

Family, Work, and Migration:
Transborder Networking among Tlapanecs from *La Montaña*

By

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Abstract

Within the last decade, members of indigenous Tlapanec households in Guerrero, Mexico have increasingly participated in network migration between *La Montaña* and the United States for job opportunities. Social networking and family-based social capital are highly important for Tlapanecs in Guerrero. For non-English speaking Tlapanecs who migrate to the US, networking among family members remains highly important. Through participant observation and bibliographic research conducted during 2008, this thesis examines household networking strategies in the sending community and in migration to the US to explore some of the potential effects of migration on family ties among Tlapanecs in *La Montaña*. While the new ties created abroad, individual agency, the length of time away, and other circumstantial variations may lead to less locally available networking opportunities, migration often serves as a form of socio-economic mobility for households in the sending community, and may serve as a form of development for the community as a whole.

Acknowledgements

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Municipal Iliatenco: Iliatenco, Portozuelo del Clarín, Cruz Tomáhuac, and Loma de Cuapinole

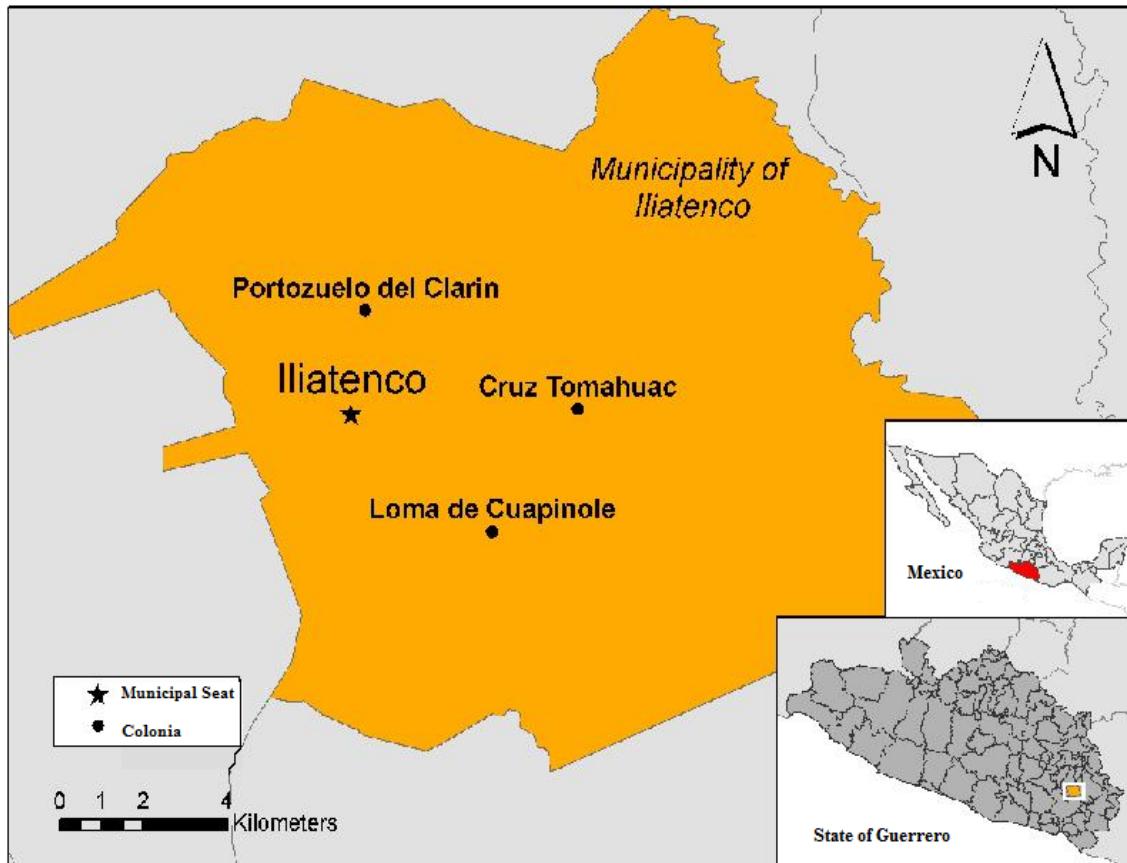


Figure 1 Lisa Rausch. "Municipal Iliatenco: Iliatenco, Portozuelo del Clarín, Cruz Tomáhuac, and Loma de Cuapinole." (Unpublished Map) Sept. 12, 2008.

La Montaña and its Municipalities

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1.- Xochihuehuetlán | 11.- Xalpatláhuac |
| 2.- Huamuxtitlán | 12.- Metlatónoc |
| 3.- Cualac | 13.- Atlamajalcingo del Monte |
| 4.- Alpoyeca | 14.- Malinaltepec |
| 5.- Tlalixtaquilla de Maldonado | 15.- Tlacoapa |
| 6.- Alcozauca de Guerrero | 16.- Acatepec |
| 7.- Tlapa de Comonfort | 17.- Zapotitlán Tablas |
| 8.- Olinalá | 18.- Cochoapa el Grande |
| 9.- Atlixac | 19.- Iliatenco |
| 10.- Copanatoyac | |

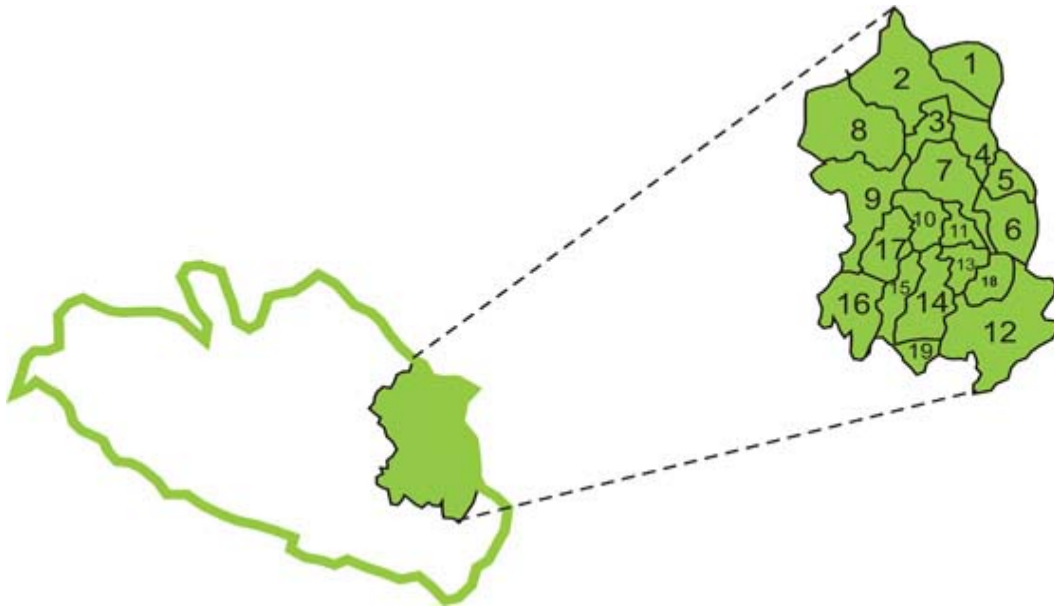


Figure 2 From “Región de la Montaña.” [Guerreroturistico.com](http://www.guerreroturistico.com) (2006) Accessed on November 8, 2008.
http://www.guerreroturistico.com/esp/pagina/z_45_Regiones_del_Estado_de_Guerrero.php.

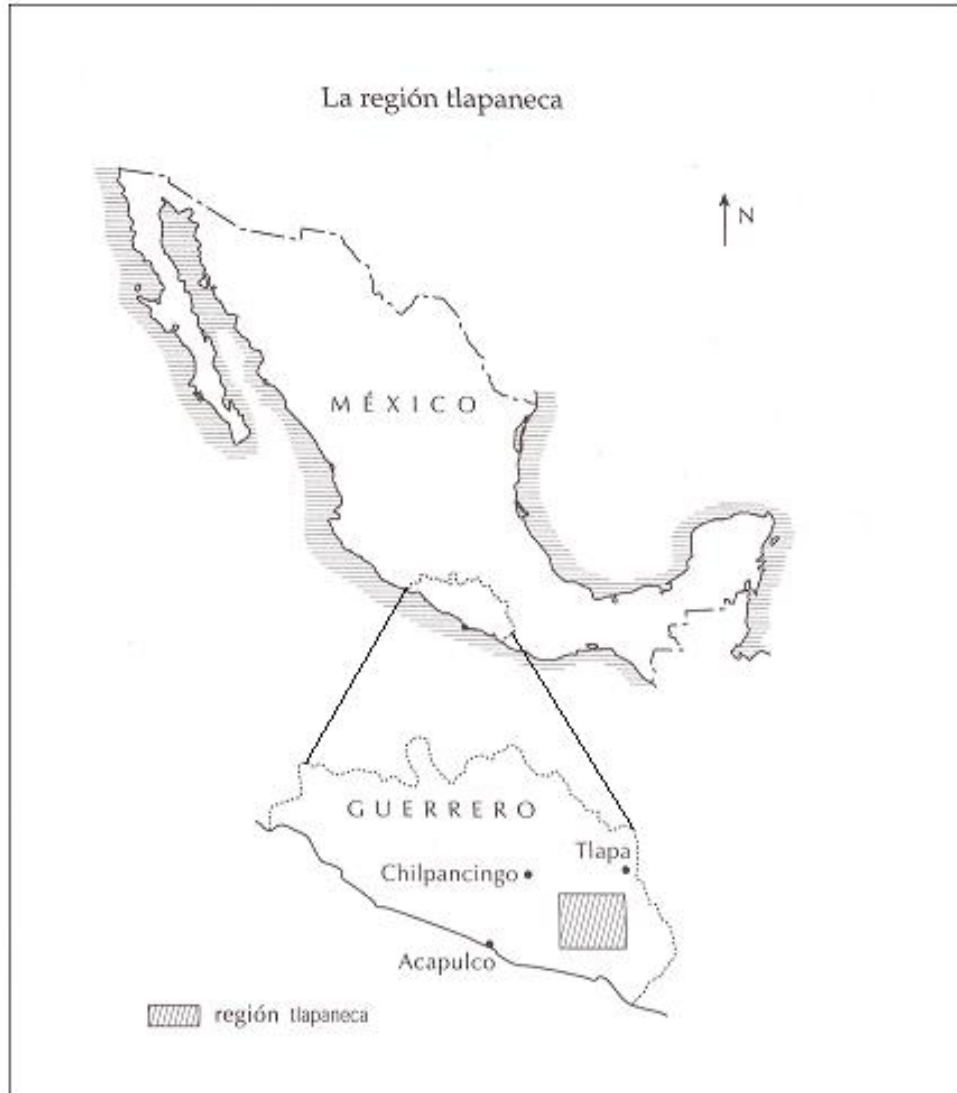


Figure 3 From Danièle Dehouve. [Ensayo de geopolítica indígena: los municipios tlapanecos](#) (México: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 2001) 9.

Table of Contents

Title Page	1
Acceptance Page	2
Abstract.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
Table of Contents.....	8
Figures.....	9
Introduction.....	10
Chapter One: History, Literature, and Methodology.....	16
Literature Review.....	20
Methodology.....	33
Chapter Two: Tlapanecs in the Past and Present.....	36
Territory and Conflict.....	40
Tlapanecs as Part of Rural Mexico.....	43
Chapter Three: Introduction to Iliatenco the <i>cabecera</i>	50
Municipal Iliatenco.....	50
The Old and the New.....	54
Chapter Four: Twenty Household Surveys.....	61
Characteristics of the Surveyed Population.....	61
The Family and Migration.....	65
Chapter 5: Iliatenco in Lawrence?.....	84
A Survey of Tlapanec Households in Lawrence, KS.....	89
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	101
Bibliography.....	108
Glossary of Terms.....	112
Appendix A Lawrence, KS Interview and Surveys.....	114
Appendix B Iliatenco Interviews.....	115
Appendix C Lawrence Information Statement (Translated).....	117
Appendix D Lawrence, KS Household Survey (Translated).....	118
Appendix E Iliatenco Information Sheet (Translated).....	121
Appendix F Iliatenco Household Surveys.....	122
Appendix G Letters from Abel Barrera to Iliatenco.....	124
Appendix H Human Subjects Committee Approval Letter.....	126

Figures

Figure 1-Municipal Iliatenco (Map by Lisa Rausch).....	5
Figure 2-Municipalities in <i>La Montaña</i> (Map from Guerrerotouristico.com).....	6
Figure 3-Tlapanec Region of Guerrero (Map in Danièle Dehouve).....	7
Figure 4-The <i>ayuntamiento</i> or Municipal Hall of Iliatenco (Photo by David López)..	51
Figure 5-Iliatenco from northeast (Photo by author).....	54
Figure 6-Tlapanec women (Photos by author).....	55
Figure 7-DVD and <i>chocomil</i> vendors (Photo by David López).....	56
Figure 8- Taxistas in Iliatenco (Photo by David López).....	59
Figure 9-“Age at Migration and Gender for 42 People” (Table by author).....	64
Figure 10-“Number and Estimated Year of Departure” (Table by author).....	64
Figure 11- The <i>caseta</i> (Photo by David López).....	75
Figure 12- General store in Iliatenco (Photo by David López).....	79
Figure 13- “Distribution of Mexican States of Origin” (Illustration by author).....	87
Figure 14- “Migration at Stage of Life” (Table by author).....	90
Figure 15- “Occupations of 28 Tlapanec Migrants” (Chart by author).....	91

Introduction

Indigenous people in Mexico who leave their communities to improve their living situation tend to form migration patterns. Various names have been used to describe these self-organizing and unplanned patterns. Arturo Escobar prefers the term “meshwork migration.” He considers them to be void of uniformity and “determined by the degree of connectivity that enables them to become self-sustaining” in a receiving community.¹ Patterns of movement in migration must therefore be understood as highly circumstantial and unpredictable. Attention to the phenomenon of network migration is integral to the study of transnational movement.

