles siguen siendo de terracería y el pueblo es un cerro. Ni siquiera es un pueblo grande, es pequeño. Podríamos decir que es un ranchito aunque no sé cuántos pobladores tenga.

¿Cómo eran las casas?

No había tantas casas de adobe pero si muchas chozas de palma.

¿Qué tipo de animales tenían tus padres?

Tenían dos toros, un burro, dos caballos, tres perros, y un gato.

¿Ayudabas a tus padres a cuidar a los animales?

No, mis hermanos hacían eso.

¿También sembraban?

Sí, solamente sembrábamos maíz y frijol.

¿La cosecha era para ustedes o para vender?

No, era para cubrir nuestras necesidades.

Cuando fuiste a Chihuahua, ¿Qué tipo de trabajo hacías?

Trabajé recolectando chiles verdes.

¿Cuánto te pagaban?

El pago mínimo era de sesenta y cinco centavos por kilo, y el costal lleno contenía entre veintiocho y treinta y seis kilos en total. Éramos cuatro trabajadores en la familia, así que mi papa ganaba entre seiscientos y setecientos pesos semanales por los cuatro.

¿Ese era el pago entre ustedes cuatro?

Sí, porque los cuatro que trabajábamos éramos mi papá, mis hermanos y yo.

Era muy poco, ¿no lo crees?

Si, ganábamos muy poco.

Después de ir a Chihuahua, ¿regresaste a San Antonio?

Si, regresamos a San Antonio, estuve un año allá y después me vine a los Estados Unidos.

¿Por qué te viniste a los Estados Unidos?

Me vine por lo mismo: por la pobreza y porque quería mejorar mi vida y ayudar a mis padres.

¿Fue tu decisión venirte o la de tus padres?

Fue mi propia decisión; mis padres no tuvieron nada que ver.

¿Qué es lo que influyó más en tu decisión para venir acá, el poder ganar dinero para mejorar tu vida o el poder ayudar a tus padres?

Me vine por las dos cosas: para mejorar mi vida y para ayudar a mis padres a mejorar la suya porque ellos no ganan mucho cuidando animal puesto que sus patrones no les pagan lo suficiente para sobrevivir.

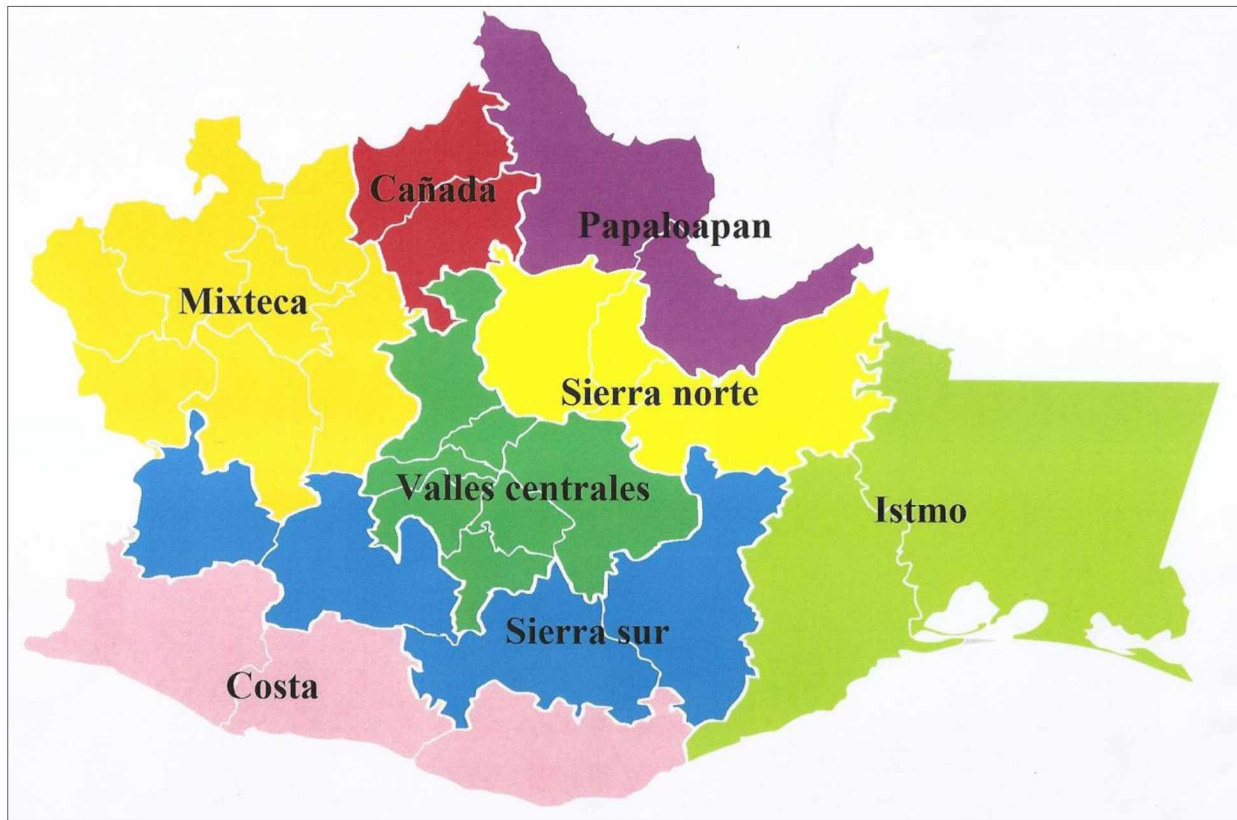
¿Con quién te viniste y a qué edad?

