FROM WHERE I AM STANDING: INDIGENOUS NARRATIVE AND PHOTO DOCUMENTARY

by

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NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY

*Indigenous and Indigenous Peoples:*
I decided to capitalize the words Indigenous and Indigenous Peoples throughout the research project as proof of relevance and importance of the participants and the knowledge carried in the exposition of being Indigenous. Capitalization signals the importance of ethnic identity in the research project.

*Spanish to English Translation:*
As used by Bernardo P. Gallegos in “‘Dancing the Comanches’: The *Santo Niño, La Virgen* (de Guadalupe), and the Genizaro Indians of New Mexico” (Pg. 203 – 223), the Spanish text is indented and followed by the author. The English translation is indented and placed in brackets below the Spanish quote. This format allows accurate display and reading of the Spanish and English versions.
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ABSTRACT

Latin American Indigenous Peoples (LAIP) are a marginalized segment in Latin America. They inhabit a sub-America and are forced to migrate due to socio-political struggle and cultural coercion. LAIP experience a transnational and transborder migration that reflects the quality of cultural hybridity and of regional, ethnic, and cultural crossings. The purpose of this study is to research LAIP ways of reclaiming and reproducing cultural practices that elicit Indigenous awareness, knowledge, and ethnic identification in a transnational setting. The study examines through interviews and photographs transborder experiences and the lives of the participants. As a result, the project reveals that LAIP are in a continual process of ethnic and cultural identification with their native roots through the usage of cultural activities and the acknowledgment of multicultural coexistence. It also supports the necessity of participant involvement during the research process of interviews and photographic and data analysis. This joint process creates a supported living narrative that explores LAIP life in the United States. The principal outcome provides support that LAIP cultural practices reflect their perspective from where they are standing in the American social and cultural sphere.

Keywords: Latin America, Indigenous Peoples, Narrative, Photography, Oaxaca, Mexico, Transnational, Transborder.
CHAPTER I:
INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

“We are not myth of the past, ruins in the jungle, or zoos. We are people and we want to be respected, not to be victims of intolerance and racism.”

Rigoberta Menchú

Individuals who carry knowledge and self-awareness about who they are through their cultural practices are highly important because they symbolize living examples of their ethnic group and culture. As a researcher, I wish to find collaborators who through their daily lives reflect the relevance of living in a multi-ethnic and racially divided society, most importantly the collaborator and researcher should aspire to be in cultural exchange and dialogue. The researcher should be a means of communication between marginalized groups and the popular culture, but such goals are a challenge when resources and information between the parties are limited. Within the eyes of western academia, Indigenous Peoples have always remained a subject of investigation and the researcher is viewed as the omnipotent ruling figure. Now, however, Latin American Indigenous Peoples use western means of research to explore and communicate their knowledge. Latin American Indigenous Peoples often are an overlooked group; they are an ethnic/racial subset within the racial paradigm in the United States, and are only visible and recognizable to those who dare to identify with the socio-historical, political, and human atrocities of their history.

The importance of identifying multi-ethnic or racially diverse collaborators does not lie in the construction of their bodies as the “other.” As Jose David Saldivar mentions in his study of “The Tempest” “[it] is especially significant for vernacular ‘racial’ writing because it contains ‘the venerable trope of Prospero and Caliban-figures portrayed in terms of self-and-other, the
West and the Rest of us, the rationalist and the debunker, the colonizer and the indigenous people”” (146). Indigenous Peoples are not to be understood as a group who differs from the norms of society and the group of power; they need to be understood by their attribution to society and they need to be acknowledged through their cultural practices and how they wish to be recognized as living peoples. Colonization has distinguished and alienated Indigenous Peoples in order to take control of their resources. This particular group, Latin American Indigenous Peoples, are in need of continual reclaiming of their past not only through the research of anthropology and sociology, but by their own commitment to explore themselves and to announce their existence as bodies of knowledge.

As a minority student myself, whose ancestors were Native Indigenous Peruvians, I understand the components of racial/ethnic policies that determine my accessibility within the American society. I believe that Latin American Indigenous Peoples (LAIP) are an important piece of the puzzle to understand native roots and development. Latin American Indigenous Peoples bear an important connection with the social-historical development of colonization. They have endured times of social unrest and little has been done to help them maintain the body of knowledge they possess. They are highly impacted in their native countries by internal conflict, political chaos, economic degradation, racism, and alienation, and once they migrate to another country, they are marked as another minority. To listen to their personal stories and to record them are an example of their continue survival and knowledge recognition. To not understand their point of view and recognize their personal history is to forget them. We must accept that they remain an important part of the socio-economic and political structure of the Americas, and also as contributors of the past, present, and future of next generations.
We must also raise questions about the way social inequality and prejudice policies affect Latin American Indigenous Peoples, but most importantly, we must redefine the idea that being and becoming the “other” can be changed by the search for knowledge. To explore and present Latin American Indigenous Peoples’ lives and knowledge moves them from the “other” to a living and thriving group full of and rich with cultural experience. Acceptance and authenticity become key concepts for Latin American Indigenous Peoples. We must break the notion that indigenous peoples’ knowledge is conferred to a determined research in which the eyes of the west are the sole and just judge; we must make this knowledge not a limited example in a book’s chapter about cultural practices and ethnographic studies, but an authentic and accepted discourse of knowledge and of evolving culture.

This project will explore Latin American Indigenous Peoples of Oaxaca, Mexico, and the development of their cultural knowledge and practices within the United States. Furthermore, the importance of collecting this information through interviews as narratives and photographic documentary binds the researcher to become a tool of communication between the oppressed and oppressor. This particular ethnic group is highly noticeable because the state of Oaxaca is known to have the highest number of indigenous communities in this southern nation. The state of Oaxaca “is one of the most linguistically and ethnically diverse regions of Mesoamerica (Chance 9). They have embraced their native roots, and have been influenced from colonization, and have amalgamated within the commercialized and rural way of living.

Therefore, the purpose of this research project is to enrich our understanding and explore the ways in which we can preserve and maintain Latin American indigenous peoples’ knowledge through narrative and photographs within the American national boundary. I want to present the literature of Latin American Indigenous views, as well as the socio-historical development of
Oaxacans in Mexico, but most importantly understand the theory of the “Latin American indigenous problem and solution” and its applicability within the American culture. Hopefully, through my research, we can begin to understand the singularities and importance of indigenous knowledge, the relevance of indigenous narrative to spread recognition of individualities in the United States, and most importantly, the use of western academic research and the researcher as means of communication between the two parties. I believe it is imperative that we look more carefully and pay attention to Latin American Indigenous Peoples if we truly wish to preserve our humanity and knowledge over time.
CHAPTER II:  
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

“We must always remember traditional knowledge is the very strength of our identity as indigenous peoples”

Alvin Manitopyes

When we think of America, we do not think of the whole continent that extends from Canada to the southern tip of Argentina; we think of the United States as the true “America.” “For the world today, America is just the United States” (Galeano 2), while the rest of the continent, Latin America and the Caribbean, is considered a marginalized continent. This second-class continent, Latin America, “is a sub-America, a second-class America of nebulous identity” (Galeano 2). Latin America is considered the underdeveloped child in the eyes of the true “America;” “and this part of the world, known today as Latin America, was precocious: it has specialized in losing ever since those remote times when Renaissance Europeans ventured across the ocean and buried their teeth in the throats of the Indian civilizations” (Galeano 1). Latin American has lost land, from the north in Mexico by the imperial force of the United States, to the south in Argentina by the presence of the forceful Great Britain. Latin Americans have been subjugated to the European thought, Indigenous Peoples considered savages and ignorant, and mestizos as a wrongful act of hybridity. Based on misconceived notions, to think of Latin America is to think of the geographic land and the people who inhabit it, but to be a Latin American is a discourse, a concept, and a definition of the intricate past of colonization, and of our authenticity of Indigenous and hybrid cultural practices and knowledge.

Latin America is about uncovering and rewriting a history that reflects the lives of this group. Latin America can be understood as an array of people with combined Indigenous, Asian,
African, and European cultural influences. This is why, “If a Republic refuses to open its arms to all, and move ahead with all, it dies” (Marti 5). Consequently, we need to begin the process of reconciliation with our past by listening to, and socially and culturally incorporating the dispossessed and diverse populations. Diversity in Latin America is a relevant characteristic of its peoples. The diversification and socio-political frame in the structure of the region speaks to the relevance of the many cultures. It is important that we pay attention to the Indigenous population because they represent the historical roots of many Indigenous countries in Latin America. As a result, the goal is to understand the way in which Indigenous personal and group development is taking steps to reclaim cultural practices and reaffirm their ethnic identity within a national and transnational setting.

Due to political and social struggle, as well as cultural coercion, Indigenous migration happens from the borderlines of Latin America to the United States. It is imperative we preserve the knowledge and cultural practices of Latin America Indigenous Peoples. For example, Robin Maria Delugan says, “as nation-state impositions affected Native access to traditional lands and resources and forced migrations or displacements ensued, indigenous people continued to strategize within and across nation-state boundaries”. The internal and external mobilizations are the result for local necessities in social and economic betterment and survival, which produce a transnational and transborder migration. We speak of transnational migration for “the people who were moving from one country to another and who were building transnational links” (Stephen 19). On the other hand, transborder crossing is a subset of the transnational experience in which immigrants cross several borders, such as “ethnic, cultural, colonial, and state borders within Mexico, as well as the U.S.-Mexico border” (Stephen 23). Knowing these crossings constantly occur, immigrants bring knowledge situated in their native land and they maintain it
in other cultural and social spheres. “Just as scientific knowledge has been shown to be situated—indeed ‘local’ rather than universal—so too has the category and contents of local knowledge come under scrutiny as something that is not self-evidently ‘just there’” (C.J. Shepherd). The continued transnational and transborder migration has produced knowledge that needs recognition and preservation wherever it may be situated. The exploration of ideas of transnational and transborder migration and maintenance of knowledge and cultural practices can be understood through oral literary narratives. This research discusses with Indigenous Peoples from Oaxaca, Mexico ways they achieve their cultural practices. To understand the way in which Latin American Indigenous Peoples reflect upon their experience, I will discuss the way in which Latin America has created a context to speak of the region and the notions conceived for its peoples. I will then explore the body of Latin American Indigenous Peoples (LAIP) and the problems presented in the region. Finally, I will expose the work done by an increasing involvement of LAIP to reclaim and redefine notions for cultural acceptance, ethnic identity, and cultural pride and performance in a national and transnational setting.

