The Emergence of Pan-Mayan Ethnicity in the Guatemalan Transnational Community Linking Santa Eulalia and Los Angeles

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Introduction:

In the current era of globalization, the internationalization of capital and the global reorganization of production have promoted uneven economic development contributing to increasing levels of international migration. Concurrently, communications technology and affordable travel has enabled migrants to maintain diverse and consistent linkages with their countries of origin. Immigrants pursue individual or collective relationships with the country of origin for a variety of reasons including the difficulty in obtaining economic security in either sending and receiving societies, racial and ethnic discrimination in the host society, and/or the desire to assist in the socioeconomic development of communities of origin often neglected by home governments or destroyed by civil conflict (Basch et al., 1994, Popkin, 1997). Migrant-led transnationalism includes maintaining kinship and social networks across borders, sending or receiving remittances, and the establishment of hometown associations that engage in collective community projects in the home region among other activities (Goldring, 2002).

The elaborate linkages between migrant sending and receiving areas that emerge lead some scholars to conceive of transnational migration as a phenomenon that may go beyond individuals and households, incorporating entire communities (migrant and non-migrant members) into the globalization process (Basch et al., 1994, Levitt, 1998, Goldring, 1992, Rouse, 1987, R. Smith, 1995, M.P. Smith and Guarnizo, 1998, Portes et al., 1999). Transnational communities emerge as a significant number from a given place of origin and settlement share this experience with each other transforming the way they think of themselves as a group (Levitt, 1999). Transnational communities have three novel features: they are a product of global capitalism due to the labor demand from the north, they constitute a phenomenon distinct from the traditional patterns of immigrant adaptation, and they offer more opportunities for popular initiatives (Portes et al., 1999).

The density and complexity of such interactions across local spaces coalesce into a single sphere of social action, the transnational social field, which evolves as a newly constructed social space that straddles international borders (Rouse, 1991, Basch et al., 1994). As immigrants construct transnational social networks of obligations and assistance, home country elites respond by attempting to reincorporate the immigrants into the sending nation polity. Transnational social fields become consolidated in the context of the interaction between the transnational practices of immigrants ('transnationalism from below') and the transnational engagement of sending country elites ('transnationalism from above') (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998, Landolt et al., 1999).

Within the literature that focuses on “transnationalism from below,” scholars have focused on the construction of indigenous migrant ethnicity in the host society context (Nagengast and Kearney, 1990; Kearney 1996; Popkin, 1999; Rivera-Salgado, 2000; Fox and Rivera-Salgado 2004). These studies suggest that the adverse conditions experienced by indigenous immigrants in the host context, particularly the nature of their incorporation in rural and urban labor markets and religious institutions and resulting discrimination, lead to immigrant ethnic organization. These organizations usually engage directly with the community or region of origin often providing direct support for development projects in these locales. Other scholars document how the process of transnational migration alters traditional social, religious, and political structures in indigenous migrant sending communities (Kearney and Besserer, 2004; Robles Camacho 2004; Velasquez C., 2004; Maldonado and Artia Rodriguez, 2004). Within these studies, the question of how and why transnational migration simultaneously influences and alters ethnicity at both ends of the migrant circuit remains relatively unexplored. This paper examines this issue through a study of ethnic identity formation within the transnational community that links the Guatemalan Mayan (*Kanjobal)* region of Santa Eulalia with Los Angeles relying on extensive qualitative fieldwork conducted in Santa Eulalia and Los Angeles since 1995 and a census conducted in the sending community in 1996. 1 I find that the economic flows associated with transnational migratory process have exacerbated preexisting class and social stratification in the home society appearing to diminish community cohesion in the

Guatemalan context. Simultaneously, transnational community members based in Los Angeles confront adverse conditions including restrictive U.S. immigration policy, a competitive secondary sector job market, racial discrimination, and the dominance of Latino religious institutions that downplay the cultural distinctiveness of the Mayan community. The increased vulnerability associated with these conditions in both Los Angeles and the Guatemalan context has generated new forms of resistance reflected in the emergence of Pan-Mayan community organizations at both ends of the migrant circuit. By emphasizing their Mayan culture, these organizations have gained support from established religious organizations, non-governmental organizations, and academics from a number of countries. Thus, this case demonstrates how ethnic change generated by migration may empower indigenous transnational communities suggesting the need for inquiry of social change processes at both ends of the migrant circuit in order to understand the potential of 'transnationalism from below'. After examining characteristics of the home community of Santa Eulalia, the paper considers how transnational migration shapes ethnicity in both sending and host contexts.

The Community of Santa Eulalia

Santa Eulalia is situated in the center of the *Kanjobal* Indian region in the department of Huehuetenango in Guatemala. The department of Huehuetenango is located in the western altiplano region of the country, the region in which the Indian population is primarily concentrated. Although no firm estimates exist of the total number of indigenous Guatemalans, analysts assert that over 40% of the country's 9 million residents are Indian (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos 1994). 2 The *Kanjobales* are one of twenty-two distinct indigenous (ethno-linguistic) groups in Guatemala and are the descendants of the Mayan Indians. The *Quiches*, *Mames, Cakchiqueles*, and *Kechis* are the most numerous, perhaps numbering 3 million persons. The remaining groups vary in size with the *Kanjobales* numbering perhaps 100,000 to 150,000. Each of the distinct ethno-linguistic groups can be further sub-divided linguistically as particular areas within

the region have adopted their specific dialect of the *Kanjobal* language. For example, the *Kanjobal* language spoken in Santa Eulalia can be distinguished from that spoken in San Miguel Acatan. Additionally, communication between ethno-linguistic groups is extremely difficult as the languages differ to a considerable extent. However, some of the neighboring ethno-linguistic groups can communicate with each other to a certain degree. *Kanjobales*, for example, can understand the *Chuj* language though have more difficulty with Jacalteco.

Extreme inequality in land ownership benefits Ladinos who dominate the country politically and economically resulting in inferior subsistence agricultural livelihoods for most Maya in the highlands region. This situation has led historically to Mayan dependence on seasonal migration to southern plantations (coffee, cotton, sugar) to supplement minimal income (McCreery 1976). 3 Horrendous working and living conditions and extremely low wages on the plantations often do not enable seasonal plantation workers to bypass the annual migration. Since the mid 1980s, international migration to the United States has largely replaced seasonal migration to the coast as the strategy relied on to secure household expenditures in some communities in the region. Mayan communities have experienced significant societal transformation in the past 40 years including the consolidation of Catholicism and the cultural merging of Catholicism and Mayan *costumbre* (Wilson 1995; Brintnall 1979), the incorporation of community members into evangelical churches and Pentecostal sects (Wilson 1995; Stoll 1988), changes in the regional economy (Smith 1984; 1990), and the militarization of large areas due to prolonged civil war (Manz 1988).

Extreme levels of poverty contributed to the proliferation of popular organizations (many inspired by the Catholic Church) in the western highlands of Guatemala that have addressed the severe socio-economic problems. The civil war that began in the 1960s and intensified considerably in the late 1970s and early 1980s severely impacted the

western highlands including the *Kanjobal* region of Huehuetenango. By 1980, the guerrilla movement in Guatemala obtained a considerable level of civilian support in the Indian highlands resulting in massive and indiscriminate counterinsurgency operations launched by the Guatemalan military. Sources have claimed that these operations led to the destruction of at least 440 Indian villages and hamlets in Huehuetenango and the neighboring department of Quiche (Manz 1988; Oficina de Derechos Humanos de Arzobispado de Guatemala 1998). Additionally, some sources place the total number of deaths in the highlands at between 50,000 to 75,000 for the period 1978 to 1984 (Manz 1988). Whereas several communities were the sites of military massacres including San Miguel Acatan and Barillas in the *Kanjobal* region, many others such as Santa Eulalia suffered extensive selective persecution of community leaders at the hands of the Guatemalan military (Oficina de Derechos Humanos de Arzobispado de Guatemala 1998; Manz 1988). Additionally, the military asserted direct political control of the region through the institution of a system called the Interinstitutional Coordination and the forced recruitment of civilians into the civilian patrols that the military relied on to report "subversive" activity in the communities (Manz 1988). These structures altered traditional political and social structures in the Indian communities of the region.