This study is a multidisciplinary examination of network migration for economic reasons between the region of *La Montaña*, Guerrero and the United States with particular focus on sending households in the Tlapanec municipality of Iliatenco, Guerrero and receiving households in Lawrence, KS. Tlapanec migrants and their non-migrant family members back home are the focus. The term “Tlapanec” generally refers to a group of people in the *Montaña* region of Guerrero who share a common history, language, and ethnicity. This thesis shows that family ties are highly valued among Tlapanecs when migrating and in their source communities. Though Tlapanecs tend to marry and cohabitate within ethnic limits at home and when migrating, evidence suggests that family ties are as highly valued by Tlapanecs as are ethnic relations. Moreover, networking is just as important for Tlapanecs’ everyday survival in Guerrero as it is for Tlapanecs’ wellbeing when they migrate. Just as the family (or household) is often the means through which various important resources are accessed in *La Moñtana*, Tlapanecs

¹ Arturo Escobar 2003: 610-11 as cited by Lynn Stephen. *Transborder Lives: Indigenous Oaxacans in Mexico, California, and Oregon* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007) 19.

abroad find jobs, apartments, and other resources and services via family connections.

The fact that Tlapanecs are a modern indigenous group makes them a unique population in a very diverse country.

The apparent continuity in social networking on both sides of the border is complicated by distance, undocumented status, language and cultural barriers, and other intangible factors. Tlapanecs who travel to the US often recreate their households, with political relationships (such as marriage or godparents) and extended family. They may or may not choose to support their household and family back home. Their goals in migration may or may not include contributing to their immediate family members (including children) who live in Guerrero. Thus, this thesis addresses the question: How does network migration to the US among Tlapanecs affect their participation in the traditional system of family networking or communalism back home? The inverse of this question is also of interest: How does traditional communalism among Tlapanecs affect their approach to migration? In the next chapter I provide a brief historical overview US-Mexico migration, a literature review, and the methodology used for this study.

Undocumented Humans

The single most important factor that hinders the integration of Mexican immigrants or migrants into US society may be the continued use of the statuses “legal” and “illegal” to describe newcomers to the US. An important aspect of the reality of “illegal” immigrants who work in the US is an imbalance of power. An undocumented immigrant in the United States is vulnerable living in a community that both looks askance at and needs his or her labor. This reality shapes that migrant’s experience in a

“contradictory framework of simultaneous surveillance and invisibility.”² For many Hispanics in the US, “hierarchies of economic, legal and cultural power” are created and perpetuated by the rhetoric of undocumented and documented statuses.³

It is not the goal of this thesis to take a stance for or against immigration (or migration), documented or undocumented. The reality enveloping immigration is much too complicated to allow for polarized views. An estimated 40% of some 12 million undocumented immigrants in the US are Mexicans. The notion that most undocumented immigrants are hired and pay taxes (when their employers abide by the law),⁴ but are frequently considered criminals due to their undocumented status creates a problem that deserves scholarly attention. According to Ina Rosenthal Urey, “United States policy on migration, especially migration from Mexico, must reflect not only the interests of local and regional constituencies, but also those of foreign policy.”⁵ From the perspective of a person who has lived in Kansas most of his life, there seems to be a general lack of knowledge in Kansas communities about what Mexican migrants go through in order to make an adequate living. There are physical, cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, and legal barriers separating a majority of Mexican immigrants from Anglos in the US. Therefore, one goal of this thesis is to humanize the men, women and children who migrate from Mexico to the United States. I will do this by focusing on the perspectives of Tlapanecs in Guerrero and the US.

² Stephen 145.

³ Ibid. 176.

⁴Meissner made this statement in her lecture. The IRCA of 1986 made employers require documentation from their employees. However, employers are not responsible for verifying the documentation. See Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo. “The History of Mexican Undocumented Settlement in the United States.” Challenging Fronteras: Structuring Latina and Latino Lives in the U.S. : an Anthology of Readings. (New York: Routledge, 1997) 120.

⁵ Ina Rosenthal-Urey. Migrants and Stay-At-Homes: A Comparative Study of Rural Migration from Michoacán, Mexico (Monograph Series 5. San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 1982) 1.

Chapters Overview

In Chapter One, I begin with a brief description of historical and macro-economic factors in US-Mexican migration. I then review the literature surrounding this complicated subject. In my discussion I include case studies and scholarly research about network migration, indigenous Mexican migration, receiving communities in Kansas, and Tlapanecs in the Guerrero region of La Montaña to clarify how this thesis fits into the realm of knowledge about indigenous Mexican migration to the US.

Chapter Two, “Tlapanecs in the Past and Present,” seeks to introduce Tlapanecs in Guerrero. Using existing research on Tlapanecs, I examine and characterize the context in which Tlapanec traditions and values, population growth, and economic and political marginalization intersect. In doing this, I show that the decision to migrate has become an increasingly common economic strategy among Tlapanecs.

In Chapter Three, “Introduction to Iliatenco,” I use my own observations, including pictures and some interview data, to describe the capital of Iliatenco, the newest municipality in Guerrero. The principle objective of this chapter is to show how Iliatenco has changed in recent decades. Moreover, in light of the 2005 creation of the municipality, *iliatenses* (people from Iliatenco) have gained a sense of autonomy, and are thus playing a major role in shaping their town’s development.

The family and work are integrally related components of life in Iliatenco. In Chapter Four, “Twenty Household Surveys: The Family, Work, and Migration,” I combine data from 20 household surveys I conducted in four Iliatenco communities and additional interviews and observations to contend that family-oriented cooperation has been and remains an important economic strategy among *iliatenses* throughout the

municipality. Because of the family-work connection, migration is in many ways a household or family level economic strategy. When migrating, *iliatenses* have an ideal which is based on supporting the family at home, and coming back. Many *iliatenses* realize this ideal when they return home, remit money, and/or invest in their community with wages earned in the US. However, family ties may also be tested or strained in migration when migrants fail to realize this ideal.

Chapter Five, “Iliatenco in Lawrence?” begins with some background on Mexican migration in Lawrence. I argue that many Mexican migrants come to Lawrence to make a living because they are able to gain employment through family connections. Much like in *La Montaña*, *iliatenses* who come to Lawrence must rely on family connections to find work and a place to live. But there are potentially profound changes affecting their dedication to their Mexican home. Many have children in the US, and a few don’t want to go home. Because Tlapanecs in Lawrence practice family-based cooperation to access resources, they are often part of an expansion in the tradition of networking when they establish new ties with extended family and marriage, and their communication with family back home may or may not continue.

In Chapter Six I conclude that the nature of undocumented migration in the US tends to perpetuate the need for networking and cooperation during transborder movement among Tlapanecs. Moreover, family networking has been a practice among Tlapanecs for countless generations, and therefore won’t change very quickly as a practiced value. When Tlapanecs migrate they extend their ties, often beyond the nuclear family, to cousins or spouses.

The effects of migration to the US on networking are difficult to observe in the short time Tlapanecs have been coming to Lawrence, KS. Every situation is unique. Migration has the potential to benefit the sending community when people remit ideas or money, or when they return. Whether migrants return is an important variable in how the sending community is affected. Relationships are sustained, as is the population. In the long run, migration may challenge cooperation and networking in the sending community if the population decreases due to outbound movement.

Chapter One: History, Literature, and Methodology

This chapter begins with a brief historical overview of some significant economic factors that affect migration between Mexico and the United States. A review of the literature about network migration and Mexican indigenous migration will follow. I then discuss my methodology in this thesis.

The Macro-context of Mexican Indigenous Migration to the US

Between the 1900s and 1930, the railroad industries in both the US and Mexico had attracted one million Mexican migrants to the US. Since the 1940s agriculture has been a common denominator in the large-scale changes on each side of the US-Mexico border that affected the households of sending communities. From 1942 to 1964 some 4 to 5 million mostly Mexican men traveled to the US to become *braceros*, or guest workers. Strong family ties and poor living conditions in Mexico made seasonal agricultural work desirable to Mexican men. Once the harvest season was over in the US, they could return home to their wives and children.

Beginning in the mid-1960s growth and development characterized by “rapid-paced urbanization and industrialization” in Mexico undermined small-scale and subsistence agriculture.⁶ A State endeavor in Mexico to reduce agricultural imports entailed a focus on larger, irrigation crops; so less investment was made in the small-plot, rain-fed agriculture of eleven states. Many poor farm workers who had already been migrating to large-scale farms elsewhere in Mexico found themselves displaced. Where would the mostly male laborers who had worked these plots go? This, explains Lourdes Arizpe, is how “the production of food [in Mexico] turned into the production of

⁶ Hondagneu-Sotelo 122.

migrants.”⁷ *Ejido* land that had been designated as farming plots for the community was therefore of less interest to small-scale farmers who couldn’t afford to maintain crops. Business interests began to acquire the land, making even less terrain available. Indigenous rural communities reacted by shifting away from maize agriculture to alfalfa or no agriculture at all. Some invested in craft production. In rural areas of Mexico, the high underemployment, low income, and lack of opportunities to supplement revenue during the 1970s were, as they had been in the late 1800s and early 1900s, exacerbated by a rising cost of living. From 1973 to 1975, prices of basic commodities including food products went up by 37.7% due to a national oil crisis.⁸ Less land available to growing populations characterized a desperate context in rural Mexico.

The dearth of prospects for making a living in many parts of rural Mexico continues to this day. Melinda Burns gives a concise summary of the economic relationship between the U.S. and Mexico and how, especially since WWII and in light of free trade, migration of Mixtecs from Oaxaca has been encouraged by macro-level change.

The Mixtecs form part of a de facto border exchange, one in which the U.S. exports cheap corn to Mexico and imports Mexican corn farmers to labor in the fields of California (and elsewhere). Nearly two decades of free trade have deepened the poverty and unemployment in Mexico’s countryside, studies show. Mexico’s three million peasants were simply outgunned by 75,000 farmers in Iowa who—with the help of ample rain, state-of-the-art technology, and millions of dollars in government subsidies—could produce twice as much corn at half the price.⁹

⁷Lourdes Arizpe S. “The Rural Exodus in Mexico and Mexican Migration to the United States.” Peter G. Brown and Henry Shue, eds. The Border That Joins: Mexican Migrants and U.S. Responsibility. (Maryland studies in public philosophy. Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1983) 11.

⁸ Rosenthal-Urey 37.

⁹ Melinda Burns. “The Price of Corn.” (Santa Barbara, CA: Newspress. <http://www.sbcoast.com/mixtec/priceofcorn100304.html>. Accessed Dec. 13, 2004) as cited by Stephen (2007) 123.

The land in many rural settings has lost its value to indigenous farmers. While subsistence and small-scale agriculture diminished in rural Mexico, commercial production of fruits and vegetables has continued to expand in northern Mexico to the point that it has become incorporated into production in the U.S. This economy, driven by US consumer demand, provided a new labor market for rural Mexicans in the 1960s, 70s and 80s.¹⁰ An unknown number of rural Mexicans at this time were already accustomed to migrating within their country to either private farms or urban centers for work. While indigenous people traditionally migrated within Mexico to work for private farms or in urban areas, indigenous Mexican migrants came to the US in large numbers with the *Bracero* program and increasingly in the 1980s.¹¹

New Trends in Mexican Movement in the US

Immigration from Mexico to the US since the 1990s differs from previous inbound movement. An unprecedented amount of foreign-born newcomers, many of which are Mexican nationals, have been moving to states such as Kansas, Iowa, Colorado, Missouri, Georgia and North Carolina. While these states have received migrants for several decades or longer, it used to be that migration flowed mostly into more highly populated, traditional receiving areas such as New York, Los Angeles, Boston, or Chicago.

Doris M. Meissner of the Migration Policy Institute emphasizes the role that immigration to the US has played in the national economy since the 1980s. Immigrants are vital to the economy because the US-born population does not supply sufficient low-

¹⁰ Stephen 131.

¹¹ Jonathan Fox and Gaspar Rivera-Salgado. *Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States*. (La Jolla, Calif: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, UCSD/Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, UCSD, 2004) 2.

skilled laborers. Eleven out of fifteen of the fastest-growing jobs in this country are in the low-skilled category.¹² Hondagneu-Sotelo refers to the increased demand for labor that Mexicans respond to as an “economic restructuring” in which “immigrant labor from seasonal, large-scale agricultural firms” decreases and there are more jobs in “year-round, urban-based, relatively small or medium-sized firms in services, construction, and light industry.” The meatpacking and processing industry also fits into the current context, especially in the Midwest. The reality of these businesses and companies in the service sector, especially since the late 1960s, is one of uncertainty and competition. One strategy in confronting “competitive pressures” is the hiring of Mexican undocumented workers.¹³

In order to understand Mexican migration from rural, indigenous areas today it is necessary to take certain large scale economic factors into consideration. For well over a century, poverty has been part of an adverse climate for indigenous Mexicans. At the same time, local efforts to cope with poverty have been unsuccessful. Migration has given people from rural, indigenous areas in Mexico a way to improve their lives. A century ago the railroad industry exponentially increased migrant employment throughout the US. Around WWII, the railroad still provided labor for many Mexican citizens, but millions also worked in agriculture. Today, low-skilled jobs in the US continue to offer economic opportunities to members of indigenous and *mestizo* sending communities in Mexico.

¹² Doris M. Meissner “Immigration and America’s Future: Where Are We Going? Where Should We Be Going?” (The 2008 Self Graduate Fellowship Symposium Lecture at Kansas University, March 31, 2008).

¹³ Hondagneu-Sotelo 121.