Latin American Context

Latin America is a region of ethnicities and diverse cultures. Social hierarchies control cultures and languages, and Indigenous Peoples often are placed at the bottom of the social stratification. Latin America is an ethnically diverse and a constantly changing region powered by different nations. In broad terms, Latin America “is conventionally designated as including twenty nations with a combined population of 480 million people,” (Williamson 2) and it is continually growing. The term “Latin American” itself “is misleading since it ignores many people who are in no way Latin” (Williamson 3). Therefore this affects the way in which race/ethnicity operates for LAIP, in which the development and recognition of language and
culture of Latin American Indigenous Peoples are subjugated to the power culture. They are considered an undermined racial/ethnic set within the Latin American social context.

The great array of cultural and ethnic developments in Latin America has much to do with its population. According to Robert Williamson, “in keeping with other areas of the world, developed or underdeveloped, it is difficult to consider Latin America as a completely meaningful unit, for it is composed of highly different cultural regions. Even at the most superficial level, five areas can be designated” (Williamson 2):

(1) Predominantly mestizo, or racially mixed, countries: Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, Colombia, and Venezuela, which represent different economies and political orders; (2) nations with a large Indian or Native American minority (or majority): Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and possibly Paraguay (Williamson 3).

Williamson distinguishes these countries by their mestizo and Indian backgrounds. These two groups of countries share an indigenous unit based on their historical, social, and cultural past, which creates their current mestizo and Indigenous identity. Williamson continues to explain that:

(3) Nations of predominantly European ethnicity: Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and Costa Rica, different as they are from each other; (4) Brazil with its Portuguese heritage, supplemented by African Americans along the northern coast and Indian tribes in the interior; and (5) the Caribbean populations, varying from European and African in Cuba and the Dominican Republic to a French- and Cajun-speaking population in Haiti.” (Williamson 3)

As Williamson distinguishes Latin American by five regional areas, mestizo, Indigenous, predominantly white, Brazilian, and the Caribbean; it is important to look upon the mestizo and Indigenous population in Latin America, which has always been the topic of discussion and of self-discovery for recognition and social advancement of all mestizo and Indigenous nations. According to José Carlos Mareátegui, a Peruvian philosopher and politician:
Todas las tesis sobre el problema indígena, que ignoran o eluden a éste como problema económico-social, son otros tantos estériles ejercicios teóricos –y a veces solo verbales- condenados a un absoluto descredito” (35).

[All dissertations on indigenous peoples have ignored or referred to them as a socio-economic problem, they are sterile theoretical exercises, and sometimes only verbal, and are sentenced to an absolute disgrace.]

The Indigenous Peoples in Latin America have always been understood as the forgotten people. They are a shadow of the system, and this system still manages to break their rights. LAIP “have always been among the most disadvantage segments of the Latin American rural population” (Davis & Partridge). To consistently understand the Latin American Indigenous view, we must make amends with the atrocities and actions inflicted upon this marginalized ethnic and cultural section. We must understand that “diversity is emerging as the [Americas’] ‘manifest destiny’” (Takaki 5) and that their Indigenous knowledge, understood as their cultural practices, must be continued in all of our continent because the process of cultural reclaiming, race/ethnic identity, and cultural acceptance by this group is being launched by their own efforts through grass roots organizations, Indigenous language development, and personal/group heritage reaffirmation.

Besides the challenges that Indigenous populations face in their native countries, they face similar situations once they migrate to the United States. They find social and cultural barriers that deter their cultural development. According to the US Census Bureau “in 2009, there were 307 million people living in the United States, including 38.5 million foreign born [also known as immigrants], representing 1 in 8 residents. Between 2000 and 2009, the foreign-born population increased by 7.4 million persons, or by about 24 percent”. With indigenous displacement and movement occurring in the Americas, especially from Mexico to the U.S.,
which is considered “the largest of all country-of-birth groups... There were 11.5 million foreign born from Mexico in the United States, representing 30 percent of the total foreign-born population” (U.S. Census Bureau). It is of utmost importance to preserve their cultural development in another cultural boundary when a significant amount of mestizo and Indigenous Peoples migrate. Latin American Indigenous Peoples encounter a migration process within the borders of their own lands. The authoritarian governments and policies that exists in Latin America leaves millions of Indigenous peoples out of the government’s social interaction. Most of the Indigenous Peoples are located in areas in which the government’s reach is limited and if there is some, little improvement is made to their living standards. The most logical solution for this group is to move; thousands of Latin American Indigenous Peoples move from rural to urbanized areas, leaving behind part of their history and cultural practices.

Migratory processes are a result of factors that reflect the need to move for survival or escape marginalized situations. Tessa Cubitt says that “these are often described in terms of the push-pull factors, the ‘push’ being those that drive migrants from their villages, while the ‘pull’ factors attract them to the city…The emphasis is very much on the hope of betterment and opportunity; the town offers a fluid situation, where the chances of improvements may arise, unlike the countryside, where opportunities are far more limited” (153).

Urbanized areas settle immigrants on the outskirts, and the people often are forced to find poor employment with a low paying job. Just as such experience is undertaken in several mestizo and Indigenous Latin American countries, it is also replicated in the United States “because they are eager to work, recent immigrants may accept below-average wages. Undocumented aliens are even more likely to accept wages far below average, fearing deportation if they report labor exploitation to the authorities” (Cooper). Such social phenomenon is a recurring action that takes
place in a transnational sphere; hence Latin American Indigenous Peoples also find themselves locating to the United States in hopes of social and economic betterment, a migratory dream, but also find a social stigma that is carried through discriminatory policies for all immigrants.

*The Oppressed: Latin American Indigenous Peoples (LAIP)*

Latin American nations with a high mestizo and Indigenous population have always resorted to a practice of mobilization or relocation in order to re-delineate their social hierarchy and the ethnicity of the Indigenous Peoples described as inferior and “savage.” Mareátegui says:

> La suposición de que el problema indígena es un problema étnico, se nutre del mas envejecido repertorio de ideas imperialistas (Mareátegui 36).

[The assumption that the Indian problem is an ethnic and racial problem is fed through the old imperialist repertoire of ideas for colonization.]

Nevertheless, the colonizing and imperialist approach extends and dominates Indigenous knowledge throughout all the colonization period. The ramification of this approach slowly disrupts and changes the Indigenous system, allowing social oppression on native populations, and disrupting cultural practices through different areas through the oppressor and the oppressed interaction.

For example, during the sixteenth century in Oaxaca, the “presence of indigenous tribute system, and endemic political instability beyond the community permitted the Spaniards to bring the Valley under control in a short time with a minimum of violence” (Chance 31). The insertion of foreign practices, such as religion, has had a major impact in the creation of a hybrid cultural repertoire. With the invasion of Latin America by the Europeans in the fifteenth century, social, political, and cultural practices were shifted. One important area affected that has developed a great influence in the lives of Latin American Indigenous Peoples is presented in adaptation and
amalgamation of religion. Religion in the colonized period spread and permeated through different areas of the civil and private lives of the individual. Xenia Silva says “in the sixteenth century the Portuguese and the Spanish conquered Latin America, prohibited the native religions, and imposed on them Catholicism. This imposition of Catholicism by Europeans on the Indigenous people generated various revolts that in some cases took the form of messianic movements.” Latin American Indigenous Peoples either “accepted the new religion or, in some cases dressed their old beliefs with the clothes of the conquerors” (Silva). The extensive work established by the Church was creating a direct control over the Indigenous populations. The “Church was busily carving out its own spheres of influence, especially the Dominican friars, who took the lead in Oaxaca from the very beginning” (Chance 39).

The exerted oppression upon Latin American Indigenous Peoples has developed such coercion that language and cultural practices are considered different from the norm just by its designation as “Indigenous practices”. And to be “Indian is only acceptable as a category which references the colonized characteristics which all indigenous peoples in the Americas share” (Houghton). Oppression and the history of oppression is the main characteristic of Latin American Indigenous Peoples; as Paulo Freire says, “While both humanization and dehumanization are real alternatives, only the first is the people’s vocation (43), the dehumanizing history of colonization upon the Indian body is what has taken Latin American Indigenous Peoples as prisoners of misconceived notions. The misguided perceptions on Indigenous Peoples speak of what oppression has made of humans; we have become the “distortion of the vocation of becoming fully human” and the oppressors’ actions have become the historical vocation that reemerges through injustice upon the oppressed, the underrepresented and “savage” Indigenous Peoples of the Americas. Freire continues by saying, “this vocation,
[humanization], is constantly negated, yet it is affirmed by that very negation. It is thwarted by injustices, exploitation, oppression, and the violence of the oppressors; it is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice, and by their struggle to recover their lost humanity” (44). The coercive social hierarchies and the misguided notions on Latin American Indigenous Peoples delineate which cultural practices and knowledge are dominant. Again, by marginalizing Indigenous views, native people see these hierarchies and notions turn into factors for internal, transnational, and transborder migration. The need to develop and approach our human vocation can start through the acceptance of ethnic and cultural differences. This is why the continual fight for recognition and recovery of Latin American Indigenous Peoples’ culture, language, and beliefs is of utmost importance since it brings out the natural vocation in us, which is our humanizing view of acceptance as individuals.

The cultural and social oppression of Latin American Indigenous Peoples is a continual reality, and most importantly Latin American Indigenous peoples’ knowledge is marginalized and considered obsolete. According to Beverly Bell and Juan Carlos Houghton, Latin American Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge as a political unit or ethnic group of origin rests in the following characteristics: “(1) They are subaltern sectors, that is, non-dominant in modern nation-states; and (2) their actions are intended to assure their survival within their autonomous cultural models, social institutions, and legal systems.” The understanding of Latin American Indigenous Peoples as these sub-cultural sectors within the socio-political frame operate within borders that carefully manage to survive by maintaining themselves marginalized and by performing and recreating their cultural practices that reaffirm their culture and identity, while countering social and political standards.
Bell and Houghton recognize that another Latin American Indigenous Peoples’ characteristic for survival is the understanding of culture as reclaiming practices. Bell and Houghton say that such characteristic is “highly significant because any indigenous peoples [that] have sustained their cultural and legal models, […] have been annihilated. Their traditions alone could not sustain them in the face of often genocidal and ethnocidal forces. On the other hand, many other have survived physically while losing important, unifying cultural and social traditions.” This evaluation speaks directly, again, to the challenges that Latin American Indigenous Peoples encounter when they struggle to recover and maintain their cultural practices and knowledge within their own native boundaries, as well as that of transnational and transborder settings.