The municipality of Santa Eulalia has a population of 20,000 (Instituto Nacional de Estadistica 1996) with its town center situated at an altitude of approximately 8500 feet in the Cuchumatanes mountains. The municipality extends 150 square miles and includes the town center and 28 rural villages (aldeas), the furthest 15 hours walking from the center. Traditionally, the few Ladinos who resided in the municipality until the 1970s lived in the town with the *Kanjobal* population residing primarily in the aldeas. 4 In spite of this residential division along ethnic lines, many *Kanjobales* traditionally owned small houses with many other family members in the town center for use only during market days, the annual patron saint celebration, and other events. Although the vast majority of the

population report Catholicism as their primary religious affiliation, sizable proportions of the population (20%) report evangelical or Mayan *costumbre* as their primary religion. 5 50% of the population of the municipality of Santa Eulalia is 14 years of age or under (36% age 9 or under) and a high proportion of the population aged 14 or over have no formal education (76% of women as compared to 50% of men) leading to the high illiteracy rates. Only 4% of the population has 4 or more years of education, and 22% has 4-6 years of education (16% men as compared to 6% women).

A clear class distinction between the town center and the aldeas exists as municipal government workers, school teachers, and commercial owners reside in town with the agricultural labor force residing in the aldeas. Santa Eulalia is connected by a road that originates in the departmental capital of Huehuetenango located 40 miles to the south and leads to the city of Barillas located 20 miles to the north. The existence of the road has facilitated the recent expansion of small commercial enterprises (83 small establishments in the town center) financed to a great extent by migrant dollars. However, the municipality generally is extremely poor as the dominant economic activity remains subsistence agriculture. 90% of the economically active population in the municipality of Santa Eulalia engage in agricultural work, an occupation that suffers due to the diminishing landholdings of households and the decreasing productivity of land associated with environmental degradation. The primary crops are corn and beans though recent crop diversification projects promoted by the European Community in the area have increased production of several vegetables.

The growing acceptance of Catholicism due in part to the presence of Maryknoll Priests in this region beginning in the 1950s has shaped the manner in which many *Kanjobales* practice elements of Mayan *costumbre* and Catholicism simultaneously. Thus, in addition to participating in Catholic Church activities, *Kanjobales* continue to practice several rituals that include asking permission to the earth to till it or to animals to kill them,

the burning of pine splits, copal incense and wax candles before cross shrines, and the following of the sacred calendar (tzolkin). Communities in the region also regularly appoint an alcalde rezador, or prayer leader, who prays for the prosperity of the community for a year while financially supported by the community. Additionally, components of the traditional Maya civil-religious hierarchy organization, such as the talk circle that emphasizes respectful turn taking and consensus decision-making, has become incorporated into the Catholic Church commissions that run the daily affairs of the local church.

International Migration from Santa Eulalia to the United States

International migration to the United States from the *Kanjobal* region of northern Huehuetenango can be characterized as having occurred in three distinct stages (pioneer, war refugee, and youth driven migration) and was preceded by internal migration in the 1940-1970 period. The few pioneer migrants who came to Los Angeles in the 1970s tended to come from San Miguel Acatan, one of the neighboring municipalities to Santa Eulalia. The civil war that raged in the region in the late 1970s and 1980s fueled the second stage of international migration. Specifically, respondents from Santa Eulalia commented that the reliance on civil patrols by the Guatemalan military in the early 1980s disrupted social and economic life within the region leading many men to choose to migrate to the United States. The Guatemalan military forced all men to participate in civil patrols weekly or pay for a replacement. Many refugees from the highlands fled initially in the late 1970s and early 1980s to the refugee camps and to communities in southern Mexico (perhaps 150,000 indigenous Guatemalans went to Mexico at that time). By 1984, Guatemalan Indians from the western highlands began to go directly to U.S. in increasing numbers with the vast majority of *Kanjobales* going to Los Angeles and Indiantown, Florida (Burns 1993). As the violence declined in the late 1980s and 1990s, the networks

linking these migrants to their respective home communities contributed to the third wave of migration consisting primarily of single men but also married men from the region. The emigration of single women and married women joining their husbands who have acquired legal status has increased in the past several years, but single men continue to dominate this migrant stream. Additionally, large-scale indigenous migration to the United States from other regions within the western highlands of Guatemala has occurred such as *Quiche* Mayan migration from Totonicapan to Houston (Hagan 1994).

1996 census data from Yichjoyom, a 450-person village (aldea) located five kilometers from the center of Santa Eulalia reveals additional features of migration from this region. 6 Table one demonstrates that over 75% of international migrants left on their first trip from Yichjoyom in the 1990s. Most migrants (77%) were international migrants though internal migration to Guatemala City and other regions of the country continued at a significant rate. Over 70% of the migrants captured in the sample traveled to California during their first trip to the United States (41% to Los Angeles and 27% to San Diego/Escondido). Southern Florida was the destination of 22% of first time migrants from this aldea. Additionally, 5% of international migrants from Yichjoyom migrated to Cancun, Mexico on their first trip. Return migration rates stand at 11% from this aldea. Additionally, the cost of migration for international migrants varied considerably depending on the final destination site (Mexico or U.S.) and whether the migrant relied on the services of a coyote (smuggler).

The census data from this community also reveals that international and internal migration from this area was dominated by unmarried men under age 30. (Table two). Additionally, table two indicates that migrants had higher levels of education than non migrants as revealed by the high proportion of non migrants as compared to migrants with no formal education (44% vs. 2% men and 57% vs. 22% women) and by the higher proportion of migrants as compared to non migrants with 4 or more years of education

(62% vs. 27% men and 44% vs. 19% women). International and internal migration led to occupational change for migrant men and women, as migrant men continue to work as agricultural laborers though at significantly lower levels than non-migrants (33% vs. 78%). This finding reflects the relative importance of southern Florida as a migrant destination as most migrants work as agricultural laborers in that region. Approximately 40% of all migrant men and women work in garment factories reflecting the high incidence of international migration to Los Angeles where the majority of migrants within the garment industry. Additionally, 89% of migrant women have incorporated into the labor force whereas 83% of non-migrant women work within the household. Making specific claims about migrant women based on these census results is difficult given the small sample size.

Transnational Migration and Socioeconomic Change in Santa Eulalia

Economic Change

Previous community studies have demonstrated how international migration exacerbates income and land inequality within peripheral sending regions (Taylor 1992; Taylor and Wyatt 1993; Mines 1981; Massey et. al., 1987; Georges 1990). The household census data from Yichjoyom demonstrates the economic significance of international migration for this region. Table three shows that international migrant households from this community owned more land on average than non migrant households prior to migration (22 cuerdas vs. 12 cuerdas) in 1996, a finding that combined with the higher levels of education of migrants as compared to non migrants indicates selectivity of migration from this community. The difference in landholdings between migrant and non-migrant households widened due to migration as migrant households had increased their average landholdings to 29 cuerdas as compared to the 12 cuerdas owned by non-migrant households. If we examine the distribution of land

owned by households in Yichjoyom in 1996, we see that 50% of migrant households owned 21 or more cuerdas as compared to only 12% of non-migrant households. Thus this community became increasingly stratified due to migration, and migrant households had the potential to earn more income through agricultural production than non-migrant households. Another indication of this conclusion can be seen in Table three as non migrant households continued to rely on seasonal labor migration to the Pacific coast at much higher rates than migrant households (58% vs. 11%).