Me vine a los catorce años de edad con dos primos y otros muchachos del mismo pueblo.

Entonces, ¿tus primos estuvieron a cargo de ti?

Correcto.

SAMPLE ILLUSTRATION



The state of Oaxaca, Mexico, showing the location of Mixteca (courtesy of Pajaro Valley School District Migrant Education Office, Watsonville, CA).

SAMPLE PHOTOGRAPHS



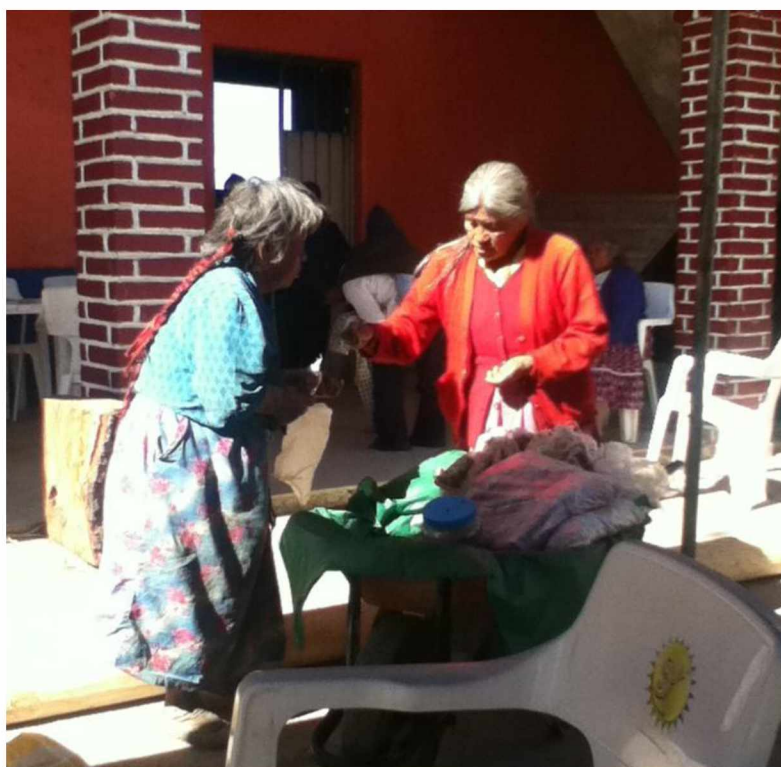
Vista of the Mixteca landscape, Oaxaca, Mexico