LAIP New Approaches for Knowledge Recognition

The characteristics of a subaltern marginalized sector and of a repressed indigenous practices group are highly emphasized in Latin America and in the crossings of transnational and transborder boundaries and cultures, although the recognition of Latin American Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge and presence is being shifted toward a cultural reclaiming and reaffirmation. Within the new approach, important characteristics, such as indigenous identity, cultural roots acceptance, as well as indigenous organizations, are some of the factors that are found within countries’ cultural and political borders. That is to say:

Recently, a new vision has emerged in Latin America that challenges conventional, top-down approaches to the (misnamed and misconceived) Latin American “Indian problem” posted by Mareátegui. It builds on the positive qualities of indigenous cultures and societies, including a strong sense of ethnic identity, close attachments to specific landscapes and territories, a sophisticated knowledge of natural resources and the environment, an the capacity to collectively mobilize labor, capital, and other resources (Davis & Partridge).
The acceptance of this new vision clearly challenges the difficulties of preserving knowledge and culture that face Latin American Indigenous Peoples.

With the presentation of this new practice that is shifting the way in which Latin American Indigenous Peoples is perceived, the preservation of the momentum of this thought and cultural exercise is carried through a close connection of Latin American Indigenous Peoples who immigrate to the United States. While mobilization occurs, LAIP are maintaining cultural practices that reflect a process of Indigenous recognition while migrating to another cultural boundary. With their individual and group performance of cultural practices of the preservation their knowledge is exemplified through their daily activities, which in turn will reflect their cultural performance.

The migration of Latin American Indigenous peoples to the United States implies that social, cultural, and ethnic performances are brought into a new boundary. Their daily activities and cultural performances also speak of Indigenous knowledge development and of the population reclaiming activities. With their continual presence and representation within the broader context of society, we can argue that their own cultural practices can be maintained through personal and cultural assertion. If such ideology is increasingly taking place in Latin America, the fluidity of isolated group thoughts between Latin American Indigenous Peoples who relocate to and within the United States reproduce their cultural practices and ethnic re-identification as a form of knowledge retention, that is to say “in almost all countries where there are significant indigenous populations, younger and more educated Indians are reaffirming (and sometimes rediscovering) their indigenous cultural roots and identities, using them to form new ethnic organizations and federations” (Davis & Partridge).
The process of preserving their knowledge within the borders of the United States will break the oppression in terms of transnational mobilization, which will lead to a “ideological decolonization, [to a] processes of nationalization [for Indigenous knowledge], and traditional political [and ethnic groups] to a new phase: the construction of indigenous power…” (Houghton & Bell). The main goal of preserving the knowledge of Indigenous Peoples will eventually function to reclaim cultural practices that will in time fight ways of oppression. For example, in Latin America oppression can be present through the use of the dominant language and the practices in which is pushed to the Indian communities. For example, “[Bret] Gustafson lays bare the tension between Bilingual Intercultural Education and castellanoización (Spanishization), or being ‘forced to speak in the outsider’s tongue in their own land’” (Shannon). Recognizing the way in which oppression operates can be of advantage to deter or completely eliminate the enforcement of oppression. This in turn can be translated within the American borders, as the need to speak the main language of the nation for survival within the economic and social sphere, but the challenge is present during the process of language acquiescence, in which Latin American Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge must be preserved through cultural practices that are transplanted from their native lands to another.

The challenge faced in language, as it occurs in Latin American countries, in which learning and speaking the language becomes a primary issue, can be overcome with the mindset of Indigenous group’s authenticity of the mobilization and implantation of Latin American Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge, or also perceived as “local knowledge.” Their cultural practices are transplanted within the cultural borders of the United States, and they are currently reproduced and reaffirmed within Latin American Indigenous concepts of ethnicity, traditions, and cultural borders. A positive outcome or effect elicits in LAIP the understanding that
reproduction of situated knowledge can nourish and be reproduced in different locations. These situations explore the way in which transnational lives and experiences are formed, this is why “all the people living within a transnational social field are exposed, in different ways and at different levels, but nonetheless in some shared way to ‘a set of social expectations, cultural values, and patterns of human interaction shaped by more than one social, economic and political system’” (Stephen 21). Therefore “this local knowledge is never crudely encapsulated in closed [national] traditions, but is produced during human encounters, rather than discovered” (C.J. Shepherd). A possible objective could be to fortify Latin American Indigenous Peoples’ historical presence and current social involvement. The “goal of this strategy is to emphasize the ancestral culture and to teach about and in the indigenous language and about the culture, knowledge, histories, values, and the worldview of indigenous groups…” (Cortina). The tentative objective clearly delineates the possibility of growing personal, historical, and social awareness for LAIP, that hopefully in turn, should ignite the desire to reproduce and preserve autochthonous knowledge that should be carried out as cultural and social forms of every day life activities.

The key to the preservation of Latin American Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge in different cultural boundaries explores movement and transplantation linked to acceptance and authenticity of knowledge, which become concepts of personal and communal indigenous networks and self-identification. Lynn Stephen says, “all [LAIP] are local in that near and distant connections permeate the daily lives of individuals lived within a locale. But within this locale, a person may participate in personal networks, or receive ideas and information that connect them to others in a nation-state, across the borders of a nation-state, or globally…” (Stephen 21). The reaffirming and reclaiming of cultural Indigenous practices maintain Indigenous or native
identity and performances regardless of location. The incorporation of that transnational and transborder Indigenous knowledge within the “American” cultural boundary is now being presented, not only as type of research within the scholarly world, but as a source of political and social practices that embody the Latin American thought of Indigenous Peoples, this is why “over the last few decades we have witnessed the meteoric rise of a category of local or indigenous knowledge that has entered the lexicon of “international cooperation” for conservation and [social] development” (C.J. Shepherd).

It is crucial to remember, “Culture, we are told, is no longer the territorial bound thing that belongs to ‘a people.’ As ‘cultural essentialism’ has become an academic no-no, culture is now deemed to be fluid, transnational, and hybrid—a permanent revolution in forms that signals ‘difference through connection’” (C.J. Shepherd). This difference is what makes LAIP knowledge of great importance as it reshapes the colonized history and the roots of Latin America. This will speak to each Latin American nation, and it will speak to the region as a whole, and as a long-lasting consequence it will speak to the origin of past civilizations. Should the outcome be a way to carefully look into history to rewrite it, or a careful analysis of the future that awaits Latin American Indigenous Peoples? Without a set answer to the question, LAIP transnational and transborder experience makes the point that “difference through connection” asserts their cultural and ethnic practices as a sounded recognized knowledge, which can be situated through the crossing of personal, regional, or national boundaries. This experience will certainly begin to questions the current oppression and the way in which it can be critically studied and dismantled for future generations to come and enjoy an invigorating, self-aware, and cultural accepted way of life.
Latin American Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge, which can be seen now as a transnational and transborder phenomenon within the borders of the United States, preserves an important connection to all of us in search of constructing our culture, identity, and language development within a foreign cultural sphere, as the United States is understood by native minds. With the existence of Latin American Indigenous knowledge, and their diverse cultural philosophy, we are starting to listen to, and appreciate their reclaiming view of their history, experience, and cultural performances. We are presented to their singular and plural voice that makes them a body of knowledge beyond the characteristics of western research; they are no longer stationary non-developing cultures and groups of the past, but a rich and thriving ethnic and cultural group bursting in knowledge.
CHAPTER III:

METHODOLOGY

“We attend to how our subjectivity in relation to the Other informs and is informed by our engagement and representation of the Other. We are not simply subjects, but we are subjects in dialogue with the Other.”

D. Soyini Madison

As Kim Humphery states “the concept and practice of ‘research’ is intimately bound up with histories of colonization - and this much at least is now increasingly acknowledged by those working within a range of fields within the humanities, social sciences and sciences” (Dirty questions: Indigenous health and “Western research”). Researchers must approach studies with the understanding of the project’s intricacies and the participants involved in the project. Knowing the historical past and the outcome of the research should not only be of advantage to the researcher, but it should equally benefit, support, and engage disadvantaged groups. The term “research” can have negative connotations to Indigenous groups throughout the world, “indeed, ‘The word itself, ‘research’, is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world’s vocabulary.’” (Humphery). And “most Indigenous criticisms of research are expressed with the single terms of ‘white research’, ‘academic research’ or ‘outsider research’ (Tuhiwai Smith 42). The utmost care and respect of Indigenous Peoples and their cultural practices must be used in research, and ethical and moral obligations must be upheld.

An accurate representation of Indigenous groups can deconstruct the stigmatized notion of “western research.” Kim Humphrey argues that, “one Indigenous response to this 'dirtiness' has been to reject participation in, and the value of, research itself. Another has been to take hold of research and to begin, as [Linda Tuhiwai] Smith argues, to ‘research back’. A third approach includes the voices of the participants, which allows them to take control and become the
researchers and the subjects of the study, allowing them to create a communication process between the research and the researcher. According to D. Soyini Madison, “the positionality of voices is where the subjects themselves are the focus, and their voices carry forward indigenous meanings and experiences that are in opposition to dominant discourses and practices. The position of the ethnographer is vaguely present but not addressed” (6). It is in this process that this project’s methodology evolves.

*Study Method*

A qualitative research approach was used during the course of the project in order to carefully represent Latin American Indigenous Peoples through their narrative and art development. According to Catherine M. Castellan:

[In] qualitative research, the researcher identifies with postpositivism which offers ‘that social reality is constructed and it is constructed differently by different individuals.’ [Researchers] would assume that social reality is constructed by the participants in it and that social reality is continuously constructed in local situations. Qualitative researchers are concerned with how individuals perceive their world and these researchers interact with that which is being researched (Quantitative and Qualitative research: a view for clarity).

Qualitative research can help pose and explain participants’ perspective and viewpoints and provide research that explores lives and cultural practices. Also, according to Smith, Bekker, and Cheater “qualitative research is characterized by adopting methods that are interpretative and focus on meaning” (Theoretical versus Pragmatic Design in Qualitative Research). The content and its interpretation are of utmost importance for qualitative research. Also, “data collection is undertaken in the natural setting and the depth of the data gathered is more important than recruiting large samples” (Castellan).

As a result, “the goal of qualitative research is to ‘better understand human behavior and experience...grasp the processes by which people construct meaning and to describe what those
meanings are”’ (Castellan). In a profound and detailed analysis, Catherine M. Castellan says that “the goal of qualitative research, depending on the conceptual framework of the study (cultural studies, feminism, post modernism, and critical theory), can be to develop understanding, describe multiple realities, develop grounded theory, description, generation of insight, and giving voice and empowerment to the marginalized in society.” Then, a qualitative study can be used for the benefit of the participants, as well as of the researcher. This method of research can be used by Indigenous Peoples and the researcher as a mean of communication, and as a tool to announce their voice, knowledge, cultural experience and practices.