The significance of the difference between migrant and non-migrant household landholding becomes clearer if we compare current landholding patterns in Yichjoyom with data from a 1968 survey conducted in the same area. As Table four indicates, 69% of households in Yichjoyom in 1968 owned 21 or more cuerdas as compared to the 1996 levels of 50% of migrant and 12% of non-migrant households in the same aldea. The average landholding size in Yichjoyom in 1968 was 24.4 cuerdas as compared to the 1996 levels of 29 cuerdas for migrant and 12 cuerdas for non-migrant households. 7 Davis (1970) states that in 1968 a family of five needed a minimum of 30 cuerdas of corn for subsistence needs for one year. Thus the average household did not have enough land for their subsistence needs thirty years ago forcing most households to send family members to the coast for several months each year to acquire funds to purchase corn in the market. Given population growth in the municipality, the problem of land scarcity has exacerbated considerably. The situation is particularly abysmal for non-migrant households who lack the access to dollars to either purchase additional land, to plant cash crops, or to start a small business enabling them to earn additional money to meet household needs. This outcome leads many non-migrant household members to incorporate wage work for migrant households as part of their economic strategy.

An examination of the census data pertaining to the financial remittances received by migrant households in Yichjoyom in 1995 reveals the relative importance of this source of

funding for recipient households. Table five shows that 75% of all migrant households in the community received migrant remittances averaging $400 during 1995. Although the census did not solicit specific income information, follow up interviews in migrant households in Yichjoyom reveal that remittances often accounted for over 50% of total income received by the household in 1995. 8 Furthermore, table five demonstrates the importance of migrant remittances for acquiring land and houses as 50% or more of migrant households that received remittances made these purchases with remittance income. This finding helps to explain the differences between migrant and non-migrant households in landholding mentioned previously. The broader significance of migrant remittances for the municipality of Santa Eulalia is revealed through the 1995 remittance data acquired from the two largest courier services that serve the municipality of Santa Eulalia. Table five shows that over 7700 households received remittances totaling over three million dollars during 1995. 9 Each of these households received an average of $408 in remittances, an amount similar to that received by migrant households in Yichjoyom.

Table six demonstrates that migrant households generally resided in better quality housing than non-migrant households in 1996. More migrant households were constructed with adobe walls than non-migrant households (97% compared to 84%) and possessed roofs of sheet metal considered the best available (80% as compared to 58%). 19% of the non-migrant homes continued to use traditional straw roofs. More migrant households possessed their own water source than non-migrant households (28% as compared to 11%). Lastly, migrant households owned significantly more horses (50% as compared to 15%), pigs (61% as compared to 46%), and chickens (86% as compared to 65%) than non-migrant households offering these homesteads additional sources of revenue and food and ease with agricultural work.

Community residents contended that migrant remittances have brought both positive and negative economic change to the region. Positive trends included a perceived increase in

jobs for non-migrant household members particularly in agriculture and construction as migrant households relied on this labor to build their houses and farm their increasing landholdings. The creation of small commercial enterprises led to the introduction of many new products to the community. Additionally, the financial support of migrant hometown associations for communal public works projects including the construction of the hospital, school, and church also benefited the community.

In spite of these advantages, discussion participants emphasized the negative consequences of the widening economic stratification between migrant and non-migrant households. They claimed that international migration generated rapid inflation of land prices due to the introduction of dollars in the region. This development often made the price of land in the town center out of reach for non-migrant households. Thus, housing in the center of town became dominated by those with access to dollars or with steady non-agricultural employment (public workers including teachers), an outcome that exacerbated the historic class distinctions between the richer town center and poorer rural periphery. Access to migrant dollars also facilitated land acquisition in the temperate eastern region of the municipality and in neighboring Barillas enabling migrant households to earn additional income through cash cropping of coffee, bananas, and cardamom.

Discussion participants also suggested that migrant households had more access to healthcare in the hospital and higher quality of education. Although the community wanted to offer affordable healthcare to all residents of the region, escalating operational costs of the facility required steep increases in the cost of medicines and specific medical procedures forcing the facility to largely serve patients with access to dollars. Additionally, considerable differences in the cost of public and private primary education in Santa Eulalia resulted in increased migrant household access (vis a vis non migrant households) to the much higher quality Catholic parish school due to their ability to pay for the tuition. Most students that complete a secondary education and enter professional occupations began their education at

the parochial school and were not exposed to the extremely poor conditions of the public primary school.

The economic gap between migrant and non-migrant households also increased due to a higher daily wage rate for agricultural laborers. Traditionally, agricultural workers earned 10 quetzales a day ($1 = 6 quetzales), a figure that increased to 20 quetzales between 1990 and 1996 due to migrant household access to dollars and the need for this labor. Non-migrant households found it increasingly difficult to pay this higher wage demanded by agricultural workers. Many community residents became dependent on working the land of migrant households but still needed to find available time to work their own land. In some aldeas there existed a shortage of agricultural laborers because the available labor chose to work for migrant households in other areas.

This discussion illustrates how transnational migration accelerated class stratification and contributed to broader economic change in Santa Eulalia. The next section of this paper examines the extent to which the widening gap between migrant and non-migrant households diminished community adherence to various aspects of *Kanjobal* identity due to the transnationalization of culture.

Class Stratification and Ethnic Identity

Community residents contended that the acceleration of class stratification contributed to social cleavages as revealed by the establishment of new ethnic boundaries within the municipality of Santa Eulalia. Specifically, the discussion group data suggests that non-migrant households referred to migrants and their family members as "Ladinos" due to their increasing wealth and adoption of behaviors associated with non-indigenous Guatemalans. As one participant commented:

> Traditionally those that live in the center of our towns are Ladinos. Take Barillas for example where they still have Ladinos. The indigenous population lives in the areas that surround the center and in the aldeas. Historically, the

> Ladinos have discriminated against us. Now the indigenous people in the center of Santa Eulalia are richer and have dollars and want to live as Ladinos, and they discriminate against us. They do not believe we have any worth. They are the ones that own the lands in temperate areas and in the center of town as well as the businesses. We know that we are men (and women), but in their presence we are not respected as humans.

These comments demonstrate how the new ethnic labels roughly correspond to the distinction residents previously made between the more prosperous Ladino town center and the poorer more rural aldeas in which *Kanjobales* have always resided. Residents of Santa Eulalia have historically used the term "Ladinos" to refer to "Mestizos" or mixed blood Guatemalans that dominate the country politically and economically. Historically, Ladinos displaced *Kanjobales* from the huge tracts of the best agricultural land in the more temperate climate zones of this region relegating the majority *Kanjobal* to those segments of the region with poorer quality land. Although virtually all Ladinos have now migrated from the municipality of Santa Eulalia, *Kanjobales* still experience discrimination when they access governmental offices in the department capital or Guatemala City and/or when they travel to the southern plantations and work for Ladino bosses.

Community residents suggested that the "new Ladinos" acquired specific traits and act similarly as Ladinos outside of the region. They noted the propensity of migrants and their family members to engage in sewing and other small business occupations while rejecting the more arduous "indígena work" (agricultural work) demonstrating their laziness. As one woman commented: "they only do machine work, they tire out quickly from working the land, they do not want to sweat or to get dirty." Residents in the community seemed to understand some of the difficulties encountered by migrants in the U.S., such as the inability of many migrants to obtain steady work. However, they believe that the nature of the predominant occupation of migrants (garment factory work) required little effort when compared to the difficulties associated with agricultural work.