Literature Review

In many rural indigenous areas in Mexico people have become accustomed to traveling internationally for long periods of time. Anthropologist Jeffrey Cohen refers to this norm as the “culture of migration.” According to Cohen, “migration is one response among many to patterns and processes that link households and rural communities to global labor markets, flow of goods and personal demands.”¹⁴ Douglas Massey finds that migration is “deeply engrained into the repertoire of people’s behavior, and values associated with migration become part of the community’s values.”¹⁵ At the same time, migration is a unique experience for everyone.¹⁶ The “culture of migration” should thus not be considered homogenous for all migrants or all Mexicans. Rather, it can be understood as a strategy often used to cope with economic adversity on the local level in the sending community, yet enveloped by a reality that is transnational.

An important component of transnational migration is networking. Tamar Diana Wilson illustrates five interconnected principles of how transnational migration networks function. Based on her research on Mexican migration between the state of Jalisco, Mexico and various points in the US, Wilson finds that: **1.** Networks are multi-local. Each sending area has multiple geographical destinations, and the most important determining variable is based on labor market conditions. **2.** The work sites and work types are the “anchoring points” of networks. The word of mouth exchange of information between the first immigrants in a job or job field and those to come is vital to determining whether those immigrants will find employment. **3.** “Weak ties,” or

¹⁴ Jeffrey H. Cohen The Culture of Migration in Southern Mexico (Austin: U. of Texas Press, 2004) 1-11.

¹⁵ Douglas S. Massey. Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium. (International studies in demography. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998) as cited by Cohen 5-6.

¹⁶ Valerie Marie Mendoza The Creation of a Mexican Immigrant Community in Kansas City, 1890-1930 (Thesis (Ph. D. in History)--University of California, Berkeley, 1997, 1997) vii.

relationships based on acquaintance, are important factors in network expansion. It is through weak ties that members of more dense networks based on family learn about job opportunities. **4.** Social capital, or the value of a strong or weak connection, in the context of network migration is based on the “aid extended, information exchanged, and recruitment to jobs” among network members. **5.** The tendency of people with a common place of origin to come together in one geographic area and workplace is more frequently due to the social capital of strong family ties as opposed to weak ethnic or friendship based relations.¹⁷

Each of Wilson’s principles is applicable to this thesis’ focus on networking between the region of *La Montaña* in Guerrero, Mexico and Lawrence, KS. The latter is one out of many receiving communities for Tlapanecs. Members of communities in and around Iliatenco, Guerrero are plugged into networks that span across multiple locations in Kansas and other states, including North Carolina, New York, Missouri, Texas, California and Oregon. For Tlapanec networks in various regions, it is the workplace that serves as the anchor to a certain geographic area. Most Tlapanecs in Kansas, for example, are employed in what can be broadly defined as services in small businesses such as restaurants, construction companies, farms, and landscaping. Many are also involved in other categories of work such as meatpacking and processing and domestic service. The presence of a cluster of Tlapanecs in Lawrence is indicative of a demand for these types of labor.

Congruent with Wilson’s third and fourth principles, the first Tlapanec-speaking people who came to Lawrence had probably found out about local work opportunities

¹⁷ Tamar Diana Wilson. “Weak ties, strong ties: Network principles in Mexican migration.” Human Organization. (Washington: Winter 1998, 57:4) 394-5.

through weak social ties, and subsequently used the information to network among family members and/or other Tlapanecs with whom they could become family members through marriage. I interviewed one member from each of eight different Tlapanec households in Lawrence to find that every one of nearly thirty adults only resided with people to whom they were related. Moreover, I didn't observe any instance in which Tlapanecs resided with non-Tlapanecs. In the source communities I visited, however, I observed several instances of people marrying outside of ethnic boundaries. In such cases, family remained a more common denominator in households I visited than did ethnicity. While this thesis is fundamentally based on members of a particular ethnic group, it centers on Tlapanecs' decision to prioritize the family in living patterns. The term household is thus used to describe not only the domicile that a group of people shares, but also a familial unit.

Many scholars argue that the decision to migrate is made by the household or the family, and not the individual.¹⁸ I argue that, based on the value of strong social ties among Tlapanecs, there is very often some amount of negotiation between the individual and his or her household in the decision to migrate. Important factors that affect the decision to migrate are the expenses of sending a migrant and the costs of sustaining a household in his or her absence. These are two of the many reasons why a member of a sending household may not be able to make the individual decision to leave. He or she may need money from other members of the household, and may not be able to leave if there aren't enough people left behind to support the home.

¹⁸ Cohen 31; Mendoza 200-1; and Rosenthal-Urey v.

¹⁸ Stephen 34 v.

As Rosenthal-Urey has pointed out, a minimum level of income is required to send a migrant.¹⁹ Mendoza finds that people from Tangancícuaro, Michoacán who traveled to Kansas in the first three decades of the 1900s were from the socioeconomic middle and lower middle class sectors of their locales since the poorest weren't able to afford the trip.²⁰ This status grouping should be understood as relative to Mexico and not likened to the respective sectors in the U.S. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that migration is an investment.

Research on network migration in the US is usually based on at least one foreign sending, or source community and at least one receiving or destination community in the US. In The Transnational Villagers,²¹ Peggy Levitt examines daily life in a “transnational village,” or a system of political, religious, and familial networks between Miraflores (Dominican Republic) and Boston, Massachusetts (US). The particular connection between the two places dates back to the 1960s and the *miraflorero* population numbers several thousand in the receiving community. *Mirafloreros* in Boston have ownership of many businesses and participate in several social, religious and political organizations with memberships in both places. In three years of ethnographic fieldwork in and several follow-up visits to Boston and Miraflores thereafter, Levitt interviewed hundreds of migrant and non-migrant members of networks.

The social ties that are part of transnational migration affect non-migrants in the sending community. Levitt maintains that migration is not a prerequisite to membership in a transnational network, because many non-migrants receive social remittances.

“Social remittances” are the “ideas, behaviors, and social capital that flow from receiving

¹⁹ Rosenthal-Urey v-vi.

²⁰ Mendoza 37.

²¹ Berkeley: University of California Press 2001.

to sending communities.” The influence of social remittances on non-migrants in the sending community makes non-migrants and their households a part of transnational networks too. Moreover, Levitt posits, “many migrants still use their sending community as the reference group against which they gauge their status.”²²

The same is true for Tlapanecs. I interviewed several people in Iliatenco, Guerrero who had washed dishes or cooked in the US, to be able to invest in their own businesses back home. Unlike the *mirafloreros* whom Levitt came to know, the Tlapanecs in this thesis have been in the US for short periods of time, and have not begun to establish businesses or religious organizations in the US (to my knowledge). However, social remittances are commonplace in Iliatenco. It is through social remittances received in Iliatenco that the municipality’s members have become part of the culture of migration. In other words, migration is now part of how people in Iliatenco think about the world, their ethos.

Because this work is based on a group of people who are unified by a common language and past, and have only recently begun migrating to the United States on a large scale, we can learn a great deal about how they migrate by investigating the sending community. Cohen argues that ethnographic research on indigenous migration from rural Oaxaca, Mexico is most valuable in the source community. Evidence he collected in households in twelve different indigenous sending communities in Oaxaca between the late 1990s and the beginning of this century yields a sharp distinction between most indigenous Mixtec migrants and *norteños*. For Mixtecs, ties to the sending community “are a force that centers the migrant and gives him hope even when he is away. Unlike *norteños*, Mixtecs are not chasing dollars; rather they are looking homeward, with a

²² Levitt 11.

nostalgia that keeps them connected.”²³ For *norteños*, on the other hand, the path from the sending community leads to the greatest economic pull, and various forces—not just economic ones—compel *norteños* to the US, both physically and culturally.

With this distinction Cohen simultaneously suggests that there are two ways of viewing migration *and* that there are two approaches to migration among members of a given sending community. There are some cases in which *norteños*, or “dislocated migrants” exist. These are the people who are more likely to call the US home, and leave Oaxaca behind. However, Cohen argues, “more often I meet *gente humilde* (humble folk)—fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters who face a changing world with grace and dignity as they manage the need for migration against other demands in an effort to maintain family, home, and community.”²⁴

Cohen’s distinction considers the sending community the true home for indigenous Mexicans. In this thesis, most Tlapanecs maintain strong ties to their home communities, and frequently return from the US. Even though this might not be true for all Tlapanecs, and just because they return home does not mean that they are not influenced, I still view the network migration in this thesis as an endeavor anchored in the sending community. Furthermore, this study focuses on economically motivated migration. *Iliatenses* may migrate for dozens of reasons, but the evidence I collected in Lawrence and Iliatenco supports the notion that those who migrate between the two places tend to do so in order to gain access to resources otherwise unattainable.

While Cohen vies to demonstrate the importance of social ties in the sending community, Nina Glick Schiller observes that “those persons, who have migrated from

²³ Cohen 3.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 8.

one nation-state to another, live their lives across borders, participating simultaneously in social relations that embed them in more than one nation-state.”²⁵ However, the anthropological study of migration should arguably be based on the sending community household—especially for indigenous Mexicans. In The Culture of Migration, Cohen concludes that:

In a sense, I advocate a return to a traditional kind of ethnography, which recognizes that space and place matter—but with a new conceptualization of space and place that is not constrained by geography. Understanding migration in rural Oaxaca begins by understanding its households and communities. To jump to the United States is to lose that foundation and to miss the profound forces that frame and organize the very processes we hope to explain.²⁶

In contrast, Lynn Stephen portrays indigenous Oaxacan migrants in both the sending and receiving communities in Transborder Lives: Indigenous Oaxacans in Mexico, California, and Oregon, emphasizing the importance of avoiding dichotomies when studying migration.²⁷ Of indigenous Mexicans migrants, Stephen writes that, “the borders they cross are ethnic, class, cultural, colonial, and state borders within Mexico as well as at the U.S.-Mexico border and in different regions of the United States.” Stephen therefore chooses the term “transborder” instead of “transnational.”²⁸ By tying multiple issues to a larger context, Stephen considers rights and power important concerns for indigenous Mexicans on both sides of the border.

Indigenous peoples in Mexico and the United States have been involved in an ongoing struggle, first, to establish legitimate forms of cultural citizenship and, second, to move some parts of their cultural citizenship into the arena of legal citizenship as formal rights defined in the constitutions and legal codes of specific nations and international governing bodies. Transborder indigenous migrants have

²⁵ Nina Glick Schiller, “The Centrality of Ethnography in the Study of Transnational Migration: Seeing the Wetlands Instead of the Swamp” in Nancy Foner. American Arrivals: Anthropology Engages the New Immigration. School of American Research advanced seminar series. (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2003), as cited by Stephen (2007) 19.

²⁶ Cohen 151.

²⁷ Stephen 315.

²⁸ Ibid. 6.

been involved in similar processes, often working within two national contexts to expand their rights.²⁹

The emphasis on formal organization and political rights among indigenous migrants is not unique to Stephen's work. Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States edited by Jonathan Fox and Gaspar Rivera-Salgado, is a 500 page compilation of 20 chapters. Each chapter focuses on political, economic, and/or social mobilization of Mexican indigenous migrant groups in the US. According to the editors, the overwhelmingly ubiquitous occurrences of economic, social, and political marginalization of indigenous Mexicans on both sides of the US-Mexico border justify the collection's theme.³⁰

In the United States an unknown number of indigenous Mexicans who hold low-skilled jobs are in precarious positions due to their undocumented status. In Mexico, contend Salgado-Rivera and Fox, policies such as that which put NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) into effect, gave most indigenous Mexicans two choices: work in the "urban and agro-export workforce," or migrate to the city, or to the US.³¹ Mexicans often migrate and become politically, socially, and economically organized in the process, because that is how they obtain rights—such as the entitlement to making a living or having a say in political decisions which directly affect them—which they are frequently denied.

Tlapanecs have not yet become politically, economically, or religiously organized in Lawrence, KS. However, they are highly unified, especially by family and ethnic ties. There is a high probability that, if such Tlapanec organizations in the US don't already

²⁹ Ibid. 316.

³⁰ Fox and Rivera-Salgado 4.

³¹ Ibid. 3.

exist beyond my knowledge, they very soon will be created. Tlapanecs tend to be politically, socially, and economically marginalized in Guerrero. Those who come to the US are arguably ostracized for linguistic, cultural, and legal reasons. This thesis is about how Tlapanecs use social ties in Guerrero and in the US as part of a strategy in affecting change in their lives. Though their desire to migrate is based on more than mere economic reasons, in this thesis I view the most profound effects of the marginalization and oppression historically suffered by Tlapanecs in *La Montaña* to be fundamentally based on a general desire to gain access to resources.

I have not found any academic publications in the U.S. or in Mexico that focus on transborder migration among Tlapanecs. However there are sources which have made valuable contributions to the research on Tlapanec migration. Anthropologist Isabel Margarita Nemecio Nemesio's *Migrar o morir: el dilema de los jornaleros agrícolas de la Montaña de Guerrero* (*Migrate or Die: The Dilemma of the Agricultural Laborers of La Montaña Guerrero*)³² brings to light the driving forces of labor migration in the agro-export industry in Mexico. *Migrar o morir* examines both local and extra-local phenomena, and observes that Guerrero's indigenous groups have recently begun to move away from agricultural labor and toward transnational patterns of migration. That an increasing number of indigenous people from the region are "no longer migrating internally because they have some family in the US" is a reality so recent that statistics on Tlapanecs in the US are unavailable.³³

³² Tlapa de Comonfort, Guerrero: Tlachinollan Center for Human Rights in *La Montaña* 2005.

³³ Nemecio 26.

Anthropologist Marion Oettinger bases *Una comunidad tlapaneca: sus linderos sociales y territoriales* (A Tlapanec Community: Its Social Boundaries and Territories)³⁴ [translation mine]) on approximately two years of initial investigation beginning in or around 1970—one year of bibliographic research, and one of ethnographic fieldwork in the municipality of Tlacoapa and Mexico City. The Conclusion is based on interviews with 50 Tlapanecs who had migrated to Mexico City. Oettinger found that a majority of the few hundred Tlapanecs who had left Tlacoapa had done so for mostly economic reasons, beginning around the middle of the twentieth century, and had gone to cities in Mexico. Oettinger concluded that migration to the city, where individualism and competition are rampant, was a potential challenge to “the sense of community and cooperation that maintain unity in Tlacoapa.”³⁵

Networking and cooperation among Tlapanecs is something that remains part of Tlapanecs’ indigenous identity today. This thesis examines the ways in which such unity is tested or contradicted in the migration process. Also important in Oettinger’s work is the evidence that Tlapanecs migrated outside of Guerrero as long ago as 60 years. Therefore, even if US-bound movement out of *La Montaña* is a recent phenomenon for the migrants in this thesis, it is probable that migration has been a normal part of many Tlapanecs’ lives for generations.