Participants

Four participants for this project came from the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. Oaxaca is “located south of [Mexico City], in the extreme southwest of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. It borders the states of Guerrero to the west, Puebla to the northwest, Veracruz to the north and Chiapas to the east. To the south has almost 600 km of coastline on the Pacific Ocean” (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca). Oaxaca is also known “for its size, [it] is the fifth largest [state] and occupies 4.8 percent of [Mexico]. [It] has a rich multicultural composition where more than 16 ethnic groups live. Like the other federal states, Oaxaca has a constitution, civil code, penal code and [coat of arms] itself” (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca).

The participants interviewed came from different locations. Participant number 1 and 3 came from La Sierra Mixe, which is located in the shorelines of one of the seven regions of Oaxaca (Interviewee 1). Participant number 2 came from the city and capital of Oaxaca, which is Oaxaca City. And finally, participant number 4 came from one of the outskirt towns of Oaxaca City known at Juan de Comaltepec Choapan Oaxacan (Interviewee 4).
It was of utmost importance to discuss with participants their understanding of how they continue to recreate their culture within a different borderline. The participants chosen for this study were selected because they all come from the state of Oaxaca in Mexico. They all recognize their Indigenous roots within different parameters, and they all have experienced migration as a cultural, personal, and social necessity for betterment. A total of eight participants were invited to collaborate in this project, however, time conflict, personal issues, and work schedules allowed only four participants able to contribute to this project.

Each one of the individuals in this study has a personal experience with migration and a personal identification as an Indigenous person. Their age range from twenty-two to thirty-five years of age. They all have experienced mobilization within Oaxaca and came to the United States, with a length of time in the United States varying between 3 to 6 years. Participant number 1, 2 and 4 have attended a local community college, and participant number 3 has not. Due to their desire for anonymity, the participants’ status and personal identity is protected.

*Context*

The interviews took place in the preferred location by the participants, which was their house. All of the interviews took place at this specific location because all of the participants lived together and shared expenses. The participants preferred not to reveal detailed information concerning the location of the interviews, except to mention that their residence is located in the City of El Paso de Robles about five miles away from the historical downtown area.

All interviews were conducted in the living room or family room of their residence, which was close to the kitchen. The family room was painted in a clear and bright beige paint that contrasted the dark brown carpet. The room was surrounded by one large window. The room had decorations of Mexico and of Oaxaca, such as paintings of the city and Indigenous pieces
that were brought when the participants immigrated. The interviews ranged from forty and sixty minutes in length and took place starting the end of June and concluding at the beginning of July.

Photographs of the participants’ residence and work environment were taken by the participants. These images were then collected and organized by the participants and the researcher. The images reveal the need of maintaining a connection of the enclosed space in order to explain their ethnicity and cultural development. This part of the project was fully developed by the participants.

\textit{Data Collection}

The purpose of the data collected was to understand the point of view of the participants by creating a narrative that speaks directly to their voices. Producing interviews and developing a photographic documentary constructed these narratives. The photo documentary was completely made by the participants and the photographs depicted their point of views, allowing for full cultural expression and understanding.

Appointments were made with each participant to record the interviews. Interviews took place starting June 20, 2010 and continued until July 5, 2010, and lasted from forty to a maximum of sixty minutes. All interviews were conducted in Spanish, which all participants spoke fluently. This provided more accurate information and a better articulation of their thoughts. The English translation was conducted by me. The translation process for the interviews started in July 15, 2010 and ended in September 19, 2010. The interviews’ English transcriptions are meant to keep the participants’ words and knowledge as true as possible as to the Spanish transcription. The interviews were open-ended and began by addressing their cultural and ethnic background identification in Oaxaca and their current identification within the
United States. Then, the interviews addressed cultural practices in Oaxaca and those that are recreated in California.

At the beginning of the interviews, the participants were presented with the informed consent and release agreement forms. The participants were briefed about the purpose of the interviews and their involvement in the project. At the end of each interview the participants were informed again about the project’s thesis and goals. Participants were also given twelve disposal cameras of which only two were returned by the end of January 2011, and only one camera had six photographs, becoming this the first challenge of the project. The cameras were given to the participants in order to record their daily experiences that reflect their ethnic identity and the way they recreate their cultural practices. Another challenge was presented when Participant number two had to return to Oaxaca, Mexico due to an undisclosed family emergency. Participant number one, three, and four provided other pictures for the project in February 2011, which will be used for the analysis in the following chapter of the project.

Data Analysis

“Data analysis is an inductive process with the explicit aim of describing and interpreting the range of attributes associated with the phenomena being studied” (Smith, Bekker, and Cheater, Theoretical versus Pragmatic Design in Qualitative Research). With the involvement of the participants through the analysis of the interviews and the photographs, this research describes and interprets the information provided by the data. Once the interviews were conducted, they were saved in an audio recorder, transcription of the data in Spanish took place and then the transcriptions were translated. All the transcriptions were carefully reviewed, trying to maintain the originality of the Spanish version. Each transcription was read and approved by the participants. Then, the transcriptions in Spanish and English were analyzed for recurrent
subjects or topics considered essential to the participants. Such topics range from spirituality/religiosity, to language, and cultural roots, as well as their perception in cultural differences between the United States and Mexico.

The second portion of the data analysis consisted in developing and creating a narrative of the photographs that the participants took. Once all pictures were developed a group meeting with three of the four participants was set to discuss their insights about the photographs. A total of nineteen photos have been named, described, and stored for the use of the project, but only a total of seven pictures will be used, along with the analysis of the interviews. The confluence of these two methods will construct the narrative and photo documentary body of the project that will be further analyzed in the following chapter.

*Personal Perspective*

As a researcher, I am trying to understand the way in which this group of Latin American Indigenous Peoples are recreating their cultural practices within the United States, and continue to maintain their native roots as a mirror of their culture, personal, and group lives. The challenges brought into this research illuminate the necessary work that needs to be done in order to include Latin American Indigenous groups’ knowledge and cultural practices into the ethnically and socially diverse society in which we live. I believe that the interviews and the photographic documentary can be used to articulate a narrative that can help us analyze and understand Latin American native roots within the United States.

As a graduating Comparative Ethnic Studies student, I have had the opportunity to understand Latin American Indigenous Peoples’ views. I can relate to their historical past and their ideas of survival because I too come from a native background. I understand the importance to always be in contact with native practices that truly emphasize our roots beyond racial and
ethnic norms. We must understand how cultural practices can really become means of
communication between native roots of the past and our longing for identity and survival. My
involvement with Latin American Indigenous Peoples reinforces my own understanding of
oppression and the ways in which we can use academic practices to provide voice to the
dispossessed. Upon completion of this project, the sources and materials employed here can be
used in order to offer a better insight into the development of studies that explores and creates a
strong relationship between Latin American Indigenous Peoples and the United States, which in
turn can illuminate personal and cultural success.
CHAPTER IV
THE INTERVIEWS & PHOTOGRAPH ANALYSIS

“We have the ability to achieve, if we master the necessary goodwill, a common global society blessed with a shared culture of peace that is nourished by the ethnic, national and local diversities that enrich our lives.”

Mahnaz Afkhami

“To me, photography is an art of observation. It's about finding something interesting in an ordinary place... I've found it has little to do with the things you see and everything to do with the way you see them.”

Elliot Erwitt

Latin American Indigenous Peoples (LAIP) migration to the United States produces a development of culture across social boundaries, this experience recreates a cultural construction that builds and “seek[s] to document the cosmology, that is, the knowledge and beliefs systems that contribute to the coherence of the group” (Bishop 3). Academic research can examine the ways native groups and cultures of the Americas live and understand the world, and how social processes such as migration and cultural reproduction conserve knowledge. In this project, interviews and photographs combine to work together to construct a literary and visual narrative that conveys the knowledge and practices that are kept alive by LAIP. Latin American Indigenous Peoples construct hybrid cultural practices within the U.S. Cultural and National setting that is reflected in religion and ancestral practices, as well as race/ethnic identity and multicultural coexistence. Indigenous practices reestablish and reclaim views, knowledge, and personal experiences, and as a result provide recognition and political enfranchisement within a national or transnational setting.
As shown in Figure 1, the creation and development of the LAIP private sphere in the United States recreates and reaffirms their cultural practices such as forms in religious performances, ancestral belief systems and values, and race/ethnic identity and coexistence. This in turn asserts LAIP views, practices, knowledge, and experience. It also provides them with cultural and social awareness, individual and group cultural recognition. And, the voice and experience of Latin American Indigenous Peoples become a living narrative.

The data collected from the four interviews in this study represent a rich and complex narrative of Latin American Indigenous Peoples who have migrated and are now located in the City of El Paso de Robles in California. To the participants, the interviews at first were considered a foreign and authoritative way to explore their identity and lives, but as the interviews developed, the participants felt that the interviews actually became a dialogue and
conversation that spoke of their life experiences in Oaxaca and in California. The participants had the opportunity to speak their minds and also to explore the ways in which research can be used by minority groups to voice concerns and to express their culture. At the end of the interviews all the participants saw the process of the interview as an ethnic recollection procedure and analysis of their own lives and cultural reproduction. At the end of the interviews I thanked each one of the participants and they responded with emphatic gratitude for the way in which the interviews became a means of recognition of their culture. For example:

De nada, gracias por la oportunidad de poder expresarme en una forma diferente (Participant 1).

[Your welcome, thank you for the opportunity to express myself in a different way.]

No, gracias a usted (Participant 2).

[No, thank you]

Gracias por entrevistarme (Participant 3).

[Thank you for interviewing me.]

Gracias a usted por la entrevista (Participant 4).

[Thank you for this interview.]

The open-ended quality of the interviews elicited important discussion of cultural hybridity regarding topics of religiosity, recreating cultural practices, and race/ethnic identity. All of the participants saw these topics as relevant characteristics that make up their identity and culture. Religious practices are considered a social frame that structures relationships and influences personal development, as well as cultural practices. And it is also presented within a hybrid use of Indigenous and ancestral traditions. To the participants, the recreating process of cultural practices mirrors their lifestyles and daily experiences that take place in the private
sphere, such as their home. The transnational cultural practices that are original from Oaxaca are also constantly present through language, cultural items, or actions existing in United States culture by LAIP. These practices, made consciously or unconsciously, retain in their perspective their foreign Indigenous identity and reinforce cultural practices. Too, it is their designation of racial and ethnic identity, recognized. The reinforcing condition of racial/ethnic identity and cultural practices are clearly delineated by LAIP by adopting and understanding the way in which American culture structures minority groups and how policies strengthen social frames.