Additionally, these data indicate that many in the community perceived that migrant households demonstrated "Ladino" attitudes toward land. As a result of inflation and land speculation, land has been transformed into a commodity rather than as the sacred basis of existence as believed traditionally by the Maya. As one elder commented,

> Our ancestors prayed to God and to the land asking permission to work on the land before placing the palo (stick) into the earth. Land was sacred; it was respected by our ancestors. Now we fight over the land. There is no respect. It is bought and sold without thought.

Additionally, group participants commented on the increased individualism and the demise of community solidarity (defined as collective work on individual projects) generated by attitudes attributed only to Ladinos in the past. As one man commented:

> In the past we each helped each other build our houses, work our land. Now the dollar is the most important thing. It creates individualism. If you ask for solidarity in the community, many people would rather just give you money than offer their labor.

Adult community residents in Santa Eulalia expressed concern at the extent to which youth in the community adopted language and dress patterns prevalent in Latino communities in the United States often by imitating return migrants. They suggested that youth who attend school learn Spanish and often attempt to supplement this training by picking up the "Mexican Spanish" and limited English they hear from visiting migrants. Community members expressed disdain for youth resistance to use *Kanjobal* language when addressing family members. Adults frequently made negative comments about young men who wore baggy pants and sport distinct hairstyles associated with "cholo" culture in Los Angeles and young women who used makeup and display jewelry. The adoption of these styles by youth in the community was further reinforced by images projected on Mexican television breeding consumerism for products popular with Latino immigrant communities in United States.

Adult community members also expressed concern that youth demonstrated a lack of respect for elders. As one elder mentioned,

> In the past young people would bow their heads as they passed an elderly person in town as a sign of respect. They would make way for an elderly person to pass before they would continue on the road. It shows a change of attitude that comes from those that have more education and from those that go north.

Community residents asserted that the declining respect for elders surfaced repeatedly in migrant households as migrant youth altered traditional power dynamics within households. Access to dollars that contribute to household expenditures often empowers young migrants and lets them demand more than traditionally permissible in the house of their parents. As one parent of a migrant son commented,

> My son brought back a wife (another *Kanjobal*) who felt she could order me around. She acted as if she were a patron (boss). She never offered to help with the cooking, cleaning. Neither of them helped to get the wood, and they expected this work to be done for them. They were always out passing around town and would appear only for meals demanding to be waited on.

Additionally, the data demonstrates community disdain for the changes in migrant food preferences and their obsession on cleanliness (daily bathing and clean clothes) and suggest that migrants look down upon them as dirty. One man commented that many residents in his aldea were upset with one young migrant who returned to visit his parents. This migrant constantly asked his mother at mealtime about the food she would serve him. If beans and rice was the mainstay of any given meal, the migrant stormed out of the house to eat meat at a small restaurant in the center of town. Community residents also pointed to the laziness of migrant men as evidenced by their refusal to conduct agricultural work when visiting the region. As one mother of a migrant son commented, "all the migrants want to do is drink and spend money on their friends when they come back to Santa Eulalia." Adult community members insisted that youth replicated these behaviors resulting in the near loss of youth respect for important aspects of *Kanjobal* culture due to their nearly universal pursuit of the "easy" life in the United States.

Kanjobal Identity and the Guatemalan Pan-Mayan Movement

The strong reaction to trends associated with international migration and economic change has been channeled into the construction of ethnicity consistent with the Pan Mayan movement in Guatemala. The Pan-Mayan movement has grown in Guatemala in the post-war period emphasizing indigenous scholarship, the mobilization of ethnic markers (such as the use of traditional clothing patterns, dance, hieroglyphs), the implementation of agricultural extension programs, and the promotion of national cultural rights legislation in the National Assembly (most notably the officialization of the unified alphabet and the funding of the *Academia de las Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala*). Central to these efforts are Mayan intellectual elites who struggle for national recognition and legal change through their fight against discrimination in education, employment, politics, and social life (Warren, 1998; Fischer and Brown 1996). New Mayan research centers that strive to document Mayan historical resistance to racism and domination and preserve Mayan languages and cultural organizations that work to enhance Mayan solidarity and self-awareness publish numerous materials. At the organizational level, there are groups such as the *Coordinación de los Pueblos Mayas de Guatemala* (COPMAGUA), a Pan Mayan movement promotes collaboration within linguistic groups (e.g. *Kanjobales* who reside in six municipalities in northern Huehuetenango).

By adopting strategies that both recognize the prevalence of transnationalism and attempt to take advantage of this process, the Pan Mayan movement has effectively generated broad support and created a degree of political space in the post-war period. These strategies include the establishment of linkages with indigenous groups throughout the hemisphere involving participation in meetings such as the 1992 conference in Guatemala that brought together indigenous leaders throughout the continent to assess the 500 years of

oppression and resistance (Hale 1994). Equally important is the projection of international human rights covenants such as the International Labor Organization's Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries to legitimate their demands. The growing integration of communications media globally help the numerous indigenous non governmental organizations that have emerged in Guatemala in the past ten years to project these human rights instruments widely and to instantly report specific violations of human rights. Additionally, the 1995 Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples of Guatemala signed as part of the comprehensive Peace Accords resolving the armed conflict in Guatemala coupled with Rigoberta Menchu's winning of the Nobel Peace Prize contributed to increased global attention of the Pan-Mayan movement in the country.

Local Expressions of Pan Mayanism in Santa Eulalia

The fieldwork reveals diverse forms of Mayan ethnic resurgence with the variation based on educational level, residency in town or the aldeas, and type of occupation. Specifically, new expressions of identity evolved concurrently in the center of Santa Eulalia incorporating those with higher levels of education and income and exposure to Pan Mayan movement activities and in the rural aldeas involving those engaged in agricultural labor. Central to these new forms of ethnicity was the selective use of features of *Kanjobal costumbre* that have largely disappeared and the promotion of official governmental recognition of the *Kanjobal* language. Within the center of Santa Eulalia, two organizations assumed leadership in the effort to integrate community residents into the Pan-Mayan effort. The organizations, the *Asociación Maya-Q'anjob'al Eulalense* and a regional affiliate of *the Academia de las Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala,* drew their membership largely from teachers who resided in the center of the community. The leadership of these organizations included several former migrants. Both of these organizations participated in a regional network of organizations, the *Coordinación Q'anjob'al*, that collaborates directly with COPMAGUA. The *Academia* promoted the

instruction of *Kanjobal* language classes in the government schools and organized adult and teen *Kanjobal* classes throughout the region in an effort to confront the dominance of Spanish language instruction in the schools. The *Asociación* emphasized the taping of oral narratives of the older generation so that these individuals could pass on their knowledge of *costumbre*. According to leaders of the organization, this process contributed to increased respect for elders including renewed use of the custom of bowing one's head to elders in the community. In order to promote the virtues of *costumbre* to youth in the *Kanjobal* region, the *Asociación* organized focus groups throughout the area by dividing community members into their respective generational groups (elders, adults, teens) that discussed group recollections of ancestral *costumbre* and its current relevance in the region. This project resulted in a publication aimed at capturing the diverse history of *costumbre* within the *Kanjobal* region. A subcommittee of the *Asociación* aimed to renew use of the Mayan calendar in the region. Additionally, the organization sponsored cultural events that emphasized the selective re-enactment of their conceptions of Mayan *costumbre*.