Evidence in the literature (or the lack of literature) suggests that until recently Tlapanecs have traditionally migrated on a limited basis and within Mexico. Why does the topic of indigenous migration from Oaxaca appear so frequently in academic investigation, while mention of migration among Tlapanecs, who live in a region

³⁴ Mexico D.F.: National Indigenous Institute of Mexico 1980.

³⁵ Oettinger 237-253.

bordering Oaxaca, rarely emerges? Oaxaca has a much larger proportion of indigenous people than Guerrero. In 2002, a total of 1,116,445 out of 3,438,765 (or 32%) of Oaxaca's population spoke an indigenous language. That same year, out of Guerrero's 3,079,649 inhabitants, 365,497 (or 12%) spoke an indigenous language.³⁶

In addition to a relatively small proportion of impoverished indigenous people, more of Oaxaca's indigenous may have had better access than Tlapanecs in Guerrero to drivable travel routes. Cohen's research on indigenous Oaxacan migrants was based on twelve communities whose economies were linked to Oaxaca City, and thus had abundant access to the city via taxis and buses. Oaxaca City is also the most common departure point to the US from Oaxaca.³⁷ Many Tlapanec areas in the *Montaña* region of Guerrero are accessible by automobile today, but that was not the case a few decades ago. Oettinger observed that there was a lack of research about Tlapanecs in general by 1970 due to the geographic insularity of the region. To arrive in Tlacoapa he had to take a six hour bus ride to Tlapa (See Figure 3, Page 7), and walk 10 to 15 hours afterward.³⁸ Tlapa is the most common place for US-bound departure from *La Montaña*.³⁹ This work thus deals with a group of indigenous Mexicans whose experiences migrating to the US are not well known. Because Tlapanecs have been geographically isolated up until the recent past, this thesis focuses much more on the sending community than on the receiving community.

³⁶ Enrique Serrano Carreto, Arnulfo Embriz Osorio, and Patricia Fernández Ham. Indicadores socioeconómicos de los pueblos indígenas de México, 2002. (México: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 2002) 27, 100.

³⁷ Cohen 9.

³⁸ Oettinger 14.

³⁹ Personal interview: Margarita Nemesio Nemesio, anthropologist and coordinator of the Migration Department of Tlachinollan Center for Human Rights in *La Montaña*, in the town of Tlapa. (Interviewed her at her office May 21, 2008).

In “Acculturation or Assimilation: Mexican Immigrants in Kansas, 1900 to World War II,”⁴⁰ Robert Oppenheimer uses interviews with Mexicans and Mexican Americans and research to describe the Hispanic population in Kansas based on large scale historical factors. Similar to other scholars,⁴¹ Oppenheimer discusses the earliest Mexican settlements in Kansas, which initially followed the railroad and expanded into “meat-packing, sugar beets, or mining industries” and eventually into more common agricultural labor. Oppenheimer focuses on “immigration” as opposed to “migration.” Nevertheless, networking among Mexicans in Kansas has existed for at least a century.

Though immigrants to Kansas came from virtually every state in northern and central Mexico, the majority came from Guanajuato or Michoacán. People from the same village or region often settled together in Kansas. For example, many Topeka Mexicans came from Silao, Guanajuato. [...] The Argentine barrio of Kansas City, Kansas included many persons from Tangancícuaro, Michoacán.⁴²

Even though Mexican newcomers to Kansas had little or no job-related skills or educational assets, Oppenheimer concludes, they weren’t merely “victims of society.” Rather, as a reaction to being “kept at the lower socioeconomic levels” of the receiving communities—even after acquiring language or job skills—in which they lived largely due to “racial, occupational, and cultural discrimination, Mexicans have reacted by separating themselves from the rest of society.”⁴³ This thesis’ goal is not to refute or support Oppenheimer’s claim that Mexicans have separated themselves from mainstream Kansas society. However, it is relevant. Regardless of the agents of separation, Tlapanecs’ presence in Kansas is generally unknown in any public sphere. This thesis

⁴⁰ Western Historical Quarterly 16:4 Oct. 1985.

⁴¹ See Cynthia Mines. Riding the Rails to Kansas: The Mexican Immigrants. ([S.l.]: Mines, 1980); Larry G. Rutter. Mexican Americans in Kansas: A Survey and Social Mobility Study, 1900-1970. (Thesis (M.A.)--Kansas State University, 1979); or Mendoza.

⁴² Oppenheimer 435.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 447.

therefore provides insight into their lives that would not be achievable were it not for my position as an interpreter in Lawrence, KS.

In “Meatpacking and Mexicans on the High Plains: From minority to majority in Garden City, Kansas,”⁴⁴ Donald Stull and Michael Broadway address the topic of assimilation in the context of Kansas’ more recent influx of Mexican newcomers since the 1990s. Like Oppenheimer’s article, “Meatpacking and Mexicans on the High Plains” describes many hardships, such as massive layoffs from meatpacking plants, to show that Hispanic populations persevere. One goal of Stull and Broadway’s chapter is to address and debunk Samuel Huntington’s assertion that Mexican immigrants represent “a challenge to our cultural integrity, our national identity, and potentially to our future as a country.”⁴⁵

This thesis, like the mentioned works of Oppenheimer and Stull and Broadway, is interested in small groups of Mexicans in Kansas. It is different from both publications because I don’t consider Tlapanecs in Lawrence to be immigrants. Rather, I view them as migrants because they generally don’t express an interest in long-term stay in Kansas. Tlapanec networks have had a presence in Lawrence for less than four years, and I have observed a high return rate to Mexico among them. Unlike the emphasis Stull and Broadway and Oppenheimer place on a United States point of view, this thesis focuses on the perspective of Tlapanec migrants’ sending communities in Guerrero.

⁴⁴ In Richard C. Jones. Immigrants Outside Megalopolis: Ethnic Transformation in the Heartland. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008).

⁴⁵ Samuel P. Huntington. “Why Mexico Is a Problem.” (The American Enterprise Dec. 20-22, 2000) as cited in Jones 130.

Methodology

This thesis primarily centers on my own participant observation in Lawrence, KS in the spring, summer, and fall of 2008 and in the municipality of Iliatenco, Guerrero between May 23 and June 3, 2008. I surveyed twenty households in Iliatenco and eight migrant households in Lawrence to obtain quantitative and qualitative data. I met most of my Lawrence subjects as a volunteer interpreter at medical appointments. In April 2008, when I received permission to conduct my research from the Human Subjects Committee of Lawrence,⁴⁶ I had already known five of my Lawrence subjects for at least six months, and therefore gained enough trust with them to be able to ask for interviews. I met one Lawrence subject in May 2008, and two others (one in April and one in June) were introduced to me by acquaintances familiar with my project. I conducted five Lawrence surveys in the subjects' households. I interviewed two by phone, and one in my car.

I traveled to Iliatenco, Guerrero from May 23 through June 3, 2008. Over the course of two weeks I surveyed individuals in twenty households in four different localities. I obtained fifteen Iliatenco interviews using the snowball method, in which previously surveyed people introduced or referred me to additional subjects. I met the remaining five people during daily activities. For example, I frequented a combination store and phone *caseta* in order to make phone calls or buy water. Eventually, the storekeeper agreed to an interview. Most surveys were conducted in the subject's home, while a few were completed in the respondent's workplace or at a social gathering.

⁴⁶ See Appendix H.

This method of obtaining data had some limitations. The topic at hand was sensitive to the point that some people in Iliatenco did not wish to share. The fact that I was a citizen of a country in which several *iliatenses* resided “without documents” probably influenced respondents’ answers in some way. For example, some people seemed to feel obligated to criticize the choice of others to go to the US. Many *iliatenses* were simply uncomfortable discussing the subject with a stranger, especially if they had family members in the US. For these reasons, I refrained from asking for personal information about migrants, such as their location in the US or their names. I also use pseudonyms for all respondents in this thesis.

I conducted three additional interviews with Marion Oettinger, Margarita Nemecio, and a man I call “Lorenzo.” Oettinger wrote his doctoral dissertation on Tlapanecs in the 1970s after spending a year in Tlacoapa and Mexico City, and Nemecio currently works for Tlachinollan Center for Human Rights of *La Montaña* in Tlapa, Guerrero. Oettinger and Nemecio have both made important contributions to the study of the region of *La Montaña* and its people. Lorenzo, a fifty-year-old school teacher and former migrant to the US, resides with his wife in Iliatenco. He taught me a lot about Iliatenco’s history during my time there.

In addition to surveys and interviews, I used bibliographic and periodical resources from Mexico and the US to access ethnographic research on Tlapanecs, studies of Mexico-US migration, and academic work on indigenous Mexico. I included pictures that I took in Iliatenco and my own observations in Lawrence and Iliatenco. In order to establish the context of Mexican immigration and migration in Lawrence, I referred to the

unpublished results of a needs assessment survey for 128 Latinos in Lawrence, KS sponsored by Centro Hispano and The University of Kansas.

Before leaving for Guerrero, I discussed my plans with a friend who migrated to Lawrence around 2000 from his home in Acapulco, Guerrero. This man ordered his nineteen-year-old son David to accompany me while I was in his home state. While David didn't take part in conducting the surveys or analyzing any data, he did take some of the pictures used in this thesis. His presence also had a valuable effect on my research. He introduced me to his cousin who is a reporter in Chilpancingo, and she then put me in touch with Margarita Nemecio, an anthropologist whom I interviewed. David's presence at many of my surveys in Iliatenco inevitably made people feel at ease.

Chapter Two: Tlapanecs in the Past and Present

The goals of this chapter are to provide a background of Tlapanecs as contemporaneous indigenous people living in Guerrero, Mexico, and to discuss how their lives fit into the context of political and socioeconomic marginalization of rural indigenous people within Mexico by the federal government. Tlapanecs share a region, language, and view of the world that make them unique. For hundreds of years, agriculture has been the base of their subsistence in *La Montaña*. However, Tlapanecs are also part of a hierarchically divided society, in which they hold a presence at the bottom. While Tlapanecs experience these hardships, they are also growing in population. I contend that these combined phenomena create a context that promotes outbound migration among Tlapanecs in Guerrero. A second goal of providing a brief description of some aspects of indigenous identity for Tlapanecs' is to show that life for them has been dynamic. Religion and language are two realms in which change is observable in Tlapanec culture. A third important category of transformation occurring in *La Montaña* is the availability of land.

Ethnicity, or a common way of life for a particular group of people with a common past, is a problematic term. Life for a people who are part of an ethnic group is constantly changing. Ethnicity is a notion used by a population in certain situations in which they intend to affirm their position relative to another population, frequently for political, economic, or social motives. Ethnic identity is generally based on a "claim to historical autonomy and perceived cultural [and/] or physical traits that are emphasized as

a primary source of identity and recognized internally as well as externally.”⁴⁷ External recognition of Tlapanecs’ indigenous character has been concurrent with the altering of old mores, the formation of new traditions; and changes that Tlapanecs have been experiencing throughout time. Thus, there is no such place in time in which the ethnic Tlapanecs of Guerrero, Mexico have been pristinely indigenous or culturally untouched.

Indigenous Background

Over 500 years ago, Nahuatl-speaking Aztecs designated the word *tlapaneco* to refer to *me’ phaa* Indians living in what is now Guerrero, Mexico.⁴⁸ By the 1520s the Spanish had entered and divided much of this territory into either *encomiendas* or slave communities forced to mine precious metals. In the *encomiendas*, tribute was collected from natives by the Spanish but the former remained “free.” Guerrero’s copper, gold and silver mines were scattered throughout the country, with at least one located in the present-day Tlapanec municipality of Totomixtlahuaca. By the middle of the sixteenth century, just a few decades after Spanish arrival, disease and warfare had brought populations of four indigenous communities in Guerrero from millions down to just a few hundred or less. Since the Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century and the subsequent independence of Mexico in 1821, most surviving indigenous groups throughout the country have remained a powerless, impoverished faction of rural dwellers in a hierarchical society.⁴⁹ The *me’ phaa* are no exception.

⁴⁷ Lynn Stephen, James Dow, and Leigh Binford. Class, Politics, and Popular Religion in Mexico and Central America. Society for Latin American Anthropology publication series, v. 10. (Washington, D.C.: Society for Latin American Anthropology, 1990) in Valdez, Norberto. Ethnicity, Class, and the Struggle for Land in Guerrero, Mexico. (Thesis (Ph. D.)--University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1995) 2.

⁴⁸ Oettinger 39.

⁴⁹ Danièle Dehouve. Entre el caimán y el jaguar los pueblos indios de Guerrero. (Historia de los pueblos indígenas de México. Tlalpan, D.F.: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 1994) 53.

Geography

There are three adjacent, geographically significant features in Guerrero: the Pacific southern coast, the high pine and oak covered Sierra Madre del Sur, and the northern Rio Balsas depression. Most Tlapanecs live in eastern Guerrero, in the Sierra Madre del Sur.⁵⁰ The coast, the sierra, and the depression are divided into seven regional divisions based on environment, culture, and socio-political differences: *Norte, Montaña, Tierra Caliente, Costa Chica, Centro, Acapulco, and Costa Grande*.⁵¹ Tlapanecs or *me'phaa* inhabit part of the region of *La Montaña*. Nahuatl and Mixtecs also reside there.