The interviews, as narratives, construct an interesting body of literature through the participants’ transnational and transborder experiences. Their experiences, along with the photographs each participant took as they explored their lives, speak of a visual cultural construction. To the participants, the process of taking and choosing photographs for the project involved identification with cultural practices and an analysis of how they impact the relationship between the culture of Oaxaca and their lives in the United States. The representation of these practices helps them conserve their Indigenous ideology within the American social and cultural context. The photographs resemble their cultural, religious, and ethnic aspects that reflect their Indigenous identity by incorporating items and images that represent and maintain a cultural meaning to the participants. To the participants, the analysis of the interviews and the photographs was a process of understanding their point of view in a different society; they were looking at the photographs “de dónde están” ‘from where they are standing.’ The participants’ photographs became a still-life reflection of their view, and their positionality helps create a sound narrative that reflects transborder experiences.

The interviews and photographs of this research work together into a confluence of the participants’ voices and visual cultural representations that delivers a constructed live narrative
of Latin American Indigenous Peoples. My goal in this chapter is to provide a voice through the analysis and interpretation of the interviews according to three different areas that were recurrent in the interviews and photographs:

1. Religious and Ancestral Beliefs
2. Recreating Cultural Practices
3. Race/Ethnicity and Multicultural Coexistence

With the analysis of the photographs taken by the participants’ point of view and story we can begin to understand the way in which culture is reproduced, “in fact, within these visual images and culture there resides the opportunity to examine the footprints of Native peoples upon the land” (Martin 3). The images reflect their beliefs, knowledge, and experience brought from Oaxaca to the United States. Each section is listed and explained, and fully translated below with direct quotes from the participants, which were also analyzed with their assistance and support.

*Religious and Ancestral Beliefs*

For the participants of this project, religion and its practices reflect a foundation to their lives, as well as the moral fiber of their individual character. “There is recognition of spiritual power in Jesus [and Religion] that goes beyond ethnicity or culture and is similar to the spiritual power already experienced in traditional Indian ceremonial life” (Tinker 138). Religious practices become an example of their cultural practices. Hybridity is evoked through these practices unique to their culture, and they represent them through traditional clothing, ethnic identification, cultural reproductions, religious processions, and other religious events that reassert their faith. “Religious traditions serve as collective memory for the colonized and preserve a cultural identity that cannot be easily destroyed” (Stevens-Arroyo 61). The recreation of religious practices for the participants are translated into their moral core as people and
citizens who are able to live in society and to understand the lives of the poor and the
disadvantage. For example, religious practices ignite for Participant 2 a spectrum of what is
considered right or wrong in society. According to the participant’s view we can argue that such
belief and cultural perspective delineates what is right and correct with religious tenants. He
says:

    Cuando vivía allá la virtud y persona del individuo es lo que importa, y yo me daba a
    conocer como una persona sencilla (Participant 2).

    [When I lived in Oaxaca, the virtue and character of the individual is what really matters,
    and I was known for being a simple and candid person.]

In another example of religious beliefs that speak of right and wrong in regards to discrimination
against Indigenous Peoples, one of the participants states:

    Hay muchos que menosprecian al indígena y pienso que están mal porque siendo
    indígena o no uno no debe de menospreciar a ningún tipo de persona por el hecho de que
    todos somos humanos y somos formados por una sola cabeza, que es Dios (Participant 2).

    [There are many people who discriminate against the Indigenous and they're wrong
    because being Indigenous or not one should never belittle any person because we are all
    humans and we are created by a single head that is God.]

    Acknowledging these religious views are important because they act as social norms that
    reinforce the religious ideology of the individual. For Participant 2, following a life of religious
    consideration and practices leads the individual to become closer to spirituality, and creates a
    citizenry of acceptance and respect. Religious practices, in particular those of Catholicism, can
    also be seen as an example of decent lives that are considered by the participant as fully relevant
    in order of to live in a state of similitude to a representative Catholic figure, which is Jesus
Christ. To many “traditional spiritual elders and medicine women and men rather consistently expressed their respect for Jesus as spiritual person and even as a manifestation of their Creator” (Tinker 137). Latin American Indigenous Peoples “can respect him as having been a spiritual presence and even as continuing spiritual presence in the world” (Tinker 137). The understanding of Jesus as a holy and exemplar figure presents the connection to the highest Catholic symbol, God, and the way in which this image is used to reinforce religious views.

Figure 2, Cristo en la pared, is an example as reported by participants:

Al tener una cruz, un crucifijo, o la imagen de Jesús significa que nosotros creemos fervientemente en Dios. Nosotros reconocemos que Dios está en todos los lugares, que nos observa, y nos cuida día y noche (Participant 3).

[By having a cross, a crucifix, or an image of Jesus, it means that we believe in God. We recognize that God is everywhere; he watches over us and takes care of us day and night.]
For the participants, Figure 2 reflects a meaningful religious protection and a way of remembering the life of sacrifice for others. During a group discussion of the photograph with the participants, they state:

Significa siempre estar protegido al estar con Jesús Cristo, al tener la protección hay paz y respeto con una cruz, un altar, y una vela.

[It means we are always protected by Jesus Christ, by having his protection there is peace and respect within the family. There is always a small altar, a cross, and some flowers at home.]

This interpretation, which can be understood as religious affiliation and devotion expresses the many centuries of religious attachment of Latin American Indigenous Peoples to Catholic images and objects. The amalgamation or fusion of Catholicism and Indigenous religious practices leads to a process of reinforcement of religious and cultural development that is still present in Oaxaca and can be perceived in the immigrants’ practices:

Viendo la cultura en Los Estados Unidos, sigo pensando que soy tal y como soy, me considero como autóctono de Oaxaca (Participant 1).

[Seeing and experiencing the American culture, I still think that I am and will be me; I consider myself autochthonous from Oaxaca.]

In a group discussion, the participants recognize that society influences the way in which individuals are constructed,

La sociedad moldea como las personas te miran y se refieren a ti por el simple hecho del apellido y de donde vienes, pero al final tienen que aceptar que eres parte de la sociedad (Participant 1).
[Society shapes how people look at you and how they relate to you, simply because of your ancestry and where you come from you are marginalized, but in the end you are part of society.]

The participants’ collaboration in the group discussion elicited an interesting cultural analysis that speaks of their hybrid religious practices as a result of cultural and social influences that are also intertwined with their Indigenous identity as a personal foundation. According to the analyses of the interviews and of the photographs all of the participants agreed that there exists a level of hybridity within religious and ethnic practices, which can be described by the following figure.

Figure 3. Hybrid Religious Practices in the Social and Cultural Sphere

As shown in Figure 3, LAIP core Indigenous identity is influenced by different external aspects such as Catholic religious views, cultural and social influence, and ancestral religious practices that in turn create a hybrid performance within a social sphere that can either be situated in Oaxaca or the United States. The hybrid religious practices are a continual cultural performance that maintains cultural practices and reflects a process of Indigenous recognition while migrating to another cultural boundary that “builds on the positive qualities of indigenous cultures and societies, including a strong sense of ethnic identity” (Davis & Partridge). The
crossing of regional and cultural borders presented in the United States speaks openly to the transborder experience of the participants. “[LAIP] are crossing a new set of regional borders that are often different from those in Mexico [and the United States]” (Stephen 23). The crossings of cultural boundaries can be understood as a subset of their transnational experience, and these boundaries are situated within different borders in the United States, Lynn Stephen says these borders include “ethnic, cultural, and regional borders” (23). Each one of the participants described their practices within the “American” cultural boundaries to create a point of cultural life narrative in the United States.

Hybrid religious practices have crossed ethnic, cultural, and regional borders that the participants continued to recognize and perform through their daily activities. And such practices reflect their identity, Indigenous values, and ties to their family unit. For example, religious practices for the following participant not only speak of his faith and devotion to Catholicism and the church, but also to the innate nature of his Indigenous identity when he says:

Lo que yo hago de vez en cuando es que yo salgo a las ocho de la noche a agradecer y rezar a la naturaleza y a Dios por lo que tengo (Participant 3).

[What I do from time to time is to go out at eight at night to pray and thank God and nature for what I have in my life.]

This practice is a reflection of how the hybridity of cultural practices, the amalgamation of Catholic religious practices and Indigenous customs and beliefs, is still a core element of their identity and how they represent it in another cultural boundary as a mean to maintain and reconcile their ethnic and cultural identification in a foreign society. For example, the following photograph illustrates the use of items that have a Catholic and Indigenous cultural meaning that
combined reflect the cultural usage and ancestral belief embedded not only in religious practices, but in notions of wellness and family betterment.

![Image](image.png)

**Figure 4. El cuadro de la ultima cena con la mata bendita para los alimentos**  
Picture of the last supper with holy mata for our food.

The above picture is an example of ancestral beliefs as discussed by the participants. The incorporation of two elements, one the painting of the “The Last Supper,” and two, the holy “mata” or a dried leaf/root brought from Oaxaca, are displayed together. The participants interpret the confluence of these objects as the nurturing capacity of the “Mother Earth” with the blessings of the food for personal and family sustain. The juxtaposition and usage of these objects reflect the transborder quality of cultural practices and its continual reaffirmation. The participants describe this image as “convivencia” ‘to live in the company of others,’ a state in which food is the “sustento” or support of the family unit in physical and spiritual ways.

As these religious practices have become a foundation, it is clear that certain ancestral or Indigenous practices also reflect the way in which religious practices serve as personal or group spiritual defense. This belief has influenced the religious items or decorations that convey faith.
For example, Participant 3 identify the following picture as reflecting the use of a superstition or cultural belief by the use of a broom placed next to the main door for protection.

![Figure 5. Superstición / Superstition](image)

The participants say that the use of this practice reveals two different approaches within hybrid religious performances:

Es un símbolo de despedida o es una creencia que indica que algo acaba y es hora de irse. (Participant 3).

[It is a symbol of farewell or it is also part of a belief that indicates that something ends and it is time to go.]

And second: “Aleja a espíritus malos” (Participant 2).
[It sends off evil spirits.]