Village of San Martin Peras



Walking down the road in San Martin Peras



Grandmother selling candles at the market



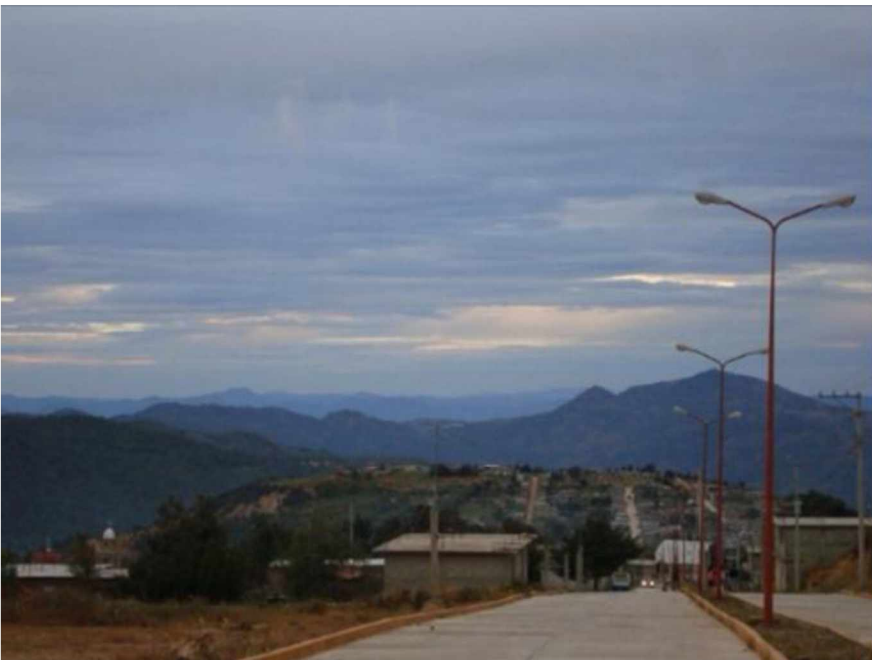
Grandmother patiently waits for the next customer



Lucia's home where she was raised



San Martin Peras built on a knoll



New street and electricity in San Martin Peras



Red flag marks the furrow that belongs to 5-6 workers. Six colors divide the workers' furrows.



Picking strawberries at Corralitos Farms, Central Coast, California



Left to right: Maura, Jesus, Hortencia, Lucia, and Carmela outside of El Altano restaurant in downtown Watsonville, California (Reina not present)



Left to right: Hortencia, Maura, Lucia, Carmela, and Jesus (Reina not present)

AFTERWORD

It is important to point out that I have not been to Mixteca, Oaxaca. I have only lived amongst the Indigenous Zapotecan culture in Oaxaca, Mexico.

I write, research, interview and analyze this indigenous culture hoping that I am serving the Mixtec people and friends honorably.

I know that it is my perception, as an outsider, that can only scratch the surface of the Mixtecs' worldview.

As a representative of my culture, I offer this research and book to fellow Americans so that maybe their perceptions will soften towards the Mixtec people, as promised, for the benefit of the Mixtec immigrants here in California.

James Ruppert shared in the analysis of the poem entitled, "Old Photograph of Aaaanyaalahaash, Chief of the Gaanaxadi." "Secure eyes look at me/from a century old face/with a million lines/pressed by age. / Our youth look at me/ with pressured faces.

The author must..."she must intercede, must turn her gaze to the people and the land in a way which allows the two sets of faces to once again look at each other.....but to do that it is sometimes necessary to get the faces looking at something else which connects them to each other, such as their bonds to the natural world....or in the social services /teachers situation, I would add, helping one another.

It is with heartfelt gratitude to the Mixtec people, Lucia my Mixteca translator; my family and the University of Alaska's Cross Cultural Master's Program that I take a deep sigh of my completion of the background and proposal for INTERSECTIONS.

CHAPTER 5: Appendices

APPENDIX A: Mixteco Weave and Threads within the Weave

MIXTECO WEAVE

It is common knowledge within indigenous cultures internationally these days, that they ‘attempt to maintain their traditional belief with the modern ways of adjustment.’ J. Ruppert.

Ruppert’s statement includes the Mixtec culture.

People change culture not culture changes people.

In the case of the Mixtecs, their environment was changed, by another cultures’ intrusion, the Spanish. These occurrences seemingly changed the Mixtec people.

Today, we have a modern way of adjustment from the Mixtec immigration. A culture that has humble beginnings that instills a character of a reflective self. These virtues seem to be maintained through the various intersections they experience as immigrants. It is because of this trait that the students ‘intellectual capacities of everyday survival’ is geared towards a survival mode of existence as trilingual culture.

Looking back to the beginning of this project, I have discovered nine continuously common threads that relate to Mixtec identity and place comparing traditional influence with their chosen status as immigrants of modern USA.

First, I believe, there is no doubt that their relationship to place and references to identity began with their supernatural belief, “yii” or “ini”. “This vital force, meaning wind, heat and heart, is animated in all living things. It has been written that within the Mixtecs themselves, this sacred force was concentrated in the heart and blood, which amongst the Mixtecs today is “anima”. Earth, mountains and rivers are not considered parts of a physical environment separate from humans, but, have agency and are connected with people and deities via this sacred force”. Even though this dates back to the time of the Spanish conquest, I believe the essence of this force is found in the intuitive beings of this culture today as depicted by their mannerisms and their ‘way of being’.