Language

Over 12 out of Guerrero's 81 municipalities include Tlapanec-speaking communities. According to the Twelfth Census of Population and Household (2000) implemented by Mexico's National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information, in the year 2000 about 500,000 people lived in *La Montaña* and half of them spoke an indigenous language.⁵² About 20%, or 100,000 inhabitants of *La Montaña*, speak Tlapanec.⁵³ The Tlapanec language, like Amuzgo and Mixtec, is part of the Otomangue language group,⁵⁴ and has existed in what is now Guerrero since at least the twelfth century. A majority of *me'phaa* reside in the municipalities of Malinaltepec, Zapotitlan Tablas, Tlacoapa, Acatepec and Iliatenco.⁵⁵

Worldviews

⁵⁰ Dehouve 1994, 31.

⁵¹ Nemecio 11.

⁵² Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (Mexico). XII censo general de población y vivienda, 2000. Perfil sociodemográfico. Aguascalientes, A.G., México: INEGI, 2002.

⁵³ The Summer Institute of Linguistics estimates that there were 75-95,000 speakers of Tlapanec in 2004. Instituto Lingüístico de Verano, A.C. "Tlapanecan Family" 2004. <http://www.Israeltuggy.com/mexico/tlapaneca/00i-tlapaneca.htm>

⁵⁴ Dehouve 1994, 7.

⁵⁵ Marion Oettinger. Una comunidad tlapaneca: sus linderos sociales y territoriales. (México, D.F.: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1980.) 39-42.

Exhibiting both typical Mesoamerican and Roman Catholic religious mores, Tlapanecs combine “theology, mythology and ritualism,” but the foundation of their worldview remains native-based. Peter Van der Loo describes the adaptable limits between the realms of Christianity and the Mesoamerican worldview as dependent upon the audience of the ceremony or proximity to the Catholic Church. For example, to invoke a rain god, they may refer to him as *San Marcos* or *Wi'ku*, the Spanish and Tlapanec names respectively.⁵⁶ Healing, hunting, agriculture and marriage are the activities with the most sacred accompanying native rituals. Several of these rituals are performed in a hidden area, away from the church. This arrangement came about when Catholic priests banned indigenous rituals after Spanish conquest. Now it is just the way that the ceremony is performed.⁵⁷

In many native sacraments, Tlapanecs count pieces of reed, sticks or pine needles to accomplish a certain goal. This is the case for a very important ritual referred to as “pray to Saint Mark” or “ask for the water” which is performed on the eve of April 25, now known as Saint Marcos’ Day. In order to ensure the coming of the rain, many residents of Malinaltepec travel five hours to La Lucerna, a high mountain top—*Wi'ku* the rain god resides in places like this—and spend the night there. The ceremony is organized and planned by the *mayordomo*, the person responsible for religious ceremonies. Several bundles with designated amounts of wood in each are offered along with gifts, including sacrifices. Each bundle represents a collective hope or prayer such as defense against enemies or help to souls without faith.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Oettinger refers to the same deity as *Akuniya* (48).

⁵⁷ Van der Loo 68.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 86-90.

The significance of “asking for the water” is based on the fact that subsistence agriculture has been the way of life for most Tlapanec people in the recent past and the often unpredictable needed rain plays an extremely important role in their well being. Tlapanecs use many natural signs to forecast the coming of the rainy season: seismic activity, bats flying low to the ground, and the brightly shining tail of the constellation Scorpio.⁵⁹

Territory and Conflict

At least three different categories of spatial association are important for Tlapanecs in *La Montaña*: First, there are those of the geopolitical hierarchical structure. The *municipio* (municipality)—much like a county in the United States—is the most important political unit of territory after the state in Mexico. The municipality is connected to both the federal and state governments. Each of these may be controlled by a separate political party. Larger *colonias* or pueblos in the municipality may achieve the status of *comisaría*, which functions as a satellite to the *cabecera*, or municipal capital.

A second spatial category is comprised of communal land and *ejidos*. Much of Tlapanecs’ farmland is divided by the Mexican government into communal land or *ejidos*, which are distributed and inherited among members of a community. Third, there are residential areas partitioned throughout a municipality. The *ranchería* or cluster of dwellings, and the pueblo, village or *colonia* are locally divided territories with relatively less political significance. Each of these communities has a leader or leaders, who may

⁵⁹ Oettinger 47-48.

answer to the municipal officials.⁶⁰ Municipalities consist of one or more major *colonias* or pueblos and several *rancherías*.

The *cabecera* of each *municipio* governs the other municipal territories. Since the 1990s indigenous communities have expanded their involvement in politics, and the municipality is the channel by which this is accomplished. In 1993 Acatepec was added to the three largest Tlapanec *municipios* of Tlacoapa, Malinaltepec, and Zapotitlan Tablas when it separated from the last one. In 2005 Iliatenco became the fifth major Tlapanec-speaking municipality when 29 localities (*colonias*) seceded from Malinaltepec and San Luis Acatlán. Municipal territory politicizes the already strong ties with the land. “In an indigenous region relations of power cannot be separated from either territory or land.”⁶¹

The *municipio* is important to the people who live in a territory because it gives *me’phaa* some sense of political power, but communal land is the most important division of land related to agriculture and subsistence. Tlapanecs’ identities are tied to their communal land.

Para todos que viven dentro de estos límites, las tierras comunales son la fuente de su vida y supervivencia. Constituyen las posesiones tangibles que en el sentir de los tlacoapeños les permiten conservar el estilo de vida y la independencia que, desde sus antepasados, vienen asegurándoles su perduración de siglos, y para los cuales hay muy pocas alternativas. Constituyen su defensa legal, filosófica y sociopolítica contra un estilo de vida amenazante y desconocido. Perder sus tierras comunales equivaldría a perder una forma de vida.

For all those who live within these limits, communal lands are the source of their life and survival. They constitute the tangible possessions that, from the point of view of *tlacoapeños*, allow them to conserve the lifestyle and the independence that, since the time of their ancestors, come to assure their survival

⁶⁰ Dehouve (2001) 67-76.

⁶¹ The original statement that I translated is: “En una región indígena las relaciones de poder no se pueden desligar del territorio ni de la tierra.” Dehouve (2001) 5-36/Quote on p. 6.

for centuries, and for which there are very few alternatives. [Communal lands] constitute their legal, philosophical and sociopolitical defense against a threatening and unknown style of life. To lose one's communal lands would be equivalent to losing a way of life.⁶²

The difference in meaning between the communal lands and the municipality is problematic because, as municipalities grow in population size and political power, the amount of farmable land does not. Furthermore, communal land is often divided irrespective of municipality boundaries.⁶³

Even though there is virtually no such thing as private ownership of land outside of one's immediate home in Tlapanec Guerrero,⁶⁴ Tlapanecs have often fought amongst themselves over disputed *ejido* or communal lands (which may be divided among individuals), the value of which has created a need for a strong community, taking precedence over both the individual and the family.⁶⁵ Since the land is communal, everyone takes a collective interest in it. Beginning sometime in the spring of 2008, the three year old *cabecera* (municipal center) of Iliatenco has been more difficult to enter. Thirty of Iliatenco's male residents at a time must stand guard on a 24 hour shift at the entrance to the *cabecera*.

According to an article published May 24, 2008 in El ABC, a regional newspaper in *La Montaña*, the armed guards' presence at the entrance to Iliatenco is due to a conflict with a neighboring community over communal lands which happen to lie between the two towns Iliatenco and Tilapa. Each is also part of a different municipality. Tilapa is part of Malinaltepec, the one from which Iliatenco seceded in 2005. About 61 hectares

⁶²Oettinger 24 (Translation mine).

⁶³ Ibid. 19-22.

⁶⁴ Gerardo Guerrero Gomez, Santano González Villalobos, and Luis Zacarías Quiróz. Los tlapanecos: un proceso histórico y una presencia cultural. (Chilpancingo, México: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, Unidad Regional Guerrero, 1992) 2.

⁶⁵ Oettinger 27.

divided into three *ejidal* polygons are under dispute. Residents of Iliatenco have been planting and building on the land in the past year, despite the decision of the *Tribunal Unitario Agrario* (Agrarian Unitarian Tribunal) to grant the conflicted land to Tilapa. Inocencio Nicolás Calleja Vallejón, in charge of *Bienes Comunes* (Communal Welfare) for Iliatenco, says that his community refused to relinquish the land because PROCEDE (Program for the Certification of Ejidal Rights) topographically miscalculated the boundaries in 2005, a decision that presumably affected the tribunal's decision in favor of Tilapa.⁶⁶ Regardless of who the rightful occupiers of this land are, there is no question that territory is extremely valuable to both the growing municipalities.

Tlapanecs as Part of Rural Mexico

According to Norberto Valdez, land is the basis of indigenous peasant people's "livelihoods, identities and communities" in Mexico, but the land is also part of the Mexican government's nationwide endeavor to compete in a global economy. Local crops in *La Montaña* lose their value in a shift from state investment in small-scale farming, to ventures in large-scale, commercial agriculture. Indigenous people's needs and interests in Mexico are rarely considered in these development policies because they are not viewed by the state as actors in economic development or nation-building. By having very limited access to land due to the state's "neglect" of indigenous people, Valdez asserts, many who live in rural Mexico are part of a lower class.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Delfino Cantú Rendón. "Reviven el conflicto agrario entre Tilapa y Iliatenco." *El ABC En La Montaña* Sábado, 24 de mayo de 2008, 496:6.

⁶⁷ Norberto Valdez. *Ethnicity, Class, and the Struggle for Land in Guerrero, Mexico*. (Thesis (Ph. D.)--University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1995) 3-4. An exception to this statement might be the Mexican government's 3x1 for Migrants Program.

Carmen Pedrazzini refers to Guerrero as one of the most socially and economically underdeveloped states in Mexico. In 1990 some 11% of the almost 3,000,000 people in the southwestern state spoke an indigenous language, and 3% of the total didn't speak Spanish. Less than 2% of the population lived in urban locations and the majority resided in towns of less than 2,500 inhabitants. More than one in four people in Guerrero were illiterate and over half of the state's children didn't complete elementary school. Nearly half of Guerrero's households lacked running water or plumbing.⁶⁸

Public security was very low. The political structure tended to be divided into small factions⁶⁹ which competed for control of resources. The most typical cleavages were between official, state-sponsored groups and autonomous *campesino* (peasant) or indigenous organizations. Rivalry and corruption among official parties such as the PRD and the PRI made their way into the smallest of villages in often violent campaign strategies. The inability of the government to impart justice was a ubiquitous characteristic in Guerrero's indigenous communities. Vigilante violence of groups ranging from *campesinos* to guerillas; drug trafficking, dealing, and drug-related aggression; political assassinations and tortures; desperate, state-led police oppression of protests; and an increased military and police presence in general became normal occurrences for "a population in a constant state of insecurity." "Thousands and thousands" of the most affected *guerrerenses* (people who live in Guerrero) migrated each year to northern Mexican states such as Sinaloa, Morelos and Sonora to find jobs

⁶⁸ Carmen Pedrazzini. "Violaciones de derechos humanos en el estado de Guerrero." In Israel Fernández ed. Los derechos humanos en México durante la transición sexenal. México, D.F.: Universidad Iberoamericana, Biblioteca Francisco Xavier Clavigero, Centro de Información Académica, 1995

⁶⁹ In Pedrazzini's words, "La estructura política del estado está sustentada en cacicazgos y corporativismo," 83.

and political freedom.⁷⁰ This is the reality in which many poor *guerrerenenses* in rural areas live in today.

Migration Patterns

The earliest academically documented cases of Tlapanec migration for economic reasons were to Mexico City around the middle of the twentieth century. From 1900 to 1970 Mexico City's population grew from about 300,000 to 8,000,000. Tlapanecs only contributed marginally to such expansion through the middle of the twentieth century due to language barriers and a lack of access to transportation routes. In the 1960s better transportation to nearby cities became available and Spanish was offered in schools in *La Montaña*. A majority of people living in Tlacoapa had consanguineal or political family living in Mexico City by this time.⁷¹ More opportunities in the city coincided with growing numbers of Tlapanecs at home.

Population growth is a part of economically motivated migration from rural Mexico.⁷² Oettinger suggests that growth rates had created an imbalance in the relationship between the land and the people. The available land did not produce enough to sustain the population, in Tlacoapa and therefore created a "push" factor around the middle of the twentieth century. Almost every one of fifty *tlacoapeños* that Oettinger interviewed in Mexico City said they had moved there for economic opportunity.⁷³

Work and Migration Since the early 1990s

⁷⁰ Pedrazzini 83-7.

⁷¹ Ibid. 237-39

⁷² See Valerie Marie Mendoza *The Creation of a Mexican Immigrant Community in Kansas City, 1890-1930* (Thesis (Ph. D. in History)--University of California, Berkeley, 1997) 32; and Paul Friedrich. *Agrarian Revolt in a Mexican Village* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970) 3.

⁷³ Oettinger 242-46.

As of 1992 daily activities for non-migrating *me'phaa* in Guerrero were still mainly based on subsistence agriculture. Other common occupations were small business owners, wool knitters and bricklayers. Those who chose to migrate tended to stay within Mexico and work as construction laborers, servers at restaurants, or temporary farm hands cutting sugar cane and coffee in the region. Eventually, Tlapanecs migrated toward northern Mexico to work on farms.⁷⁴ Since the 1990s and continuing today, there has been a shift away from the tradition of farm labor in northern Mexico to a more occupationally varied and geographically dispersed pattern of migration to work in the service sector in the US. In sum, migration has become an ordinary part of life for many Tlapanecs.

Today in Guerrero, that migration to the US is an utter normality can be deduced by clicking on the “*migrantes*” icon found at the official state webpage for Guerrero. The Secretary of Social Development (SEDESOL) has posted various resources for migrants, including a two-part booklet titled *Guía para el migrante guerrerense* (Guide for the Migrant from Guerrero) and information and registration forms for the government assistance 3x1 for Migrants Program.