The religious and ancestral beliefs are recreated by each one of the photographs taken by the participants. The mobilization of their hybrid religious and cultural practices from Mexico to the United States break down the barriers and allow them to reconstruct and recreate them in a new environment. By analyzing these photographs, participants articulate their understanding of their culture, and, most importantly, they generate new ways of understanding the American cultural involvement in the lives of Latin American Indigenous Peoples.

Recreating Cultural Practices

The recreation of cultural practices is an inalienable right for any individual. To many Indigenous peoples, it is about “preserv[ation] and promot[ion of] culture, language, and religious beliefs and practices, and pass them on to children, grandchildren, and to their children and grandchildren on, forever” (Daniels). The recreation of cultural practices in different locations speaks of the individual effort to reclaim and maintain Indigenous knowledge and identity of the subject. For the participants of this project:

La sociedad moldea como las personas te miran y se refieren a ti (Participant 1).

[Society shapes the way in which you are perceived and talked about.]

And as a result the recreation of cultural practices reflects their experience of border crossing, hybridity, and cultural influence. It is the transnational and transborder migration and the crossing of ethnic, cultural, and regional borders in which they claim and reclaim their practices as Indigenous because of their knowledge and culture.

To the participants, the recreation of cultural practices are an example of what they consider daily activities, but through the analysis of the interviews and photographs, it can be argued that such activities are a “representation of Indigenous peoples by Indigenous peoples
that is about countering the dominant society’s image of Indigenous peoples, their lifestyles and belief systems” (Tuhiwai Smith 151). The acknowledgement of this resistance is developed through their understanding of their ancestral cultural beliefs and performances in a transnational and transborder setting.

Figure 6. Recreating Oaxacan Cultural Practices in Paso Robles, California.

As Figure 6 shows, the participants are in a process of continuing cultural development that is framed by the quality of border crossing and hybridity. As a result, their cultural performances reclaim Indigenous practices passed down from generations, which also creates in the Indigenous mind a conscious or unconscious self-indigenous representation and awareness of their culture and the cultural differences presented against the American political and social sphere. The photographs, as well as the interviews, serve as evidence of their cultural endurance.

Recreating cultural practices is about social and individual development and involvement of the culture:

A través del trabajo, la vivienda, y la convivencia con la familia (Participant 3).
It is the cultural involvement into their household and family unit that carries Indigenous knowledge that is reproduced. For example:

Durante los once primeros años recibíamos conocimiento oral por parte de nuestros padres ó nos exigían respeto por una ceremonia ó evento principal (Participant 3).

[During the first eleven years of my life we would earn oral knowledge imparted by our elders or they would at least ask for respect in ceremonies and relevant events.]

Traditions and cultural knowledge are passed down through the generations, and are constantly carried by the participants. They are a source of personal identification with their ethnicity and individual growth that can take place in different aspects of their lives. The recreation of cultural practices for some of the participants can be seen in food and food preparation, language or dialect acknowledgement, and Indigenous clothing. For example, the following photograph in Figure 7 developed by Participant 4 reflects the use of food as a base of cultural identity within the American borderline.

Figure 7. Puñete / Puñete
The display of the photograph in Figure 7 is representative of the State of Oaxaca culinary artistry. Participant 4 says:

Es un tamal tradicional de Oaxaca, de San Juan Comaltepec Choapan de Oaxacan, que no lleva ningún tipo de relleno (Participant 4).

[It is traditional Oaxacan tamale, of San Juan Comaltepec Choapan de Oaxacan, that doesn’t have filling.]

The preparation or “ritual” involved in reproducing an edible item reflects the incorporation of cultural practices that were born in Mexico and that find a way to be reproduced in another cultural boundary. The quality and ability of this transborder performance recognizes the use of particular efforts of Latin American Indigenous Peoples to reclaim their identity and close attachment to a philosophy of cultural awareness. By crossing the national and cultural borders of the United States, they are creating a hybrid state in which their culture is and will be performed based on ethnic identification and knowledge passed down by generations.

The recreation of cultural practices reflect beliefs that support the core identity of the participants through the use of items that convey practices unique to a hybrid culture able to transit through land and cultural borders.

Figure 8. Despensa / Food storage
The participants argue that the above picture:

Es un hábito, es una creencia que parte de nuestra historia y cultura.

[Is habit, it is a belief that was born from our history and culture.]

The display of food is used as a characteristic of the family’s well-being and economic means:

Cuando uno compra alimentos en Oaxaca no se guardan, si no a veces se muestran en la cocina como un atributo a que hay alimentos y sustención en los miembros de la familia y la familia (Participant 3).

[When we buy groceries in Oaxaca, these are not simply stored, but once in a while they are displayed on the kitchen counter as a quality of support for the family members and the family unit.]

The picture reflects a performance that conveys a cultural and personal meaning that fulfills the participants’ ethnic and Indigenous identity reproduction. The image contains a stationary reality that mirrors the life of the participants. “We search for some source of authentication of the event or even ourselves. It is within the photograph that we hope to find answers to our queries,” (Martin 6). It is clear to the participants that the Despensa photograph answers a personal query when it explains the cultural function and belief attach to it. It provides an example of cultural reaffirmation and performance for the participants who see the recreation of their cultural practices within a social sphere that differs from theirs. For the “viewers of images may look for authentication and the discovery of this intangible quality [of cultural reaffirmation] that causes us to imagine” (Martin 7). The audience connects with the photograph’s content because it is culturally significant to the authentic traditional Oaxacan practices. The work of the participants provides them with insight into these inner-cultural reflections. It is through the analysis of the
photographs that Indigenous practices represent a reality; it may be perceived a still image to the
viewers, but active to the conscious mind of the participants.

Race/Ethnicity and Multicultural Coexistence

Race and ethnicity in Latin America are “terms embedded in academic, popular and
political discourses that are themselves a constitutive part of academic, popular and political
relationships and practices” (Wade 5). These two terms, race and ethnicity, were “once widely
predicted to be on the decline, destined to be dissolved by political and economic modernization”
(Wade 3). But the search and understanding of racial and ethnic identities are becoming
increasingly significant to LAIP because important characteristics such as Indigenous identity,
cultural roots acceptance, as well as Indigenous organizations, are appearing and reforming their
lives and internal views of this group. With the introduction of cultural reclaiming and
reaffirmation, as well as cultural recognition, LAIP are consistently analyzing the conceived
notions of race/ethnicity and constructing a new vision for future generations. To the participants
racial/ethnic identifications are based on cultural performances that take place in different areas:

La lengua que hablo, que es el Español (Participant 2).

[The language I speak, which is Spanish.]

La creencia sagrada de la naturaleza y también [lo] que uno siempre lo va a llevar en la
sangre (Participant 3).

[Our sacred belief system about nature and what we always carry in our bloods.]

Compartimos un dialecto que se habla en esas regiones (Participant 1).

[We share with our dialect that is spoken in certain regions.]

Fiesta patronal (Participant 4).

Religious celebration.
To the participants, these terms connote a racialization or distinction within a foreign cultural sphere. Race/ethnicity is understood under a social frame that delineates a culture and marginal group. As Peter Wade says, “the word[s] have been employed to refer to groups of people as minorities within larger nation-states” (16). Even though the term race/ethnicity carries a stigma, the participants consider that cultural differences are relevant to make visible the variances between race/ethnic groups, and acknowledging such differences provide an understanding of the social parameters that delineate social behavior and preconceived notions about Latin American Indigenous Peoples.

The way in which race/ethnicity operates as a cultural example in the lives of LAIP contribute to the participants perception of multicultural coexistence and the diversity that exists in society. For the participants, multicultural coexistence extends and translates in terms of social recognition and safety in the American society:

Aquí es diferente, la sociedad es un poco más tolerable, mas justa, en la cual podemos confiar más en el sistema judicial y el Gobierno (Participant 1).

[Here is different, society is a bit more tolerable, fair, and we can trust more in the judicial system and the government.]

The perception of multicultural coexistence presented by the participants serves as an understanding of their migration process that was articulated in their analysis as a shift in Indigenous ethnic identity perception and translation in a transnational frame. This process speaks of perception by their understanding of migratory effects within a national and transnational sphere. And it speaks of “translation” because the view of Indigenous race/ethnicity as limited by social parameters within a nation view, for example the participants’ marginal experiences in the state of Oaxaca, are translated into social acceptance and economic betterment
through migration, either in a national setting such as mobilization from rural towns to Oaxaca City or in a transnational and transborder setting from Oaxaca to the United States. As a result, the essence and performance of their culture and ethnicity are reflected by their migratory experience in the “American” society, and their economic and social recognition is enhanced in their view.

Figure 9. Transnational Shift of Indigenous Ethnic Identity Perception

As shown in Figure 9, the participants articulate their transnational and transborder experience as a process that translates from previous occurrences in a national boundary to a transnational setting. The participants’ experiences in Oaxaca are understood as notions that perceive ethnicity as a limited cultural characteristic that is detrimental to Latin American Indigenous Peoples. The notion of ethnicity as perceived limited features in Oaxaca are translated in the “American” cultural sphere by the understanding of migration as the conductor for social and cultural acceptance, which also translate in their economic betterment within the United States. For example:

Estando aquí es diferente, aquí hay mayores oportunidades y prácticamente aquí la gente se mira igual, son iguales, eso es lo que percibo, todos tenemos las mismas oportunidades (Participant 1).
[Being here is different, here we find more opportunities and practically people look at you as if we all are equal, that is what I perceive, we all have the same opportunities.]

The recognition of this process provides meaningful ways that were expressed through the use of the photographs. For example, in the following picture, Participant 1 tries to convey an image of a male figure in Oaxaca. His performance reflects the way in which memory is used to recreate an ethnic identity unique to Oaxaca and its culture.

Figure 10. Baile de los viejitos de Oaxaca / Dance of the Oaxacan Elders

The photograph is a reflection of “El Baile de los viejitos de Oaxaca” ‘Dance of the Oaxacan Elders.’ This image serves as a process of reimagining and reproducing a cultural subject. El viejito is presented as:
Un hombre a veces ebrio y jovial, por lo general vestido de blanco, sentado en la vereda y con una radio en su mano (Participant 1).

[A man, sometimes drunk and jovial, usually dressed in white, sat on the sidewalk and with a radio on his hand.]

The participant’s parody of this subject conveys certain cultural longing, it produces an appreciation of what the Oaxacan Elder means to him, and copying his attire and mannerism can be understood as a need to reclaim an identity, he links his image and persona by his identification and performance with the culture and the elders. The act of remembering and imitating this subject, according to Participant 1, speaks of the group’s need to reconcile with the past and the ancestral figures. It seems that the influence exerted by the American culture changes the way in which a foreign hybrid culture is reproduced, this is the reason that reconciliation exists because the participants actively try to not negate their ancestral cultural activities learned and brought from Oaxaca, and even though the external influences (American cultural activities and lifestyle) become a powerful source of new identities and practices, the participants’ private sphere filters cultural activities that do not reclaim Oaxacan Indigenous views.