A “massive social change and a renewed emphasis on cultural continuity” Dr. James Ruppert stated, has occurred in the United States.” The Mixteco culture establishes this social change by placing themselves between two national intersections while attempting to maintain ‘cultural continuity and perception’. The strength to nourish their spirit to survive requires a looking inward to tradition. In the case of the Mixtecs their bond to the natural world appears to be in memory/link to their homeland of Oaxaca.

The most obvious influence is place. With the Mixtecs it has been a reoccurring theme regarding the “relationship of the exterior landscape with that of the interior sacred place of a familiar landscape of memory.” (Barnhardt/Kawagley) It is this ‘landscape of memory’ that maintains their desires to not relinquish ties to Oaxaca. Instead their lives in California are often full of

promise of remittance; buying houses and property in their homelands, saving for family reunification in Oaxaca or California. No matter, which reason, it requires a relationship and a continuity of identity to homeland.

As transient immigrants they also carry within themselves a generational bond that originated with their homeland. By tracing their lives between Oaxaca and California's multiple land changes we can now better understand how each individual's worldview has encountered numerous intersections of an adaptive integrity while living within a dominate society.

Now in California, with numerous plans to accept their difficult position in the 'Promised Land', I see a commonality with the manner in which David Thomas wrote about the Maoris, "living in a society dominated by other ethnic groups whereas the ethnic minority status is a stressor (ex. jobs) and provision of services and social support are run by the dominate group and the (Mixtecos) are invisible and underrepresented. Localization is used to refer to the process of elaborating psychological concepts derived from the cultures of indigenous peoples and non dominant peoples whose conceptions of psychological processes are usually invisible to the dominate groups in their societies." (David Thomas, University of Waika, Hamilton, New Zealand)

Thomas' description of assimilation of indigenous people is what I call the Intersection of Surrender and Allow. Surrender to Trust in one's 'heart, feel the wind and heat'. The psychological processes, I would argue, are driven by maintaining a tradition of their inward spirit.

Traditionally, the Mixtecs have allowed a belief /faith in yii's spirit for guidance. This trust is their vital force. Anima is guided by the souls of the departed where only good thoughts can be spoken.

In the case of some of the students, God is their driving force. "Just as you can hear the wind, but can't tell where it comes from or where it will go next, so it is with the spirit. (John 3:8)

They have surrendered and allowed their new lives to succumb knowingly to low wages, risky border crossings, misunderstood daily encounters with cultural differences, poor housing, language isolation, uncertainty of place seasonally, and have deliberately chosen this life of variables for a life that appears to trust the unknown.

The Mixtec youth are continually tested in competency by their relationship to daily survival in a new realm of subsistence. Indigenous people have traditionally acquired their knowledge through direct experience in the natural world...the 'laws' are continually tested in the context of everyday survival." (Indigenous Knowledge Systems-Barnhardt/Kawagley)

This real world context is their adaptive integrity. It is experientially shaped in their stories as they share who they were, and are becoming. Their willingness to have nothing in hopes of acquiring an unknown is something in itself.,"where a life that goes beyond making a living can be restored." Kawagley Their mode of survival is focused. America is in their heart. They surrender to the lack of food, shelter and clothing leaving behind the familiar place and seek a

God given, faith driven survival mode. This cultural shift takes place with the need for trusting in their intuitiveness or a belief in “yii” to provide the basics of food, water, clothing and shelter.

THREADS WITHIN THE WEAVE

History

The word Mixtec is an Aztec word for people of the rain or people of the clouds. It is interesting that one of the predominate reasons their homeland is not prosperous is the lack of rainfall, hence immigration to the states. In California the lack of rain produces work and in Oaxaca the lack of rain does not produce agricultural benefits.

Historically, the Mixtecs have stood up to Aztecs, Spanish and now the US government. Unfortunately, standing up to the Spanish was not enough to protect their land from becoming ecologically devastated. In today's Mixtecs it is the US government that is slowly but surely tightening the borders.

The good news is the Mixtecs are using their rights as indigenous people in the US with multiple legal statuses as an empowerment for better working conditions and labor laws. I uncovered two books that are written specifically on the Mixtec future in the US which represents ‘undocumented, legal residents, citizens, low wage workers, and poor agricultural working conditions that absorb facets that the unions susupport.

The Mixtecs' stamina, tolerance and perseverance, I would argue, is historically a cultural trait...a sense of inherent being.