Two pages of the guide are dedicated to the table of contents. Warnings about crossing the desert and the dangers of hiring a *pollero*, or human smuggler are outlined. Information about traveling documents, the Mexican consulate, US driving laws, knowing one’s rights in the event of an arrest, and SEDESOL’s 3 x 1 Program are provided. The first page after the table of contents, headed “*Querido Paisano*”

⁷⁴ Guerrero Gomez 1-2.

(Esteemed Countryman), ends with a revealing remark. “We don’t want you to go, but if you already decided [to leave Guerrero], remember that you’re not alone.”⁷⁵

According to the general description of the “*3x1 Para Migrantes*” plan, migrants who are from a common sending area in Guerrero who form clubs in the US with the intention of financially supporting their community can obtain matched support from both the federal and municipal governments. The federal and municipal governments and the migrants’ club, organization, or association each offer a certain percentage of money toward a planned community goal. The details stipulate that the migrant group and the federal government each pay 25% and that 50% will be covered by the municipality and the state. The project cost may reach a total of 800,000 Mexican pesos, or about \$76,000.00.⁷⁶

It is unclear how many people participate in the program. Internet usage is not widespread in *La Montaña*. Other important limitations may restrict Tlapanecs’ ability or will to remit money for a common goal. First, even though *me’phaa*, or Tlapanecs are very community oriented, political boundaries mean that Tlapanec migrants from different municipal territories may have difficulty finding a common goal. Second, the general pattern of remitting money is on the individual or household level. Therefore, migrants or their family members may not want to sacrifice household level benefits in order to help their communities. Nevertheless, the contents of the State of Guerrero website suggest that statewide migration to the United States is both common and potentially beneficial on an economic level to municipalities in Guerrero.

⁷⁵ Translation mine, from Secretaria del Desarrollo Social. “Guía para el migrante guerrerense.” Gobierno del Estado de Guerrero 2005. <<http://www.guerrero.gob.mx/error404.html>>

⁷⁶ Secretaria del Desarrollo Social. “Guía para el migrante guerrerense.” Gobierno del Estado de Guerrero 2005. <http://www.guerrero.gob.mx/error404.html>

Conclusion

Migration and other forms of contact with the outside world have made the concept of ethnicity dynamic for Tlapanecs. Language and religion have each been influenced substantially by Spanish and Catholicism respectively. Population growth and increased politicization have confounded the traditional relationship between the people and the land. For Tlapanecs, migration is one way of dealing with a lack of locally available resources. Because land has traditionally been such a vital part of Tlapanecs' identity, the lack of land available will definitely mean a drastic change in this identity in the long run.

Political instability adds to poverty and unemployment, creating a context in which migration within Mexico and to the US is more appealing. Tlapanecs are gradually adopting a culture of migration. However, even when better economic opportunities are available elsewhere, *La Montaña* continues to be home for a growing number of people. In addition to high birth rates, many who leave to work elsewhere in Mexico or the US ultimately return to the region based on a desire to live there. Immigration law and border militarization in the US are important factors. However, as the following two chapters will show, many of the motives for Tlapanecs to return home are based on the sending community.

There is a potential significant federal and state involvement in US bound migration from Guerrero. It is unclear how many Tlapanecs participate in the 3 x 1 Migrants' Program, but the public promotion of such a program by the Mexican government seems to suggest that there are not any immediate locally based solutions for

the often extreme poverty in rural Mexico. What is evident is that reality for Tlapanecs continues to change in this global context, and migration is one way in which they adapt.

Chapter Three: Introduction to Iliatenco the *cabecera*

In recent decades life for *iliatenses* has been changing on socioeconomic, geopolitical, linguistic and cultural levels. This chapter's purpose is to provide a profile of Iliatenco, emphasizing some of the recent changes in the town and among its inhabitants. I contend that even though Tlapanecs are a relatively marginalized group, due largely to their status as indigenous rural dwellers in Mexico, the case of *iliatenses* shows that Tlapanecs are not passive subjects of the oppressive or adverse phenomena mentioned in the previous chapter. Nor is Iliatenco the isolated village it may have once been. Rather, it is a place where people understand the importance of being proactive in order to affect change in their lives and adapt. Many of these changes take place due to external influence, such as migration or reliance on imported goods.

Municipal Iliatenco

Iliatenco is located in a valley 3,380 ft. above sea level in the mountain range of the Sierra Madre del Sur. "Iliatenco" is a compound originating from the Nahuatl words meaning "tree" (Ili) and "river" (tenco). The small rivers Cerro Cuate and Alchipahuac run through the thickly forested basin.⁷⁷ Founded in 1890 by a livestock farmer named "Lewis Lan" and 38 families, the settlement had previously been known as *El Zapote Amarillo* or *El Zapote Colorado*.⁷⁸ The available farmland at the time was utilized for the cultivation of cotton for textiles, sugar cane, avocados, corn, beans, mango, citrus, and pineapples. All of these products were locally consumed or traded and sold in neighboring villages. Two dirt roads lead from the valley over its western peak to a

⁷⁷ Guerrero, Gobierno del Estado 9.

⁷⁸ Anonymous 7.

nearby paved highway. To the south is San Luis Acatlán, and the pacific coast is another hour or so beyond that. To the north about 3 hours is Tlapa de Comonfort, the capital of *La Montaña* (See Figure 2).

In 2005, after nearly 40 years of effort on behalf of *iliatenses*, the state government decreed the *comisaría*⁷⁹ of Iliatenco and 28 other localities a municipality. Iliatenco is now a *cabecera* or municipal head of 29 pueblos and *rancherías* which are located to the north and east of Iliatenco proper. Prior to 2005, Iliatenco and a majority of its current municipality belonged to the neighboring *municipio* of Malinaltepec. Iliatenco also absorbed one village from the municipality of San Luis Acatlán.



Figure 4 The *ayuntamiento* (town hall) in the central plaza of Iliatenco is the municipal administrative center. Before 2005, this building was a *comisaría* to the *ayuntamiento* in Malinaltepec. (Photo by David López)

A town of about 2,300 people, Iliatenco is now linked with the state and federal governments, and its 28 localities. This change has meant political and economic autonomy for a municipality whose residents consider themselves to have been marginalized by the previous *cabecera*, of Malinaltepec, about 14 miles north across the mountains. The following are two of the arguments made in the 2005 decree.

⁷⁹ See previous chapter for a description of a *comisaría*.

Second-[Bearing in mind] that the Municipality is considered the administrative political organization that serves as the basic territorial division and political organization of the States and plays a fundamental and key role in the construction of a more developed, equitable and participatory society.

Third-[Considering] that one of the causes of the impediment to good development in the life of some population centers of various municipalities in the State of Guerrero, is the marginalization and abandonment that many of these localities experience under the jurisdiction of their municipal authorities, which has provoked [the] nonconformity of the inhabitants of certain regions who, searching to solve their problems and [serve their] needs, they organize themselves to petition to the Government of the State for the creation of new municipalities and in this way to receive the resources to satisfy their demand.⁸⁰

Not only does Iliatenco now govern itself, the *municipio* has an annual budget of at least US\$ 1.7 million based on the 2005 municipal budget of Malinaltepec divided proportionally among Iliatenco's 29 localities.⁸¹ Before 2005, Iliatenco and its municipal localities depended on Malinaltepec to divide and disperse these funds. Theoretically, the same amount of money is now allocated for Iliatenco as was before, but most people contend (as does the formal decree above) that such funds were not reaching Iliatenco.

The *ayuntamiento*, or Municipal Hall in the central plaza of the town is a highly trafficked structure. The patriarchal government, comprised of a president, a trustee (*síndico*), and a secretary, has a reserved parking lot on one side of the turquoise building. Before paying them a visit it is common to first look to see if the new Ford or Chevrolet pickup truck is parked there, to find out if the particular official is in the building. Then it is necessary to sign in on a clipboard with a municipal guard who stands at the entrance dressed in black, from hat to combat boots, armed with a shotgun or an assault rifle. Individuals may have to wait for hours to see a member of the *ayuntamiento* if they don't have an appointment. On some Saturdays there are over a hundred male community

⁸⁰ Ibid. 2 (Translation mine).

⁸¹ Guerrero, Gobierno del Estado 12.

leaders, typically wearing cowboy hats, blue jeans and plaid button-up shirts, meeting with the *ayuntamiento* members in front of the Municipal Hall.

Community-level renovations are apparent throughout the *cabecera* and its localities. A new technical school is under construction near the center of town. In front of the Municipal Hall there is a pile of used electrical wire and insulation that will soon be utilized to bring a second source of electricity to the municipality. The existing line has been increasingly strained since its installation in 1976.⁸² The municipality now has direct control over its road maintenance. Caterpillar machinery such as a hydraulic excavator and a track loader lines the roads linking Iliatenco with the rest of *La Montaña*. Before 2005, if a mudslide obstructed a road, weeks would go by before the Malinaltepec-based government would send the personnel and equipment to clear the rubble.⁸³ Now Iliatenco has its own. The equipment is also utilized for construction and maintenance of streets. The municipality has been able to build reinforced concrete bridges at various points where roads meet waterways, making travel easier and safer during the rainy season.

⁸² Personal Interview #2. "Lorenzo," 50, teacher and resident of Iliatenco. Interviewed him on several occasions at his home between May 22 and June 3, 2008.

⁸³ Iliatenco Survey #1: "Inocencio," 21, school teacher. Interviewed at his residence in Iliatenco May 25, 2008 (75 minutes).

The Old and the New



Figure 5 View of Iliatenco from east/northeast. (Photo by author)

According to my observations and twenty descriptions of change obtained in interviews with residents in Iliatenco, home for people in this area has changed vastly in recent decades. Some characteristics associated with the past remain the same. Men and women still wear *huaraches*, or sandals. Some people still dress in simple or modest, locally made clothing. Respondents recall or have heard about a time when women wore simple, long dresses and didn't use makeup, flashy jewelry or pants. Their hair was long and never styled. Men didn't sport blue jeans, cowboy hats and boots, or button-up shirts. Instead they dressed in *mantas*, or ponchos and locally made clothing. Spanish was only used as a trade language, useful for communicating with rarely seen outsiders.



Figure 6 A woman wearing *huaraches* makes salsa in a blender, and a bilingual teacher in pants and tennis shoes addresses her class in Tlapanec (Photos by author).

Domiciles have changed too. *Iliatenses* once lived solely in adobe brick houses with thatched roofs. Clay shingles top the remaining adobe houses in the area today, and most dwellings are made with pine wood, concrete or bricks. A 1937 picture of Iliatenco outside a photo shop shows a few scattered dwellings and a small church, indicating slow growth during the first several decades after the town's founding in 1898. Today the flat land at the base of the mountains is teeming with hundreds of houses, some of which are owned by the occupants, some of which are rented. In the 1990s, Iliatenco used profits made from selling timber to a lumber company to expand the church to gigantic proportions (See Figure 5).⁸⁴ Houses in areas outside the main town of Iliatenco are more frequently built with pine wood, and the oldest domiciles are made of adobe bricks. Most homes are one level, but the number of multi-level homes is increasing at a yearly rate. Concrete homes, for instance, are built with rebar (reinforcing steel) long enough to

⁸⁴ Personal Interview #2. "Lorenzo."

suffice for two levels. Looking across the tops of the houses from an elevated point in Iliatenco's center, one can see several long-established houses with rebar extending upward from the roof. Builders have left the steel in place for the eventual construction of an additional floor (See Figure 11).

Burros used to be the most common mode of long-distance transportation, and the nearest highway was as far away as Malinaltepec, the former municipal capital. Since the lumber company cleared paths for better roads in order to extract the pine and oak they purchased, traffic has increased exponentially. Taxies line up at various stops as early as five o'clock in the morning and as late as 11 o'clock in the evening. Virtually any neighborhood or village in the municipality, or any place outside it, can be reached by taxi from the town of Iliatenco. People often hitchhike to or from town, paying a small fee to the driver who picks them up. Sometimes it is a taxi, sometimes not.



Figure 7 A DVD vendor shows a video outside his home (left). A woman offers chocomil, (like a chocolate milk shake) for 5 pesos or 50 cents (right). (Photo by David López)

Iliatenco's economy is opening up to greater dependence on imported commodities. Professional equipment, televisions, automobiles, name brand clothing, video games, Coca Cola, Corona Beer, and other items now part of virtually everyone's

life throughout Iliatenco must be delivered from or purchased outside of *La Montaña*. In the service sector there are mechanics, auto parts dealers, hardware and furniture stores, sawmills, lumberyards and pharmacies.⁸⁵ Music, DVD and clothing stores; businesses providing internet, photocopy, photography, and telephone services; and grocery stores and restaurants are bountiful. Most of these mercantile amenities, however, are only available in Iliatenco proper.

Decades ago, corn and beans were two of the most important crops here. They were grown and sold or traded in a *trueque* (barter). *Iliatenses* now spend several weeks each winter harvesting coffee to be sold by the ton to a private company. Growing and selling coffee means that less of the land is used to cultivate staples like corn. Due to increased and diversified commerce and economic activity, remitted money from Mexico and the US, and an increase in the value of an education, improvements in living conditions and upward socioeconomic movement are observable at the individual and household level. “People used to be poorer,” summarized a teacher during an interview.⁸⁶

In the early 1970s, most people still used resinous *ocote*, or pine wood, for light.⁸⁷ At the beginning of 2005, 19 out of 29 municipal localities had accessed electricity via power lines.⁸⁸ Since then the number has gone up. During my two weeks in Iliatenco the power went out about every other day. Some days it was unplanned. Other days it was scheduled to be turned off because the municipality was putting up a second power line route. In addition to two telephone *casetas* that announce to recipients the incoming calls

⁸⁵ Guerrero, Gobierno del Estado 10-11.

⁸⁶Iliatenco Survey #20. “Maritza,” 40, school teacher and homemaker. Interviewed her at her home in Iliatenco June 3, 2008 (20 minutes).

⁸⁷ Iliatenco Survey #1. “Inocencio.”