After the signing of the peace accords, one increasingly began to hear in the rural areas the call for renewed adherence to particular facets of Mayan *costumbre* in the belief that this practice would reverse the negative socio-economic conditions that existed in these areas of Santa Eulalia. As one community member commented,

> Many of the problems we face here exist because we no longer respect the land like our forefathers. We fight over the land, they shared all the resources from it. We now use chemicals on the land which eventually destroys it. There is much illness. All of these bad things occur because we have lost respect. We need to remember the experience of our ancestors, such as praying to the land before planting, and practice it in order to advance ourselves.

Participants characterized their greatest problems as decreased productivity of the land due to greater reliance on chemical fertilizers (due to the import of dollars) and the limited access to land resulting in increased social conflict within the community. As mentioned above, the problem of land shortages had consistently worsened since the 1950s, however, community

members attributed international migration as the primary problem due to inflation of land prices and migrant household concentration of the best land in the municipality. By showing respect for the environment through regular prayer to the land prior to planting and acknowledging of the power associated with the mountain spirits among other traditional practices, advocates of ethnic revitalization contended that agricultural productivity would increase and social conflict within the region would dissipate. These findings appear consistent with other studies that conclude that ethnic revitalization among the *Q'eqchi'* indigenous population in the Guatemalan department of Alta Verapaz evolved in part as a reaction to economic problems associated with community incorporation into regional economic markets (Wilson 1995).

The renewed interest in enacting specific components of *costumbre* has led to extensive reflection among Catholics concerning the compatibility of *costumbre* with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Since the 1950s when foreign priests began to work in Santa Eulalia, the Catholic Church has stressed exclusive devotion to God in a manner that delegitimates the Mayan relationship to the land and mountain spirits. However, community residents in 1996 debated the feasibility of simultaneous prayer to God and land in the context of this ethnic revitalization. Although the discussion group data reveals that some residents of the aldeas rejected the possibility of practicing "two religions" at the same time, the majority of participants suggested consistency in both recognizing God and the sacred basis of the land. As one participant commented,

> It is necessary to pray to both God and the land. First comes God who represents the soul of our body as he is our boss and savior. And afterward, we have to mention the land . . . because it is from the land that we eat, and we sleep and walk on the land. . .We must discuss the sacred nature of the land during the rosary because the land gives us life.

Discussion group data on youth attitudes concerning the migratory process in Santa Eulalia reveals an additional aspect of the growing support for ethnic revitalization. Although the data from middle school (grades 7-9) youth reveals interest in the adventure associated with the international migratory experience, these data also suggest youth hesitancy to embark on the journey. Specifically, discussion group participants asserted that they did not admire many of the behaviors of visiting migrants, particularly their propensity to isolate themselves socially from the rest of the community including their lack of reintegration into church activities. Students claimed that migrants particularly ignored young women in the community because, as one student claimed, "they have come to prefer the women in the United States who are less timid." Additionally, these data demonstrate that youth shared adult concerns regarding the maintenance of certain features of *Kanjobal* culture, particularly the language and dress, threatened by the introduction of English, "Mexican Spanish", and alternative styles by migrants. Furthermore, students expressed concerns about the ability of families to stay together due to international migratory process. As one participant commented, "we see other youth leave and never return and we see men sometimes leaving their wives and kids behind and not maintaining contact with them." Additionally, these data indicate that students understood the difficulties of life in the United States and seriously considered these factors when deciding about their future. As one student summed up, "often it is necessary to live in crowded housing in fear of immigration authorities. Also, there is less work there than several years ago and this leads one to ask if the risk is worth the investment." Thus, students remained cautious about pursuing migration because of their concerns of contributing to the diminishing respect for certain features of *Kanjobal* identity and the breakdown of local family structures. Students feared whether they would be able to successfully reintegrate into the community upon return there. These data lead me to conclude that the transnationalization of culture is contested social process in Santa Eulalia.

The Construction of Mayan Identity in Los Angeles

According to the 2000 census, 372,487 Guatemalans resided in the United States as compared to the 268,779 captured in the 1990 census. These numbers represent a 38.6% increase over this 10-year period. 118,069 Guatemalans resided in the Los Angeles area as reported in the 2000 census, though some studies suggest that this number considerably underestimates the numbers of Guatemalans in this region (Suro, 2002). Guatemalans are the third largest Latino group in Los Angeles after the Mexican and Salvadoran populations. The dramatic increase in the Guatemalan immigrant population in the Los Angeles region between 1980 and 1990 evolved due to the escalation of war and political violence as previously noted. According to the 1990 census, 30% of Guatemalans who resided in the Los Angeles region at the time arrived to the area between 1980-1984, years in which the civil war and government directed repression aimed at the civilian population peaked (Lopez et.al, 1996; Popkin, 1998). Although it is difficult from census figures to determine the number of indigenous Guatemalans (Mayan) in the Los Angeles region, estimates place the number at 10,000, a small percentage of the total number of Guatemalans in this region (Peñalosa 1995).

The 1990 census revealed that Guatemalans resided in high concentrations (at least 10% of census tract) in the areas of Pico-Union/Westlake, Hollywood, and in some tracts in the northern part of South-Central Los Angeles. However, the percentage of all Guatemalans that resided in these areas was less than 30% suggesting that the community had begun to disperse throughout this region. Fieldwork conducted for this study revealed that the Guatemalan Mayan community was predominantly concentrated in the Westlake section of Los Angeles, just west of downtown in the early 1990s. Since that time, the *Kanjobal* community has dispersed as many members currently reside in the South Central part of Los Angeles considered by community members to have higher quality housing and less crime than the Pico-Union/Westlake area.

In 1992, 44% of Guatemalan immigrants (indigenous and Ladino) in the United States were undocumented and 62% of all undocumented Guatemalans in the United States resided in the Los Angeles region (Popkin 1997). My fieldwork indicates that the vast majority of *Kanjobales* currently do not have legal immigration documents, a factor that contributes to their acceptance of poor working conditions in the garment industry in Los Angeles. According to the 1990 census, Guatemalans were concentrated in service positions (32%), operative transport positions (23.1%) and craft positions (17.4%) within Los Angeles. Most *Kanjobales* work as sewers in the garment factories earning from near minimum wage to approximately $8.00 an hour for those gifted sewers in more reputable plants. Beginning in 2000, *Kanjobal* informants began to speak of the declining availability of work within the garment industry in Los Angeles due to their perception of a dramatically increasing number of Mexicans entering this labor market as a result of deteriorating conditions in their home country. These conditions led most Maya to combine work in the garment factories with informal jobs such as taking in boarders or cooking and selling tamales and/or stable part time jobs.

Mayan identity construction and organizational efforts are conditioned in part by the process of adaptation to a predominately Latino community that confronts discrimination in the context of an anti-immigrant environment in Southern California. Beginning in the 1990s, restrictive national immigration policy (Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996) coupled with California State Proposition 187, an effort that attempted to limit undocumented immigrants' access to social services, set the conditions for immigrant employment in the secondary labor market. These initiatives led to intensified fear and insecurity within both the legal and undocumented immigrant communities.