On the other hand, the following picture is an example of a hybrid representation of cultures in the work field and the way in which race/ethnicity delineates social roles for one of the participants. The photograph depicts one of the participants during his work shift and the photograph reflects the still quality of the work environment and the public cultural sphere:

Es un ejemplo de mi vida y desde dónde estoy con relación al ambiente y la sociedad (Participant 1).

[It exemplifies my life and from where I stand in relation to the environment and society.]
The photograph also illustrates the way in which social norms and parameters are met by LAIP by working on sites that are not necessarily economically abundant, but that speaks of ancestral cultural beliefs, notions of religiosity, or pastoral employment practices, such as the attachment to rural activities. For example:

El tipo de cultura es diferente en el aspecto del trabajo porque aquí uno encuentra la agricultura, uno cultiva la uva y en mi pueblo yo cultivaba el maíz, entonces es diferente porque los dos alimentos son muy diferentes y alteran la construcción de la cultura y la gente (Participant 2).

[The culture here is different, based on the type of work we do, which is mostly agricultural. Here we harvest grapes and in my town I used to harvest corn, so it is clearly different because both crops are really different and alter the way in which cultures are constructed and performed.]

![Figure 11. Alimentando caballos / Feeding Horses](image)
The view of Participant 2 elicits ideas that rural and agricultural work delineates the way in which cultures and individuals are formed. The above photograph depicts Participant 1 during a day of work. He says of the picture:

Estaba alimentando a los caballos cuando mi hijo me tomo una foto (Participant 1).

[I was feeding the horses when my son took a picture.]

In this still life representation the viewers are shown a work related depiction that hides notion of how race/ethnicity construct identities for the subjects of the project, but the participants, who became the photographers, challenge the viewers to rethink and dismantle assumptions about cultural performances and realities that affect this population. The position of the participants as photographers became of utmost importance because it provides them with a critical understanding of how racialized notions operate and outline multicultural coexistence. It is through this analysis that participants explore and reaffirm their identities as part of the “American” social and cultural milieu. The use of the interviews and photographs as narrative allows them to reproduce and reconstruct a cultural reaffirmation that starts with their cultural Indigenous insight in Oaxaca, then they are impacted by a transnational and transborder migration, and finally they are presented in the “American” society by and with their own cultural reclaiming that agrees with their views and from where they stand.
CHAPTER V:
THE CONCLUSION

“This solution cannot be achieved in idealistic terms. In order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as limiting situation which they can transform.”

Paulo Freire

Latin American Indigenous Peoples knowledge is a vivid and enriching characteristic that is overlooked in western society. This group endures hardships that threatens and deters their lifestyles. As a social and political group, they have less power and represent a culturally marginalized sector within their own national setting. At the same time, they struggle to dismantle social disparities within their national location. They translate everyday actions and speak of their ancestral roots in ways in which Indigenous identity is recognized. A new approach based on their native origins and worldview is emerging as a reaffirming quality of who they are through their Indigenous practices. The new perspective consists in acknowledging Latin American Indigenous Peoples native cosmology that includes areas of religion, language, customary dressing, food preparation, and rituals. These processes produce interesting outcomes such as national Indigenous organizations that advocate for local cultural recognition, and the acknowledgement of their cultural experiences.

To the participants in this project, it is a reflection of the ways in which they reconstruct their Indigenous identity. The interviews tell a life narrative that mirrors in written words their experiences. These experiences are a result of cultural reproduction that become an example of the participants’ repertoire or notions of what being and becoming an Indigenous person means. The participants’ words express an understanding of their point of view from their cultural
history; this perspective allows participants to remember their lives and practices within their native cultural and social sphere in Oaxaca. The ability to look from a foreign location back to native locations allows participants to delineate cultural traces that they believe are important to their ethnic group and to the representative notion of being Indigenous.

When observing their current lifestyles, from where they stand serves as a reclaiming point in their personal history that searches for interior cultural notions and repossession of their identity. This perspective allows them to see the differences that exist in the “American” cultural sphere. Most importantly, the process of reclaiming and recognition exists within the participants’ need to find and establish their culture in another social setting. The quality of their narratives was enriched with the addition of the photographs. To the participants, the photographs reflect an exact moment that could be translated as the capturing of their cultural repertoire. The images carry a sense of emotion and answer the need of remembering the native traditions, the soil, the air, and the idea of being present in Oaxaca. The combined use of the interviews and photographs document the participants’ lives as they continue to develop cultural responses to their interaction in society. It brings LAIP experiences to recognition and allows the participants the opportunity to record their presence and future evolution.

In my perspective, the challenge presented as a researcher is the way in which we normally think of being and becoming an Indigenous person and the practices that represent this quality. I believe that my research constructs the notion that Indigenous identity is a fluctuation of blood related ancestry and the formation of cultural reproductions. I have found that I too see myself reproducing cultural performances through food preparation, consumption, and behavior in my private sphere. I have clung to a state of remembering the “me” that reflects my culture and the images of my previous experiences in Lima, Peru. I have simply failed by clinging onto
the state of remembering, only to realize that it is the process of re-analyzing my past experiences and my current re-identification, and my cultural productions that convey who I am and who I have become. I have realized that the process in remembering who I was in Lima and who I am now embodies the hybridity of my culture and the cultural elements that make up my private sphere. My research has proved that through daily activities I have not only constructed my identity, but also made me conscious of my innate Indigenous identification and perspective, and such identity is continuously adapting and changing.

The work done on my research has only touched a superficial layer of the participants and the researcher’s cultural experiences and Indigenous identities. I believe that at a first glance the research project expresses the ways in which culture is recreated and reclaimed by the participants. It voices the views and opinions of a marginalized group found in the Americas, and it collects their experiences as a proof of their knowledge and socio-political recognition within a foreign sphere. But with further investigation and analysis we may conclude that cultural experiences truly reflect the “self” of each individual. The search for autonomy and cultural recognition lies within the person who does the searching, and it is this process that allows us to dismantle preconceived notions and permits for personal restructuring according to one’s own humanity and ethnic identity. The combined methods of interviews and photographs in this research explore the way in which the participants’ migration, defined as transnational and transborder, is an example of LAIP continue personal and group cultural reproduction and analysis. The methodology hopefully portrays the participants as the major driving force of this research; most importantly they have become researchers themselves by observing and analyzing their own personal insights, and developing a dialogue with the audience. My role as a researcher
and student proved to be that of mediator between the participants’ voices and the presentation of
the project.

I strongly believe that my senior research project serves to help us understand the socio-
political and cultural intricacies of different cultures through migration. The exploration of
transnational and transborder lives of immigrants conveys knowledge through the reproduction
of cultural practices and it also seeks to understand the ways in which Latin American
Indigenous Peoples preserve such knowledge. The quality of this project produces a hybrid
living narrative based on the support provided by the participants and the analysis of their ideas,
photographs, and descriptions; it was crafted by human desire for human desire. This desire is
searching for the qualities by which we understand each one of our experiences as defining
cultural elements of our persona. This research may assist others in comprehending the views
and positionality of the participants, and the many ways in which it functions to accept and
legitimize diverse ethnic and cultural manifestations that exist in each one of us. Our cultural
practices are reaffirmations of our lives and living cultures that are reproduced in new settings as
examples of our identities, identities that are created and recreated from where we are standing.
References


<http://www.csus.edu/indiv/o/obriene/art111/readings/JoseMartOurAmerica.rtf>


Appendix A: Sample Letter

Dear ,

My name is Nestor R. Veloz and I am a graduating senior at California Polytechnic State University, SLO in the department of Comparative Ethnic Studies. I am finishing my last four units at Cal Poly, and must complete a senior project thesis in order to graduate. I am conducting a research in paper in preserving the knowledge and cultural practices of Latin American Indigenous Peoples residing in the U.S. through interviews as narrative and photo documentary. Please feel free to contact me via cell phone at 805-679-6078. I am truly eager and I look forward to work with you. Thank you for your time and have a wonderful day.

Sincerely,

Nestor R. Veloz

Comparative Ethnic Studies Student

CAL POLY

805-769-6078
Apéndice A: Carta de muestra

Estimado(a) ,

Mi nombre es Nestor R. Veloz y soy un estudiante de la Universidad Estatal Politécnica de California en San Luis Obispo, en el departamento de Estudios Comparativos Étnicos. Estoy terminando mis últimas cuatro unidades en Cal Poly, y debo completar una tesis para poder graduarme. Estoy realizando una investigación sobre la preservación de los conocimientos y prácticas culturales de los pueblos indígenas latinoamericanos que residen en los EE.UU. a través de entrevistas en forma de narración y de un documental fotográfico. Por favor, no dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo a través del teléfono celular 805-679-6078. Estoy muy ansioso y espero trabajar con usted. Gracias por su tiempo y tenga un día maravilloso.

Sinceramente,

Nestor R. Veloz

Estudiante de Estudios Comparativos Étnicos

CAL POLY

805-769-6078
Appendix B: Informed Consent

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT ENTITLED: “From Where I am standing: Indigenous narrative and photo documentary”

A research project on Latin American Indigenous Peoples’ Representation in the United States is being conducted by Nestor R. Veloz in the Department of Comparative Ethnic Studies at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. The purpose of the study is to assess the practical and theoretical efficacy of a research methodology that combines tape-recorded interviews and subjects’ self-expression via photographic media as a source of preservation.

You are being asked to participate in a non-confidential research project in which you will take part in an interview that will last approximately sixty minutes about your experience in your country and in the United States. Transcriptions will be created after the interview in Spanish for you to review and make changes if necessary then translated into English and reviewed by the researcher’s advisor. You will also be given a camera for a period of four months, which you will use at your convenience to capture moments or daily activities that are important to you. You will select the pictures that you would like the project to display as well as those you personally want to keep. No expenses will be charged to you. The photographs and interview transcriptions will be used to construct the methodology of text and visual recordings as an efficient research process that conveys knowledge on constructing indigenous identity, indigenous culture, preserving indigenous culture in the United States and providing political agency. The final project will be reviewed by you in order to make suggestions, add or delete information since the photographs and transcriptions will not be able to be retrieved after being submitted.