Place

“I tried to gain a better understanding of how the Yupiaq (Mixtecs) and modern ways of knowing and doing are made to work together in everyday life and whether compromises are made between them or one is favored over the other.” Kawagley-A Yupiaq Worldview.

Agriculturally, they leave behind the dry unproductive soil of home to work prosperously in miles of vibrant agricultural fields here in California. They risk all to work in a very laborious backbreaking menial atmosphere.

This environment, although sometimes with miserable working conditions, appears as though it establishes within the Mixteca(o) a consciousness a sense of wealth in and of itself. This wealth is in the prosperousness of working amongst miles of bountiful produce, harvest and work. The ultimate job security! Water and food are abundant...the temperature is perfect and the identity of the unknown is no longer, at least until the season is over.

They are without work here in California, maybe 4 months and in Oaxaca it is the reverse they would only average 4 months of agricultural work to yield crops to survive.

The Mixtecs' environmental way of thinking follows the lead of the land via the seasons. The land maintains a type of intelligence of its own through the various seasonal transitions.

Place as an identity of self

If we look at Native intelligence of knowing, harmony and peace, I have observed that the Mixtecos are not into power or dominance, especially out in the agricultural arena. They are such a humble people.

The labels that the Mixtecs receive in the US are Oaxaqueños, peasants, backwards....not to mention the 'palabras' in Spanish. These labels are rude and hurtful to the Mixtecs. They define a barrier and lack of acceptance to place and environmental relationship to status.

Kawagley states, "Words shut us down." Their intuitive knowing "feels right" and is received.

Homeland

Through influence of one another and their stories back home and there are an evolution of attitude and a stronghold of traditions. This relationship of duality, as transnational people, portrays a behavior of leaving behind and a longing to be apart of an environment. Both maintain an identity.

Poverty/ financial status

The Mixtecs as a culture have had centuries of oppression. There is a public self-consciousness knowing that impoverishment is a way of life for the Mixtecs.

Both in Mexico and the US they are in the lowest class as indigenous people primarily due to isolation and to the uncertainty of work.

Once they leave their pueblos and venture 'out into the world' they take on the freedom of choice. They are no longer living in isolation. Their relationship to place must take on a child like wonderment trusting in a better way of life. California place names offer renewed hope with dreams for a prosperous future of work.

Social

Major social transformation by all the variables previously mentioned. Understanding Spanish and English while stepping into a pace of life that is very different from their remote 'tierra'. This adjustment to the social learning that needs to take place by the Mixtecs is very difficult. I have imagined how I would adjust to their village life.

Isolation

Back in Oaxaca they lived in isolation due to the landscape. Localism. Here in Wastonville, they often live in an urban environment but are also isolated due to language, physical appearance, barriers of racism, and mistreatment.

Family Ties

Age gap-elders and children left back in the homeland, find it difficult to communicate with their returning family members who have been exposed 'to the outside world' especially from new social learning values. In California, the older Mixtec residents notice the ease of the, comparatively to the past when the 50 yr. olds first came across. Overall, better working conditions.

Language- when a Mixteco(a) has a self-determined ambition to be more prosperous in California they attend school to learn Spanish and English. It is truly an art to maintain the native language, Mixteco, while studying new languages. With this 'advancement' values change. Upon returning to the homeland, communication patterns may differ.

Success

Success takes on many meanings. Saving enough money to pay a coyote for new family members to cross over; job stability in the seasons, a baby born in the US, having a private room for your family to live, crops to harvest back at their village. Money sent home to acquire roadside potholes to be filled, or electricity to be installed.

Food

The Mixtecs work most of the year with food. Dr. Craig Gerlach's article Food Systems, Environmental Change, and Community Needs points out facets of transition that correlate from Alaskan Natives to the Mixtecs. This shared indigenous existence of identity to land must be noted. It is important to question the effects of the Mixtecs diet of choice here in Watsonville.

We are aware the Mixtecs leave behind a food system that is minimal for reasons beyond their control. Gerlach's article states it is "clear that change is coming in ways that are new, unpredictable, and not always anticipated by traditional or local knowledge (ACIA 2005; Main et al. 2008). This change is explained in the Mixtec dietary adjustment. They enter a new home in the US where 'finding their food needs cannot locally be met,' except at a one local Oaxacan market in downtown Watsonville.

Dietary changes were not reason enough for the Mixtecs to stop migrating into California. As they leave behind minimally unproductive land to they enter into the American glamour of fast, cheap food. (Ex. Mixtecs preference is Coke, whereas the Pomos did not allow Coke, only Pepsi). This trajectory of change away from traditional foods and towards industrially produced ones, has been described as "nutritional transition".