Within this context of restrictive immigration policy in the mid 1990s, Mayan social organization evolved as an effort to maintain the linkage between *Kanjobal* culture and religion. Discrimination from Latinos, the acculturation of Mayan children to the Latino community, and religious divisions. Members of the Santa Eulalia migrant community suggested that the immigration context in Los Angeles had the potential to bridge some of the historical differences that separate Guatemalan indigenous and Ladino populations and accelerate Mayan adaptation to the Latino community. Respondents stated that Guatemalan Ladinos and Mayans experienced similar levels of discrimination in Los Angeles due to their common immigrant status. However, by invoking the distinction between Maya and Ladino when referring to their interaction with co-workers, *Kanjobal* informants implied that conditions in Los Angeles represented the reproduction of traditional ethnic relations in the home country (Popkin, 1999). The respondents frequently commented that they felt self-conscious of their Spanish language ability in the presence of their Latino co-workers. According to community members from Santa Eulalia, language mistakes often led the co-workers to poke fun at *Kanjobal* sewers and refer to them in derogatory terms such as 'indio'. Respondents suggested that Ladino discrimination against *Kanjobal* women was particularly severe due to their limited Spanish ability. The *Kanjobal* community also asserted its Mayan identity to distinguish itself from a Latino community depicted in the media as plagued by crime, gang activity, and persistent poverty. Of particular concern to Mayan parents was their fear that the 1.5 and second generation would acculturate to a Latino community that confronts these conditions in Los Angeles. Thus, Mayan parents deliberately emphasized the maintenance of their cultural values in their households, a process threatened in part by their children's immersion into an environment that privileged Spanish on the street and English in the schools.

The struggle to preserve the linkage between Mayan culture and the Catholic religion exists in a religious context in Los Angeles that has some similarities with the home region. Mayan Catholics expressed concern at the increasing rates of conversion of co-nationals to Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Charismatic churches and organizations. Informants contended that this process contributed to the declining adherence to Mayan culture and rapid acculturation to the dominant Latino community as most members of these religious organizations were Latinos from many nations. Within this context, Mayan Catholics attempted to establish linkages with Catholic parishes. At the local Catholic parish level in Los Angeles, priests often assume a cultural unity among the distinct national groups subsumed under the category 'Latino'. Any group that wishes to emphasize its own experience of church or insists on the connection between culture and religion (as do the Maya) is perceived as divisive by the local pastors (Wellmeier 1998). In this context, traditional Catholics that prioritize the maintenance of their Mayan culture and religion must organize independently of each of these churches and groups.

Mayan Immigrant Socio-religious Organization

In 1986 a small group of Catholic men from Santa Eulalia organized into an informal association that aimed to conduct traditional religious services in the *Kanjobal* language, to preserve their culture, and to collect funds to help rebuild the home parish destroyed by a fire. By 1992, the association, the Fraternidad Eulalense Maya Q'anjobal (FEMAQ), included around two hundred members and had established a strong relationship with the priest from Santa Eulalia who traveled annually to Los Angeles to work with the organization. The priest assisted the group to formalize the association by choosing directors and forming committees modeled on modern Catholic parish organization in the home region of Huehuetenango. By 1995, the Santa Eulalia Maya in Los Angeles subdivided into several groups incorporating up to 800 members (Wellmeier

1998). The approximately 40 adult members of FEMAQ began to focus on cultural work through its marimba group, its weekly prayer sessions, and its leadership in the annual organization of the patron saint festivities. The weekly prayer ritual consisted of a paraliturgy that closely resembles the form of the mass in Santa Eulalia. Following the prayer service, members shared a collective meal and discussed both events back in Santa Eulalia and in Los Angeles. By facilitating weekly interaction between the children of its members in the context of prayer group, FEMAQ hoped to encourage a sense of community and reinforce *Kanjobal* identity among the 1.5 and second generation. The group additionally offered marimba (traditional Guatemalan Mayan musical instrument) classes to young migrants from Santa Eulalia in Los Angeles.

Each of the separate groups associated with FEMAQ functioned as small communities. The hospital committee engaged in annual house visits to members of the migrant community to raise funds to pay the salary of the doctor and for an innovative medical insurance program in Santa Eulalia. By conducting over 100 visits annually, hospital committee members served to strengthen the connection that migrants maintain with the home community. A separate emergency committee organized fund collections for sending back the bodies of members of the Santa Eulalia migrant community who die in the United States and for ransoming compatriots from border smugglers who sometimes hold them hostage. Other committees revolved around specific villages of origin (aldeas) and supported the construction of capillas or small worshipping and meeting sites in the home community. In 2001, FEMAQ dissolved as the broader group representing the Santa Eulalia Maya. The emergency committee and smaller groups supporting specific villages within the municipality of Santa Eulalia continue to conduct their work. Members of each of these groups participate and contribute to special events including the patron saint fiesta and the all-Maya soccer league, which is organized in Los Angeles around the specific municipality of origin.

An examination of the associations reveals that elements of the home community organizational structure transcend the boundaries that separate Santa Eulalia and Los Angeles. These groups function similarly to the official Catholic Church commissions in Santa Eulalia with formal leadership directorate (*directiva*) that includes a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, at-large members, a prayer leader and catechists, or teachers of religious doctrine. Significant power resides in the President who has the responsibility to 'animar' or provide vision and inspiration for the organization. The group expects the president to devote considerable time and finances for the benefit of the community, a practice consistent with organizational behavior in Santa Eulalia. In fact, a significant number of the current leaders of the organizations in Los Angeles have participated as members of church commissions in Santa Eulalia in the past. Following the tradition in Santa Eulalia, consensus decision-making occurs among the directiva. There exists a significant gender imbalance in the leadership of the migrant associations. Women do participate in the organizations though they tend to provide the support system for all group activities as is common in Santa Eulalia. These activities include the preparation and serving of food and the decoration of worship space.

Expressions of Pan Mayanism in Los Angeles

In the highlands of Guatemala, the patron saint serves as a symbol that stands not only for the holy person but also for the parish under his or her patronage, as well as the pertinent municipality including the language group and particular cultural patterns of that area. Thus, the fiesta to honor the patron saint takes on great importance to the migrant community and requires months of planning and coordination among the different associations in the community. Typically, the highlight of this event involves a formal program of speeches and the coronation of an elected queen of the community, a feature

shared by many Central American Latino community patron saint fiestas. There exists a dance that includes a mix of the traditional 'son' music of the marimba, the slow waltz that serves as the form of social dance prevalent in the indigenous highlands of Guatemala, and taped salsa music.

Beginning in the late 1990s, community members began to incorporate new elements in the fiesta program by re-enacting several features of traditional Mayan *costumbre*. During the ceremony five years ago, a procession of young men and women entered the hall dressed as the elderly alcaldes rezadores or holy Mayan priests. Carrying gifts of flowers, corn, fruit, candles, incense in a clay censor, and bottles of rum, the group knelt and lifted their gifts to the four points of the Maya cosmos at three stationary wooden cross shrines. The group proceeded to the stage where one young man blew his blowgun, still used by some highland Maya to hunt, to the same four points as the others left the gifts at the image of Santa Eulalia. The master of ceremonies explained that this presentation represented the *costumbre* of the ancestors in a manner consistent with the ethnic resurgence movement in Guatemala. By incorporating elements of *costumbre* in the celebration, migrants from Santa Eulalia strived to reinsert into the cultural and religious life of the home country.

The renewed emphasis on Mayan *costumbre* in the patron saint festivities evolved as a new organization emerged within the traditional Catholic Mayan immigrant community in Los Angeles, the Proyecto Pastoral Maya. In 1996, leaders from each of the *Kanjobal* and *Chuj* Mayan communities within the city came together to coordinate efforts that reflected an increasing Pan-Mayan consciousness. The group facilities the organization of each communities patron saint and other events, coordinates the visits of priests from the home region, and collaborates with the national Proyecto Pastoral Maya (described below). The emergence of this group significantly altered the work of the Santa Eulalia Maya. All community events pertaining to Santa Eulalia are now organized by this

group thus guaranteeing the participation of members of the *Kanjobal* and *Chuj* communities. This organization has served as the main contact for the church in Santa Eulalia. Leaders of this group are catechists or delegates of the word and thus have enormous influence within their respective communities and the broader Mayan community.