Your participation, which includes the interview, interview reviews, photographs capturing, photograph selections and final review of the project, will take a total of approximately twenty hours, which will take place at different times and at your convenience. During the time of taking the photographs I will be available to answer questions or be of assistance. Please be aware that you are not required to participate in this research and you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty.

The possible risk associated with participation in this study includes the disclosure of some personal information that may be incriminatory, related to immigration or other laws. However, such information will be omitted from the transcription. The disclosure of information may have some personal reactions for the subject; if this happens, please be aware that you may contact the County Health Department in Paso Robles at (805) 237-3050 for assistance.

This is a non-confidential research project because your images will be included in the final project, although I will omit all of your private personal information from the transcription that may reveal your identity. During the interview you will state your name, and this will be coded by using the word “Interviewee” and a roman numeral I will provide which I will use as reference in the final project. This code will only be known by the interviewer and the interviewee. Please be aware that self-photographical representations may reveal partial or
complete information about your identity. Therefore, you should carefully review your photographs before deciding to submit them.

The potential benefits associated with the study as much as your experience and photographic depictions will support future studies about representation of Latin American Indigenous Peoples in the United States. Since this is a relatively new area of investigation, this type of information, as well as your participation will spur the development of similar studies.

If you have questions regarding this study or would like to be informed of the results when the study is completed, please feel free to contact Nestor R Veloz at (805) 769-6078. If you have questions or concerns regarding the manner in which the study is conducted, you may contact Dr. Steve Davis, Chair of the Cal Poly Human Subjects Committee, at (805) 756-2754, sdavis@calpoly.edu, or Dr. Susan Opava, Dean of Research and Graduate Programs, at (805) 756-1508, sopava@calpoly.edu.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research project as described, please indicate your agreement by signing below. Please keep one copy of this form for your reference, and thank you for your participation in this research.

_________________________________________________________________________  ________________
Signature of Volunteer                                      Date

_________________________________________________________________________  ________________
Signature of Researcher                                      Date
Apéndice B: Carta de Consentimiento


Un proyecto de investigación en el tema de Poblaciones Indígenas Latinoamericanas en los Estados Unidos está siendo conducido por Nestor R. Veloz en el Departamento de Estudios Comparativos Étnicos en Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. El propósito de éste estudio es de analizar la eficacia de una metodología que combina entrevistas personales grabadas y la auto-expresión de las participantes vía fotografía como medio para construir y preservar la presencia de indígenas Latinoamericanos en los Estados Unidos.

Se le pide participar en un proyecto de investigación no-confidencial, en que Usted participará en una entrevista que durará sesenta minutos aproximadamente sobre su experiencia en su país y en los Estados Unidos. Transcripciones se crearán después de la entrevista en español para que usted pueda revisar y hacer cambios si es necesario. Luego serán traducidos al inglés y revisados por el asesor del investigador. También le proveerá una cámara fotográfica por un período de cuatro meses, la cual va a utilizar por su conveniencia para capturar momentos o actividades diarias que son importantes para usted. Usted seleccionará las fotografías que le gustaría que el proyecto muestre, así como los que desea conservar. Ningún gasto se le cobrará a usted. Las fotografías y transcripciones de la entrevista se utilizará para construir la metodología de texto y grabaciones visuales como un proceso de investigación eficiente que transmite los conocimientos sobre la construcción de la identidad indígena, la cultura indígena, la preservación de la cultura indígena en los Estados Unidos y la formación de acción política. El proyecto final será revisado por usted con el fin de hacer sugerencias, añadir o borrar información, ya que las fotografías y transcripciones no podrán ser recuperadas después de ser sometidos.

Su participación, que incluye la entrevista, la revisión de la entrevista, la toma de fotografías, las selecciones de las fotografías y la revisión final del proyecto, tomará un total de aproximadamente veinte horas, que tendrá lugar en diferentes momentos y por su conveniencia. Durante el tiempo que tome las fotografías, estaré disponible para responder a preguntas o ser de ayuda. Tenga en cuenta que usted no está obligado a participar en esta investigación y que podría suspender su participación en cualquier momento sin penalización.

El posible riesgo asociado a la participación en éste estudio incluye la divulgación de cierta información personal que pueda ser información incriminatoria relacionada a la inmigración u otras leyes. Sin embargo, tal información se omitirá de la transcripción. La divulgación de información puede tener algunas reacciones personales para el entrevistado; si este fuera a suceder usted puede comunicarse con el Departamento de Salud del Condado en Paso Robles al (805) 237-3050 para obtener ayuda.

Éste es un proyecto de investigación no-confidencial porque sus imágenes se incluirán en el proyecto final, aunque se omitirá toda la información personal y privada de la transcripción que pudiese revelar su identidad. Durante la entrevista usted dará su nombre, y ésta información será codificada utilizando la palabra "Entrevistado" y un número romano el cual se le proveerá y el
cual se usará como referencia en el proyecto final. Este código será conocido únicamente por el entrevistador y el entrevistado. Tenga en cuenta que las representaciones fotográficas de sí mismo puede revelar información parcial o completa sobre su identidad; por lo tanto debe revisar las fotos cuidadosamente antes de decidir someterlas.

Los beneficios potenciales de la investigación, así como su experiencia personal y tu fotografías apoyarán futuros estudios sobre la representación de personas de raíces de indígenas de Latinoamericanos en Estados Unidos. Siendo esta área de investigación relativamente nueva, este tipo de información, así como su participación, impulsarán el desarrollo de estudios similares.

Si usted tiene preguntas sobre esta investigación o le gustaría estar informado sobre los resultados cuando esté completo, por favor contacte a Nestor R. Veloz al teléfono (805) 769-6078. Si tiene alguna pregunta o preocupación sobre la manera en que la investigación se llevó a cabo, usted puede contactar al Dr. Steve Davis, Presidente del Comité de Sujetos Humanos de Cal Poly al (805) 756-2754, sdavis@calpoly.edu o a la Dra. Susan Opava, Decana de Investigación y Programas Posgrados al (805) 756-1508, sopova@calpoly.edu.

Si usted está de acuerdo en participar voluntariamente en esta investigación, por favor firme en la línea inferior. Por favor mantenga una copia de esta forma como referencia, y gracias por su participación en ésta investigación.

______________________________  _______________________
Firma del Participante            Fecha

______________________________  _______________________
Firma del Investigador           Fecha
Appendix C: Release Agreement

Cal Poly – Comparative Ethnic Studies Department
Photographic Image and Audio Recording Release Agreement

I, __________________________________, also known in the research project “From Where I am Standing: Indigenous Narrative and Photo Documentary, as ___________________________ hereby release to California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo (University), and scholar Nestor R Veloz the use of my personal photographic image(s) described herein:

Digital audio recording of interview conducted by Nestor R Veloz or his agents, and my related materials generated during the course of the interview and project, and photographic images produced by the interviewee.

for use and reproduction by the University and Nestor R Veloz for representation, publicity, and/or promotional purposes which may include, but are not limited to:

Scholarly publications, exhibits, or the use on the web.

Such release is made without consideration beyond acknowledgement by the University of this release agreement.

This release agreement is intended to discharge the State of California, Trustees of the California State University, California Polytechnic State University, officers, employees, students and volunteers of each from and against any and all liability arising out of or connected in any way with my release of photographic image even though that liability may arise out of the negligence or carelessness on the part of persons or agencies mentioned above.

I understand that institutional data (including photographic image(s)) may be protected under state and/or federal privacy acts (including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), nevertheless, I agree to assume the risks of authorizing the University to use my image and release and hold harmless any of the persons or agencies mentioned above who (through negligence or carelessness) might otherwise be liable to me (or my heirs or assigns) for damages. It is further understood and agreed that this Photographic Image Release Agreement is to be binding on my heirs and assigns.

I have read this entire Release Agreement, I fully understand and agree to be legally bound by it. This is a release of your rights, read carefully before signing.

Releaser’s Signature  _________________________________________________________

Parent or Guardian if Releaser is under 18 years of age:
Print name  ________________________________________________________________
Signature  ________________________________________________________________
Apéndice C: Acuerdo de Emisión

Cal Poly – Departamento de Estudios Comparativo Étnicos

Acuerdo de Emisión de Imagen Fotográfica y de Grabación de Audio

I, ______________________________, también conocido en el proyecto “Desde Dónde Estoy: Narrativa Indígena y Documentario Fotográfico” como ____________________________ por este medio libero a California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo y a Nestor R Veloz (Universidad), el uso de mi imagen fotográfica personal (s) descrita a continuación:

Grabación digital de audio de entrevista conducida por Nestor R Veloz o sus agentes, y cualquier material generado durante el curso de la entrevista y el proyecto, así también como las imágenes fotográficas producidas por el entrevistado.

para el uso y reproducción por la Universidad y Nestor R Veloz para la representación, publicidad y / o la promoción que pueden incluir, pero no están limitados a:

Publicaciones, exhibiciones, o en el uso del internet.

Dicha liberación se hace sin tener en cuenta más allá del reconocimiento por parte de la Universidad de este acuerdo de liberación

Este acuerdo de liberación es para descargar el Estado de California, a los Administradores de la Universidad Estatal de California, Universidad Estatal de California Politécnica, funcionarios, empleados, estudiantes y voluntarios de responsabilidad de cada una de y contra cualquiera y de todas las que surjan de o conectados de alguna manera con mi liberación de la imagen fotográfica a pesar de que la responsabilidad pueda surgir como consecuencia de la negligencia o descuido por parte de personas u organismos mencionados anteriormente.

Entiendo que los datos institucionales (incluidos los de la imagen fotográfica (s)) puede estar protegido por el estado y / o leyes federales de privacidad (incluyendo pero sin limitarse a los Derechos Educativos de la Familia y la Ley de Privacidad), sin embargo, estoy de acuerdo en asumir los riesgos de autorizar la Universidad de usar mi imagen y liberar de responsabilidad alguna a las personas o entidades mencionadas anteriormente que (por la negligencia o descuido) de otro modo podría ser responsable de mí (o mis herederos o cesionarios) por daños y perjuicios. También queda entendido y acordado que esta liberación de imagen fotográfica de acuerdo debe ser vinculada para mis herederos y cesionarios.

He leído todo este Acuerdo de emisión, entiendo perfectamente y estoy de acuerdo legalmente vinculado a él. Esto es un emisión de sus derechos, lea cuidadosamente antes de firmar.

Firma del Emisor: _____________________________________________________________

Padre o Guardián si emisor es menor de 18 años
Escriba Nombre: _______________________________________________________________
Firma: _____________________________________________________________________

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