After reading Gerlach's work, I wonder what will become of the Mixtecs? Could an intuitive nervousness set into their 'way of being' living the American Dream? When they do visit their homeland is it their diet that creates disconnect? Is poor diet what defines the common attitude of many present day Pomo?

Food Security and stress-food contributes far more to health than just calories and nutrition. Food and food culture are linked to health in multiple ways, with many possible social and cultural dimensions of participation at all steps of the food chain, though the relationship and even where the outcomes may not all be overt or obvious. (e.g., Loring and Gerlach 2009).

"Social and spiritual connections to the land and to each other associated with the 'subsistence' lifestyle' have also been shown to play an essential role in the maintenance of psychological and emotional well-being, providing strength and resilience in times of uncertainty (Graves 2005; Saylor et al. 2006).

There are sustainable practices arising in Oaxaca today. This would be a fascinating topic to further explore.

It was interesting to read about the definition of subsistence today in Alaska. Dr. Gerlach's article opened my eyes to a new way of thinking as words evolve into new time periods.

APPENDIX B: Research Background: Intuitive and Experiential Comparisons of Other Indigenous Peoples to the Mixtecos

Dr. Oscar Kawagley spoke of the 'natives mind as a living being'.

After working with specific Native Americans tribal environments and settings, it became evident to me that at one time I disagreed with Kawagley's statement. It had been my experience with certain tribes that the native powerful mind was not nurtured daily by the individual to earn gifts from the Creator.

I have realized I had no authority to state such a disagreement or feeling about an individual's intuitiveness but again my passion was intertwined with place. Kawagley's notion was defined profoundly in isolated remote locations, with resources abundant in subsistence opportunities.

In all fairness I believe he was writing about the Yupiaq Natives themselves in his book titled *A Yuoiak Worldview: A Pathway to Ecology and Spirit*. After all, Dr. Kawagley was a native Yupiak.

I am now taking his statement and expending it to represent all native people,

I still believe it has relevance. Afterall, the Mixtecos are isolated and rural.....however, what is missing are the abundant year round resources, compared to the Yupiaq. I say this because after working with the Mixtecos I now agree with Kawagley but in the Mixtecos sense of place...that setting is transnational.

I argued that his tale was in 'storybook' form with the pristine environment of an isolated wilderness serving to sustain the Alaskan/Canadian natives culturally due to subsistence, diet, lack of adjustment and only working with familiar resources and generational identity.

But now I do agree with Kawagley and Barnhardt at a different level. Yes, the Mixtecos' native mind does appear "as a living being" to the notion that there is a 'carried within' influence to survive, endure and sustain. The Mixtec mind, body, heart and soul are united in determinism, hope and a humble gratitude.

APPENDIX C: Comparisons of Environmental Influence with Other Native Americans in California

The California native people I have worked with do not, if I dare say, have this daily ambition for wisdom to be obtained. My experiences with these cultures and their land lead me to argue that the humanness of the worldview does not maintain their 'harmony, and peace with spirit' without the rich land and resource base to invite the influence of balance. Perhaps this is because of the lack of abundant resources available to the Hopland Pomo as with the Mixtecs.

The Pomo environment is separate, but not isolated. Their water supply for example is trucked in and placed into a tank for the rancheria residents. The cost of the water is exuberant. A casino on the rancheria also uses the water for the public.

Wineries and cattle grazing ranches surround the Rancheria. The geography is such that the ranchers are located on the slopes above the Rancheria. The ranchers block the creek flows down to the Pomo land by placing bulldozed dams for cattle ponds and fill up creek crossings with gravel bars for their hunting clubs dirt roads. Below the Rancheria big name wineries such as Fetzer and Weibel irrigate their vineyards in late March and April with overhead sprinklers when the creeks are flowing they're highest. Traditionally, this is salmon spawning time on the Rancheria.

It is no wonder the Pomo behave as they do caught in the middle of resource 'wars'.

Now I do believe that as humans anyone by choice can balance and align their mind, body and soul. The Urban Indians and Pomos I worked with generally speaking carry a festering or unrest to strive for recognition of identity through historical, well deserved (sarcastically speaking) social services handouts (food, animal control freebies, etc.), 'white guilt' or blame. The common attitude unfortunately carries bitterness motivated by the distractions of depression. I can only speak frankly like this because many of my native friends from these cultures would joke about the 'easy life' they were given to make up for the 'white guilt of history'.