The national Proyecto Pastoral Maya evolved in 1994 with financial support from the Office of Migrant Ministries of the Catholic Conference of Bishops. Coordinated for many years by a U.S. nun, Sister Nancy Wellmeier who works out of Mesa, Arizona, the group brings together in annual national assemblies leaders of Mayan immigrant organizations in the United States to reflect on the compatibility of Catholicism with traditional Mayan religious practice and to coordinate several annual activities. Sister Wellmeier established a bilingual newsletter (*Kanjobal*/Spanish) that includes information on the activities of each of the over 30 *Kanjobal* and *Chuj* migrant communities in the United States affiliated with the effort. Additionally, she arranged the annual visits of the Diocesan members from Guatemala to these communities. Currently, the organization is run by Father David Lopez, the Guatemalan priest who worked in Santa Eulalia for much of the 1990s through 2001.

Transnational Dimensions of Pan Mayan Ethnicity in Los Angeles

The national assemblies organized by the Proyecto Pastoral Maya serve as a mechanism to maintain the transnational linkages of the groups affiliated with the effort. Priests from the home communities and other representatives from the Diocese of Huehuetenango attend the assemblies and help to reinforce the hometown projects supported by the member organizations. In an effort to solidify the Catholic base in the home region, the Catholic Church in Huehuetenango directly engages in the work of

Proyecto Pastoral Maya and the Mayan immigrant organizations in Los Angeles and other cities in the United States. As Mayan mainline Catholic immigrants increasingly incorporate into Charismatic Catholic, Evangelical, and Pentecostal groups, they inform their family members in the home region of this development contributing at times to these individuals choosing to leave the Catholic Church. In particular, women with migrant husbands seem to be influenced by their husband's religious choices. As the following account illustrates, immigrant associations also have the potential to influence the religious landscape in Santa Eulalia. Several years ago, one migrant hometown organization based in Los Angeles proposed to construct a small church in their isolated aldea located within the municipality of Santa Eulalia. It became known that the members of the migrant organization affiliated with the Charismatic church in Los Angeles and planned to collaborate with Charismatics in the sending community to implement the project. These actions enraged the parish priest who felt threatened by the possibility of Charismatics establishing a recognized base within his region with the support of the military. He publicly opposed the project and launched an alternative parish construction project by appealing to the other Catholic hometown associations in Los Angeles. Although both projects ultimately succeeded, the initial migrant hometown association has since shifted their support to projects endorsed by the local Catholic Church due to the persistent pressure applied by that institution through the other migrant organizations.

As a result of these trends, prominent priests from the *Kanjobal* region of Guatemala travel annually to this country for at least one month. These annual visits enable the priests to maintain a relatively high profile within the immigrant community and facilitate the ongoing connection of migrant associations to the home community in the context of increased restrictions on migrant physical mobility due to U.S. border militarization. During the annual visits of the priest from Santa Eulalia to the immigrant communities in the U.S. in the late 1990s, the priest worked to create committees in each

locale that committed to raise funds for the hospital. He initiated a medical insurance program in which migrants purchased insurance for family members that reside in the home community. The priest often directly engaged in the internal politics of hometown organizations in Los Angeles due to his moral authority. As a result of this role, aspiring leaders within the migrant community attempted to obtain the priest's direct support whenever disputes of substance arose. Several years ago, a major dispute erupted in the community when several leaders wanted to replace the committee responsible for generating funds for the hospital in Santa Eulalia. These leaders claimed that the committee did not maximize its potential to raise funds for the project due to the lack of a coherent outreach plan. By successfully soliciting the support of the priest, these leaders displaced the committee and created another organization that adopted a new work plan. Migrant leaders consolidated their position of authority and obtained status within the migrant community by obtaining the priest's support.

The involvement of the priest from Santa Eulalia and other Guatemalan representatives in the assemblies organized by Proyecto Pastoral Maya reflects the interest of the Diocese of Huehuetenango in establishing linkages between Mayan *costumbre* and traditional Catholic teachings. These church representatives see Pan-Mayanism's growing appeal in both the home region in Guatemala and within the Mayan immigrant community in the United States as a mechanism to confront declining membership in the Catholic Church in the face of substantial conversion to charismatic Catholicism and Pentecostalism. Recognition of the growing Pan-Mayan movement began immediately following the culmination of the Guatemalan civic war as the Diocese of Huehuetenango established formal commissions at the municipal level to facilitate discussions focusing on the compatibility of *costumbre* and Catholicism. The effort to both consolidate and expand its base of support has led the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Huehuetenango to go so far as to support the concurrent practice of Mayan *costumbre*

and Catholicism. The church wants to find ways to allow members to identify with their ancestral roots while maintaining their commitment to the Catholic Church. One outcome of this process relates to the image of the cross as a significant symbol for both Mayan *costumbre* and Catholic religion. Whereas Catholic priests historically destroyed the large wooden crosses placed in sacred locations throughout the municipality, several priests now speak favorably of Mayan traditional prayer at the cross sites that have been reconstructed within Santa Eulalia.

Conclusion

The Pan Mayan movement in Guatemala continues to flourish in the context of the increasing strength and importance of indigenous movements elsewhere in Latin America, particularly Bolivia and Ecuador. As more Guatemalan Mayan immigrants connect with this movement, we can expect new forms of Pan-Mayan organization to emerge in Los Angeles. Additionally, as restrictive immigration policy in the U.S. (including increased interior enforcement and border militarization) intensifies and as economic growth and political stability in Guatemala remain elusive, Mayans from Santa Eulalia will likely continue to organize along ethnic lines. Kearney's provocative analysis of "post-peasant" politics in the U.S.-Mexican border region helps to explain this outcome (Kearney 1996). Kearney (1996; 181) argues that the social scientific conceptualization of rural populations as "peasants" is problematic given the forced geographic mobility of formerly agrarian populations that requires families to work in multiple, often marginal, niches in different transnational economies. He contends that in the face of polyculturalism, ethnicity becomes the social glue that allows dispersed people to feel a sense of common purpose across migratory networks that span rural and urban areas in both Latin American and U.S. contexts. The Santa Eulalia case study further substantiates this claim. Although

ethnic change within indigenous transnational communities demonstrates how ‘transnationalism from below’ may empower these populations, it is conceivable that sending and home states will attempt to co-opt and control these communities (‘transnationalism from above’).

Footnotes

1. The Los Angeles fieldwork was conducted between 1995 to 2002 and focused on four Mayan (Kanjobal) immigrant hometown associations linked to the community of Santa Eulalia. This qualitative work included participant observation of hometown association events and meetings and ten semi-structured group interviews with members of these organizations, and twelve semi-structured personal interviews with hometown association leaders, representatives of the Guatemalan Consulate in Los Angeles, and Guatemalan Ladino leaders of the Association of Guatemalan Hometown Associations in Los Angeles (*Asociacion de Fraternidades Guatemaltecas*). All interviews were conducted in Spanish, taped and transcribed. The fieldwork in Santa Eulalia was conducted during two one-week visits to the region in 1995 and for six months in 1996. This qualitative fieldwork included participant observation of community events and meetings, informal conversation, 20 semi-structured individual interviews and 17 semi-structured group interviews. Finally, I conducted a 62 household census in one village connected to the municipality of Santa Eulalia in 1996. All interviews were conducted in Kanjobal, taped, and transcribed into Spanish. Local teachers were trained to help facilitate and translate the interviews. The interviews took place in the center of Santa Eulalia as well as in five villages also located in the municipality of Santa Eulalia. For more information on the methodology associated with this project, see Popkin. 1998.