⁸⁸ Guerrero, Gobierno del Estado 13.

over a PA system, there are very few people with private phone lines. As for mobile phones, there are no towers in the municipality, but many residents are able to get cellular phone coverage when moving to a high location.

Everyone in Iliatenco has access to clean water. Most people connect thick hoses to *ojos de agua*, or underground springs. A common means of obtaining H₂O in the *cabecera* is directly from one of the two nearby rivers via pipeline. Gravity pushes the water through pipes to hydrants where people haul it off in trucks or by hand in a bucket. This may be why three subjects commented that the rivers are smaller than they used to be. At the beginning of 2006, 478 houses had *drenaje*, or an outbound line for water refuse in their house. Those without *drenaje* use septic tanks or outhouses.⁸⁹ Among all houses, few or none have in-bound water lines for conveniences such as accessing water from an indoor faucet, showering or flushing the toilet. Instead, people are accustomed to using bowls, buckets or larger *tambos* to store and use water.

Signs of Migration

Migration is a factor entrenched in today's Iliatenco. Signs of what Peggy Levitt describes as social remittances (See Chapter One) can be found throughout the capital. In front of a restaurant sits an old Ford pickup with a Wisconsin license plate. Down the same narrow, dirt road there is a 1980s VW Beetle from The Federal District parked in front of a *pollería* (chicken store). Toward the evening and on weekends, speakers atop poles announce telephone calls to locals from other parts of Mexico and the United States. Many people wait for those calls on concrete benches outside the stores that provide the majority of the town's phone services (See Figure 11). There are also three

⁸⁹ Ibid. 13.

computer and internet services. One is a community center free to the public and the other two are *cibercafés* which offer the internet for 10 pesos or US\$ 1 per hour.

Not all households send members to other parts of Mexico or the US, but improvements and investments made at the household and individual levels are the most common observable evidence of outbound migration from Iliatenco. Moreover, when investments are made into local businesses, the community may benefit. For example, each of three brothers migrated to the US for a long enough period of time to invest in his own taxi and now works with other taxi drivers for the municipality driving people to localities in Iliatenco that may be as much as an hour away (see Figure 8).⁹⁰ It is unclear whether or not these investments were planned from the time of initial departure for the US. What is evident is that migrating to the US may allow someone in Iliatenco to afford an investment otherwise unachievable.



Figure 8. One of several taxi stations in the *cabecera* of Iliatenco. By migrating to the US for a few years, several of the *taxistas* were able to pay for their cars--an investment unaffordable on a local salary. (Photo by David López)

⁹⁰ Iliatenco Survey #19. Shoe repairer, 45. Interviewed him at his home/shop in Iliatenco June 3, 2008 (70 minutes).

Conclusion

Over a hundred years ago, when Iliatenco had just been founded, the outside world probably didn't have such a regular presence in everyday life. Tlapanecs in the region most likely obtained everything they needed from one another or from a nearby *colonia*. The most common forms of transportation were walking or taking a burro. Although many of the changes visible in Iliatenco today have occurred gradually, they are profound. Visitors from the US to the *cabecera* today might be more surprised by what they have in common with *iliatenses*, than by how they are different. The people living in Iliatenco today are more conscientious than ever about what's going on in the world around them. Based on my observations, *iliatenses* are a very future-oriented people. In the next chapter, I argue that, with all the changes and growth occurring in Iliatenco, social capital remains the highest valued commodity among *iliatenses*.

Chapter Four: Twenty Household Surveys

In this chapter, I focus on twenty household surveys I conducted between May 22 and June 3, 2008 in the municipality of Iliatenco to demonstrate the role of the household or family in work. I also argue that the decision to migrate often entails a negotiation between the individual and his/her household. Evidence suggests that the migration-household relationship is significant due to the high value of social relations in strategies of finding work among Tlapanecs. As discussed in Chapter One, migration *is* typically a household-level endeavor, in which a migrant may receive support from his or her family in leaving, send money back home, and/or ultimately return home. It is also possible that family ties are strained in migration when members are separated for long periods of time, and expectations such as remittances or a migrant's return are not met. Thus, this chapter also examines some of the ideas and expectations that *iliatenses* now have about itinerant movement as members of a culture of migration.

Characteristics of the Surveyed Population

I interviewed eight women and twelve men between 21 and 57 years of age. Both the median and the mean ages were 38. The interviewees' households are distributed in Iliatenco (13), Cruz Tomáhuac (4), Loma de Cuapinole (1) and Portozuelo del Clarín (2).⁹¹ I asked each of the twenty subjects living in the *municipio* of Iliatenco about his or her household. I inquired as to each resident's age, gender, civil status, type of employment, birthplace, language(s) spoken, and each member's relationship to the person surveyed. I also asked open-ended questions about change and migration. The

⁹¹ See Figure 1 at beginning of this thesis.

average size of the household was about five members. This is congruent with the INEGI average of exactly five members from the year 2000.⁹²

Of the 103 members of 20 households distributed in these four localities, about 20 people were born outside the municipality of Iliatenco. Six out of those 20 were born in Guerrero, outside the region of *La Montaña*, but no one was born outside the state of Guerrero. Nineteen out of 20 adults born outside Iliatenco had moved there after marrying an *iliatense*. An undetermined, but large number of “wed” couples in Iliatenco have not been legally and/or ceremonially married. Rather they are together by *unión libre*, or common law.

Spanish and Tlapanec

Ninety out of 103 people in households surveyed were at least five years old at the time of the survey. Only one 85 year old woman was said to speak “a little” Spanish, while the remaining 89 all spoke Spanish. This means that all of the 66 people who were at least five years old and spoke Tlapanec are bilingual. In addition to Tlapanec and Spanish, three people were fluent in Nahuatl, one in Mixtec and four had learned English. In the town of Iliatenco, fewer people surveyed speak Tlapanec than Spanish. But this is not representative of the entire municipality. The population of the 29 localities that comprise the municipality of Iliatenco was approximately 13,000 in the year 2000.⁹³ When comparing my survey results to a large scale INEGI census, only subtle differences are revealed. My findings indicate that there are generally more people in the municipality who speak only Spanish than those who speak only Tlapanec, but

⁹² Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (Mexican National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Information). *XII censo general de población y vivienda, 2000*. Perfil sociodemográfico. (Aguascalientes, Ags., México: INEGI, 2002 as cited in Anonymous 2006) 56.

⁹³ Ibid in Anonymous (2006) 15.

bilingualism is high. According to INEGI, about 11,000 out of 13,000 (or 85% of) *iliatenses* speak Tlapanec; 8,000 (77%) are bilingual in Spanish and Tlapanec; and less than 500 speak only Tlapanec.⁹⁴ My findings indicate that virtually everyone speaks Spanish, and 73% also speak Tlapanec.

In contrast to the town of Iliatenco, all respondents and their family members who lived outside the *cabecera*, speak Tlapanec. My survey results strongly suggest that Iliatenco's role as the municipal seat, its proximity to the highways, more educational institutions, the internet, telephones and other channels of communication with the non-Tlapanec-speaking world mean that the *cabecera* has the lowest number of Tlapanec speakers and the highest number of Spanish-only speakers.

Family in the US

I asked the people whom I surveyed if they had any family members living in the US. I inquired about the age, gender and year of most recent departure in each case. By requesting impersonal information about family members, I was able to collect data about more individuals in a short amount of time, while respecting subjects' sense of protectiveness about their migrant family members.

Details about age, gender and approximate year of departure were provided about 41 family members who had migrated to the US in 15 different households. All of the most recent departure dates range from a couple of months (February-March 2008) to eight years ago (2000). Even though some of the 41 had been to the US before 2000, US bound migration from Iliatenco has apparently become much more common since 2000. Margarita Nemecio points out that migration between *La Montaña* and the US is a phenomenon that has exponentially increased within the last five years, when networks of

⁹⁴ Ibid in Anonymous (2006) 38-40.

agricultural workers in northern Mexico from *La Montaña* began to seek more desirable, nonagricultural opportunities in the US.⁹⁵

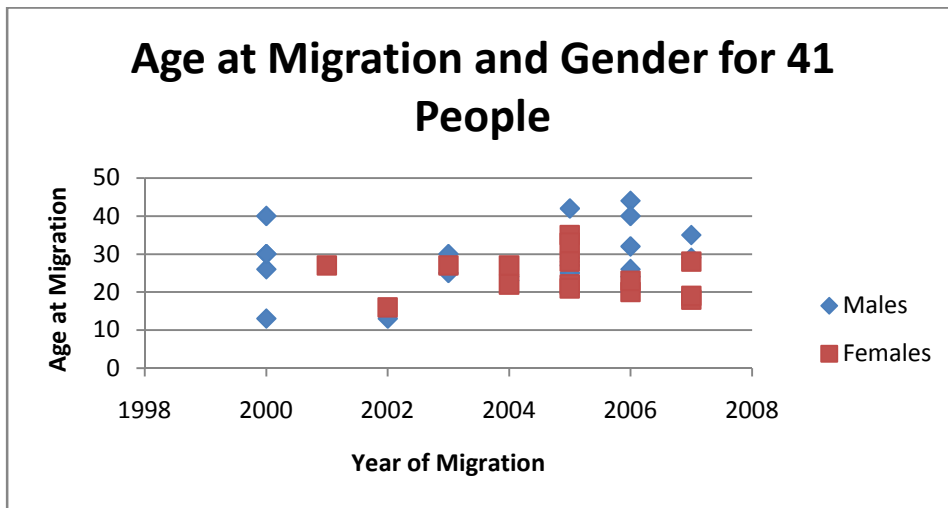


Figure 9 (By author)

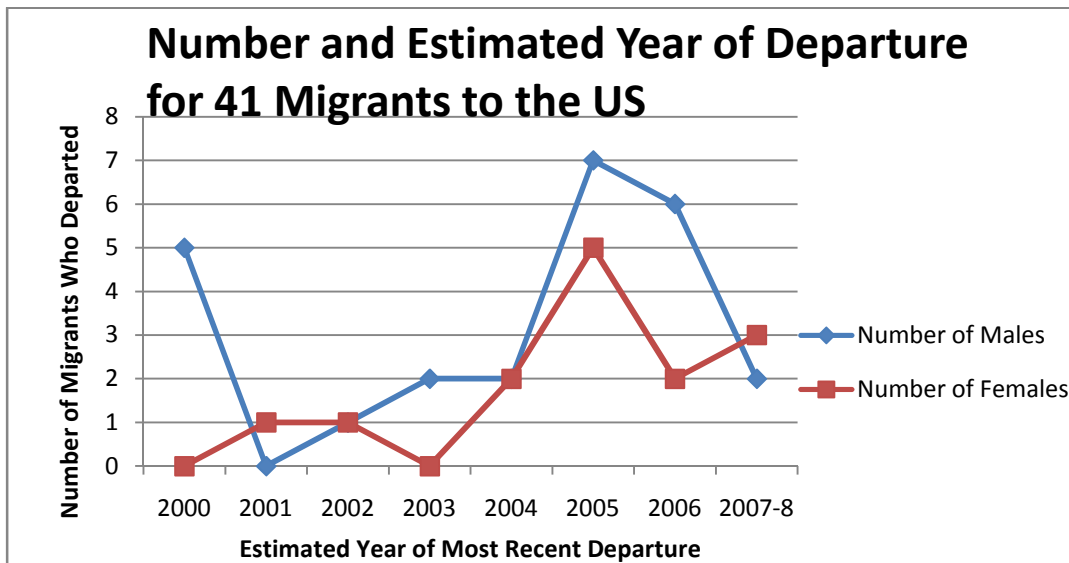


Figure 10 (By author)

Most people who leave for the US are in their twenties, and a majority of the others are in their lower thirties. More women tend to travel to the US compared to trends observed throughout the twentieth century.⁹⁶ Minors rarely leave and, like women,

⁹⁵ Personal Interview. Margarita Nemecio Nemesio, anthropologist and coordinator of the Migration Department of Tlachinollan Center for Human Rights in *La Montaña*, in the town of Tlapa. Interviewed her at her office May 21, 2008 (60 minutes).

⁹⁶ For example, most *bracero* workers were men. See Chapter One.

usually don't go without a close family member's accompaniment. It is unheard of that the elderly leave. High rates of migration from Iliatenco mean fewer men and women of working age, and relatively high numbers of minors and middle-aged and elderly people in the *municipio*. This suggests that people who approach a full time working age have limited local opportunities for employment. In the following section, I discuss some of the ways people deal with these limitations in Iliatenco and abroad, and how migration is now a phenomenon surrounded by expectations in the household.

The Family and Migration

Interview #16: Mauro

Mauro's situation sheds light on the often complicated relationships between migrants and their families back home. Because of the socially cohesive manner in which Tlapanecs live, especially when it comes to their families, there is a high probability of family involvement in any Tlapanec migrant's experience. Forms of family involvement include emotional or financial support, expectations of remitted money, or the promise of a place to live when returning.

Fifty three year-old Mauro has a daughter, Claudia, who has been living in Lawrence, KS for a couple of years. I had interviewed the twenty-two year-old mother of one several weeks before visiting Iliatenco. She gave me the names of her parents for an interview. A few days after arriving in Iliatenco, I found out that her parents had moved to Cruz Tomáhuac, an hour east of Iliatenco by car. I had gone to Cruz Tomáhuac once already to meet Claudia's parents. She hadn't let them know I was coming. I would learn that she wasn't on good terms with her mother, Ana. When I approached Mauro and Ana's house the first time I was accompanied by Isadora (Survey #10). After I

interviewed Isadora she was kind enough to introduce me to Ana, but Mauro was out in the field. Ana offered me some local coffee that day and then asked me to come back the next Monday. She didn't know *who* I was, and it was awkward that she was home alone with her children when an unknown man showed up mentioning her daughter in the US. Her sixteen year old son stood behind me and stared at me for the first 15 minutes I was there.