2. Many analysts contend that the census bureau in Guatemala de-emphasized their work in the indigenous regions of the country leading to limited interviewing in these regions particularly prior to 1994 census.

3. Indigenous Guatemalans were legally required to perform labor for the state until 1944 thus assuring adequate cheap labor for the southern plantations of coffee, bananas, sugar, and cotton.

4. Ladinos resided in the municipality (predominantly in the town center) until the 1970s though their numbers began to decline in the 1950s as internal migration increased. Until the 1970s, they often occupied the highest civilian political office (mayor) in a civilian political structure that until the 1940s co-existed with Kanjobal civil religious hierarchy structure. Indigenous mayors sometimes ascended to power such as in the 1944-1954 period prior to their complete political control of the civilian political structure in the 1970s.

5. These data come from a census of the municipality of Santa Eulalia completed by the Diocese of Huehuetenango in 1992. Costumbre refers to traditional Mayan culture and religion. Historically, elderly men referred to as principales controlled Indian communities having achieved their position by ascending through the ranks of a hierarchy of rotating civil and religious offices (cargos) requiring enormous commitments of time and money. This civil-religious hierarchy structure serves as one of the most distinguishing features of MesoAmerican closed corporate communities. Closed corporate communities continue to exist in large parts of Chiapas and Oaxaca, Mexico and in a smaller number of indigenous communities in Guatemala.

6. For purposes of the census, migrant households are considered to be those that have a current migrant that household members consider to be part of that household and/or those

that have a return migrant living there. Although it is possible that this census did not capture all migrants from Yichjoyom, I did check the accuracy of my list of migrants currently residing in southern California (acquired from the census) by reviewing it with members of the Yichjoyom hometown association in Los Angeles. They could not identify any migrant living in southern California that was not included on this list.

7. Data for Table four calculated from land survey data from Yichjoyom compiled by Shelton Davis as part of his dissertation research. See Davis (1970).

8. I chose to not include income information on the instrument because of the previous experience of the Catholic Diocese of Huehuetenango that conducted a census of the municipality in 1992. Over 90% of the respondents refused to answer income information due to a fear of taxation according to those involved in the census. However, I did attempt to acquire general household income information during my follow up household interviews in Yichjoyom.

9. These data as well as the remittance data from the Yichjoyom survey do not delineate those households that received more than one remittance from those that received only one remittance.

Table One

Individual Characteristics of Migration in Yichjoyom
(N = 54)

International or Internal Migration During First Trip	
International	77.8
Internal	22.2
Destination of International Migrants During First Trip	
Los Angeles	41.5
San Diego/Escondido	26.8
Florida	22.0
Other Region of United States	4.9
Cancun, Mexico	4.9
Year of First Trip For International Migrants	
1986 – 1990	21.4
1991 – 1993	54.8
1994 – 1996	23.8
Cost of First Trip For International Migrants	
$0 – 350	23.8
$351 – 850	50.0
$851 – 1500	21.4
$1501 – 1700	4.8
Percentage of Return Migration	
Returned Migrants	11.1

Source: Census of Yichjoyom 1996

Table Two

Demographic Characteristics of Adults (14 years and older) by Gender and Migrant Status (Internal and External) in Yichjoyom (N = 269)

	Migrants		Non Migrants	
	Women (N=9) (6.2%)	Men (N=42) (33.9%)	Women (N=136) (93.8%)	Men (N=82) (66.1%)
Age				
14 – 20	22.2	23.8	27.9	24.4
21 – 30	33.3	57.1	24.3	18.3
31 – 40	44.4	14.3	17.6	15.9
41 – more	0	4.8	30.1	41.4
Years of Education				
0	22.2	2.4	57.4	43.9
1 – 3	33.3	38.1	23.5	29.3
4 – 6	22.2	47.6	17.6	24.4
7 – more	22.2	14.4	1.5	2.4
Occupation				
Agricultural	0	33.3	3.7	78.0
Homemaker	11.1	0	83.1	0
Student	11.1	2.4	5.9	13.4
Business Owner	0	0	0	4.9
Construction	0	7.1	0	2.4
Garment Worker	44.4	38.1	1.5	0
Landscape	0	9.5	0	0
Domestic	22.2	0	1.5	0
Other	11.1	9.5	3.7	0

Source: Census of Yichjoyom 1996

Table Three

Economic Characteristics of Households
by Migrant Status in Yichjoyom (N = 62)

	Migrant (N = 36)	Non Migrant (N = 26)
Migrant Status of Household	58.0	42.0
Average Current Quantity of Land Owned (Cuerdas)*	28.8	12.5
Average Quantity of Land Owned Prior to Migration (Cuerdas)	22.6	12.5
Quantity of Land Owned by Category (Cuerdas)		
0 - 5	8.3	37.5
6 – 10	13.9	29.1
11 – 20	27.7	21.0
21 – 50	44.0	8.3
51 – 100	5.5	4.1
Seasonal Work on Plantation		
Yes	11.1	57.7
No	88.9	42.3

*Cuerda = 25 x 25 Varas; Vara = .85 of Meter; (1 cuerda = .13 acre)

Source: Census of Yichjoyom 1996

Table Four

Comparison of Household Landholding in Yichjoyom 1968 and 1996

	1968 (N=15)	1996 Migrant (N=36)	1996 NonMigrant (N=24)
Quantity of Land Owned by Cuerda			
0 – 5	0	8.3	37.5
6 – 10	12.5	13.9	29.1
11 – 20	18.7	27.7	21.0
21 – 50	62.5	44.0	8.3
51 - 100	6.3	5.5	4.1

Source: Fieldnotes from Shelton Davis, 1968; Census of Yichjoyom, 1996

Table Five
General Characteristics of Family Remittances
Received by Migrant Households
in Yichjoyom in 1995 (N = 36) *
and by All Households in Municipality of Santa Eulalia **

Households that Received Remittances	75.0%
Average Quantity of Remittances Received by Household in 1995 ****	$2490***
Relation of the Person Who Sent Remittances to Head of Household	
Head of Household	33.3%
Wife	3.7%
Son/Daughter	55.6%
Son/Daughter in Law	7.4%
Migrant Households that Bought Land With Remittances ****	50.0%
Migrant Households that Bought House With Remittances ****	59.3%
Total Quantity of Remittances Received by Households in 1995	$62,240

Total Quantity of Remittances Received by Households in Municipality of Santa Eulalia in 1995	$3,149,000
Total Number of Households That Received Remittances in Municipality of Santa Eulalia in 1995	7702
Average Quantity of Remittances received by Household in Municipality of Santa Eulalia in 1995	$408

*Source: Census of Yichjoyom 1996
**Data received from King Express and Intercapitales Courier Companies in Huehuetenango
*** Range: $240 - $6000
**** Of Those Households That Received Remittances in 1995

Table Six

Characteristics of Migrant and Non-Migrant Households in Yichjoyom, 1996

	Migrant Household	Non-Migrant Household
Housing Materials		
Walls:		
Adobe	97.2	84.6
Other	2.8	7.7
Roof:		
Sheet Metal	80.5	57.7
Tile	13.9	23.1
Straw	2.8	19.2
Water Source		
Own Tap	27.8	11.5
Communal Tap	0	3.8
Well	16.7	15.4
Spring	52.8	65.4
No. of Animals Owned		
Horses	50.0	15.4
Sheep	30.6	34.6
Pigs	61.1	46.2
Chickens	85.7	65.4

Source: Census of Yichjoyom, 1996

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