I had better luck when I returned and met Mauro. He was all smiles. "If someone is helping my daughter it's alright" he said, to let me know he didn't mind talking to me. He gave us some freshly roasted corn on the cob that he had grown. There was a pile of it nearly waist high in the small rectangular building that served as their kitchen. Their house was a long rectangular design made of wood with a tin roof. It was the second time since arriving in Iliatenco that I had watched cable TV in a room with a dirt floor. A curtain divided the living room and the sleeping quarters. Down a hill behind the kitchen was an outhouse.

Based on the short time I spent with Mauro, it seems that he and his wife supported their older children's decision to migrate to the US with expectations of remittances. Three out of Mauro and Ana's eight children are in Kansas; the others are under sixteen and still live at home. I had passed off Ana's reluctance to speak to me as an issue of her feeling vulnerable or threatened by me, and it may have been. But Mauro explained that his wife had all but disowned their daughter Claudia because she was not sending any money back. What's more, she had even asked them if she could send her baby (born in the US) back with a returning friend. Mauro and Ana had "found a way" for their daughter to go and now she was not giving anything in return. He explained to

me that, “a father is always a father,” regardless of such complications. Ultimately, Mauro and Ana didn’t agree to take care of Claudia’s baby.⁹⁷

El Último Genitor

Large nuclear families are common in *La Montaña*. However, young adults often leave the home to migrate, splitting up the family. In Tlapanec society, there has long existed a custom in which an elderly person or couple living in the household is not to be left without someone to take care of them. This usually means that, as the members of the household leave to marry, build a house of their own, or migrate, the last remaining (and often the youngest) child stays behind lest his or her caretaker be left alone. The one who remains then inherits the house. Anthropologist Marion Oettinger refers to this custom as *último genitor*, or last offspring.⁹⁸ I observed at least two potential instances of *último genitor* in households I surveyed.

Survey #10: Isadora

My tenth interview was in Cruz Tomáhuac. Isadora is a fifty-seven-year old farmer and school board member who has lived with her four year old granddaughter since Isadora’s daughter left to go to the US three years ago. Like most people in Cruz Tomáhuac, Isadora resides in a rectangular pine wood house with a dirt floor. When I interviewed her, Isadora was wearing gold jewelry and had her hair cut short and styled. She wore a modern dress and had a meeting to go to as soon as we finished the interview. She spoke of migration ambivalently. Migration was great because people were able to send money back home to improve life. But she was lonelier without her daughter, and

⁹⁷ Iliatenco Survey #16. “Mauro,” 53, farmer. Interviewed him at his home in Cruz Tomáhuac June 2, 2008 (70 minutes).

⁹⁸ Personal interview: Dr. Marion Oettinger, anthropologist who based his PhD. work in Tlacoapa and Malinaltepec. Interviewed him on the phone February 25, 2008 (30 minutes).

she worried about the future. Would her daughter return? For Isadora remittances were part of a cooperative effort. She took care of her daughter's baby and her daughter sent money back home.⁹⁹ It is possible that her granddaughter will one day take care of Isadora.

Interview #13: "Epifanio"

Lorenzo (Iliatenco Personal Interview #2) introduced me to his neighbor in Iliatenco, a fifty-seven-year old plantain and coffee farmer I call Epifanio who was very skeptical of my intentions. He invited me in after Lorenzo assured him that I was alright, and then read my information sheet out loud in Spanish, his third language after Nahua and Tlapanec. He had built his rectangular house out of pine. It had a tin roof and a dirt floor. There was a dividing curtain that made a small room in the front of the house. We sat at a table in this area while his twenty-three year-old daughter sat to the side quietly listening.

When he finished reading my information sheet he gestured as if it was okay to ask him questions. Then he began talking. He told me he was an orphan but that people in Iliatenco accepted him. Epifanio's wife and seven out of his eight children are in New York. He was not comfortable telling me their ages or when they left because he said that "two gringos" had questioned him before and wanted more details. I asked him what his ideas were about the differences between life in the US and life in Iliatenco and he replied, "My kids tell me that New York is beautiful, there is something to eat [there]. Here it's sad. You only make five measly pesos [or 50 cents] an hour."

⁹⁹ Iliatenco Survey #10. "Isadora," 57, homemaker and school board member. Interviewed her at her home in Cruz Tomáhuac May 29, 2008 (40 minutes).

When I asked him about changes he had seen in Iliatenco he mentioned how much it has grown. He also said that he was part of the effort that finally made Iliatenco a municipality. “We fought in Chilpancingo in 2005,” he proudly explained.¹⁰⁰ Epifanio’s daughter, who also works with him in the field, will probably be responsible for taking care of her father when he is older.

In the previous three cases, I illustrated that migration and the family are often inseparable realms for *iliatenses*. Claudia’s parents assisted her in migrating to the US, and her mother is now upset with Claudia because her daughter isn’t sending money back home. Epifanio and Isadora are both approaching an age in which they will be unable to take care of themselves. In the decision to migrate, the respective family members took the necessary precautions to make sure someone would be there to take care of Isadora and Epifanio. In all three households, there are expectations of remittances. However, as we see in Claudia’s case, the expectations may not be met. In the following section I describe work in Iliatenco, with the goal of examining the relationships among work, the family or household, and migration.

The Family and Work in Iliatenco

The number of small businesses run out of the home is growing in the town of Iliatenco. Other employment opportunities are also increasing. The new municipal budget created employment opportunities for tasks such as road construction, taxi transportation, municipal policing and more teachers than ever before. The daily work schedule begins around eight o’clock in the morning for most *iliatenses*. Around two or three o’clock in the afternoon, people take time to eat, take a nap, run errands or do

¹⁰⁰ Iliatenco Survey # 13. “Epifanio,” 57, farmer. Interviewed him at his house in Iliatenco May 31, 2008 (35 minutes).

chores. Until about six in the afternoon, everyone from government officials to internet café owners makes their services unavailable. Then in the evening, people go to work again for a few hours.

Many of municipal Iliatenco's community level needs are met by collaborative efforts among its citizens. Because the disputed land between Iliatenco and Tilapa (discussed in Chapter Two) is communal, everyone takes an interest in it. All of the able men in the municipality must complete a twenty four hour shift in groups of thirty, guarding the land near the road that descends into the valley that is Iliatenco. A new technical school's construction site is vulnerable to theft and vandalism. Various men who are associated with the school, such as construction workers or teachers, take shifts protecting the location. Much of the road construction, maintenance and even cleaning of the streets are community endeavors.

Work for each member of the household is often gendered, and tends to be handed down from one generation to the next or via other strong social ties. It is also typical for a person to choose the same occupation that his/her parents chose, even when the job is not household-based (i.e. home business management, farming, etc.). The four most common occupations among 61 adults in surveyed households were teaching, farming, business management and homemaking.

Homemakers and Farmers, Women and Men

Homemakers and farmers are the most traditional occupations for Tlapanecs. Eleven out of 32 women in surveyed households are homemakers, or *amas de casa*. Some are married, either by common law or legally, while others are single. Most are mothers. Like many children, they are often unofficial part-time farmers or business

managers. For example, a woman who spends most of her time at home may bring her children when they are not in school to join her husband in the fields during times when there is much work to be done. In the same vein, a woman whose children are all in school or who doesn't have children may spend as much time in the fields as her husband, yet still work at home too.

Women are also responsible for making tortillas, which must be plentiful and fresh at every meal. It is in these small circular staples that most of the maize that Tlapanecs grow is consumed. The quality of the tortilla and whether or not it is supplied on a regular basis are considered important criteria in determining a woman's "value as a wife."¹⁰¹ Homemakers are typically in the household while their husbands are away during the day, and there is a sense of vulnerability associated with the husband's absence. A male guest or friend of the family is culturally expected not to unnecessarily visit a house when only women and children are there.¹⁰² A *machista*, or male dominated way of thinking and living partially explains the protectiveness. A man who is away tending to a cornfield is unable to be at home to defend his wife and children in the event of a confrontation, so it is best not to make him or his family worry.

Slash and burn farming in *La Montaña* is small-scale, and may be a part-time job for people with primary responsibilities such as homemaking or managing a business. But many farmers work on their crops full-time throughout most of the year.¹⁰³ There are also times when farmers need extra help from people who aren't full-time cultivators.

¹⁰¹ Oettinger 164.

¹⁰² This inference is based on my daily observations and experiences. In addition to an incident at a restaurant in which I inadvertently made a woman feel threatened by requesting an interview from her, another woman, who was home alone when I visited her house, nervously told me to return when her husband was there.

¹⁰³ Oettinger 160.

Even though only ten out of 61 adult members of households surveyed were technically farmers of coffee, corn, plantains, and other small crops, at least thirty additional adults and children from a total of 103 people spend time in the fields when there is much demand.

During and around the months of January and February, “everyone cuts coffee.”¹⁰⁴ This is the most typical part of the year to see migrants return home from other parts of Mexico or the United States, often to cut coffee as well. Coffee is important to Iliatenco’s economy. In the last several decades, it has become virtually the only large-scale agricultural product with commercial value. While most farmers have some plantains and other crops that they consume and potentially sell or trade locally, most now tend to coffee plots which have become the single-most profit-yielding export in the region.¹⁰⁵

Teachers

Another common occupation in Iliatenco is teaching primary, *secundaria* (middle school), *preparatoria* (high school), and technical schools. Maritza, my initial contact in Iliatenco, is a teacher. Her son teaches, and so does her husband. She introduced me to four other teachers whom I surveyed. Obviously, the snowball survey method led me to meet many educators; and their occupations therefore cannot be considered proportionally representative of the entire municipality. Yet in four out of the five household interviews that I conducted randomly, there were seven teachers. This brings the total number of educators to 16 out of 61, or about 25% of the adults in the surveyed group.

¹⁰⁴ Iliatenco Survey #1. “Inocencio.”

¹⁰⁵ Lawrence Survey #8: “Sabrina,” 25, housekeeper at private residence in Lawrence, KS. From Iliatenco. Interviewed her on the phone September 27, 2008 (25 minutes).

Why are so many people in the municipality of Iliatenco becoming teachers?

Each year hundreds of parents opt not to send their children to school because they cannot afford to lose the supplemental labor that the kids provide to the household. Only half of the 3,000 children between six and fourteen in Iliatenco were attending school in 2005.¹⁰⁶ But this proportion has gone up in recent years. The population is growing, and the need for and awareness of alternatives to agriculture for young people are increasing.

More educational prospects and better transportation, largely due to municipal funding, are important parts of the increased value of education. Currently the municipality is building a second technical school. Public and private schools are available in the *cabecera* and in some of the larger localities. Many children commute several kilometers to school every day, especially if they live outside Iliatenco. Elementary schools in outlying communities tend to be bilingual, with half of the day's lessons taught in Tlapanec and the other half in Spanish—an endeavor to provide an education to children who don't speak much Spanish when they enter the first grade.

Oportunidades is a nationwide effort to help low income families send their children to school instead of work. Founded in 1997 and originally called *Progresá*, it is the Mexican government's primary anti-poverty program. Participating families are given cash incentives for meeting educational, health and/or nutritional goals. Higher grades, regular school attendance, and visits to the health clinic are some of the activities rewarded with small monthly grants ranging in the hundreds of pesos. The program targets the

¹⁰⁶ Anonymous 21, 33.

tradition of sending children to work instead of school, because this tradition perpetuates an “intergenerational transmission of poverty.”¹⁰⁷

Throughout my interviews people referred to the program in both negative and positive ways. Some argue that *Oportunidades* makes people lazy when they feel less obligated to work due to an increase in income. Others feel that it creates an overall improvement in the quality of life. *Oportunidades* is arguably part of the same context that makes teaching a prevalent occupation: education is increasingly valued by Iliatenco’s parents. Whether or not Iliatenco will be able to produce enough jobs for up and coming educated residents remains to be seen.

Business Owners and Managers

Ownership of a home based business was probably one of the first ways in which farmers’ families supplemented their income. Though there are some exceptions, such as vendors who must travel outside of home to sell their products, virtually all businesses in Iliatenco are run out of the home. Typically, there is a front room of the house which has been converted into a shoe and clothing store, an internet café, a general store, a pharmacy, a school supply store, an auto shop, or a video and DVD business. A hanging curtain usually closes the doorway to the area where the business owners live. The most common way *iliatenses* obtain jobs is through the family or the household. Home businesses are therefore easy for large families to staff. Until a child is through with the responsibilities of school (if he or she attends school), he or she often works part-time in the family business.

¹⁰⁷ World Bank Institute. “Shanghai Poverty Conference: Case Study Summary of Mexico’s *Oportunidades* Program.” *Reducing Poverty, Sustaining Growth: What Works, What Doesn’t, and Why*. World Bank Group 2003-5, <http://info.worldbank.org/etools/reducingpoverty/docs/newpdfs/case-summ-Mexico-Oportunidades.pdf>.

I interviewed the owners or managers of several household businesses including a grocer, a phone *caseta*, a restaurant, a photo-developing store, a shoe and clothing merchant, and a shoe repair shop. Each was home to countless “business managers.” This figure is unattainable due to the number of minors who are technically students, but double as managers, cashiers and attendants. The following two cases exemplify the cooperative manner in which household businesses are run. Each business also shows Iliatenco’s connection with the outside world, especially due to migration. The first business provides phone services to Iliatenco and outlying communities. Most of its customers have family in Mexico or the US. The second business is a general store. An undisclosed amount of the storeowners’ income is from remitted money. Remitted money



Figure 11 People wait outside a *caseta* for phone calls from another place. Above the buildings, additional floors will be added in time. (Photo by David Lopez)

has helped the owners make improvements in the store’s appearance in order to attract more customers, in addition to supplementing the household’s income.

Interview #9: Luisa and *La Caseta*

There are two stores, commonly known as *casetas*, in the town of Iliatenco with multiple telephones available for national and international calls. Twenty-three year old Luisa and

her two teenage brothers manage the *caseta* I visited for my ninth survey. The store is on a corner and, just like half a dozen others in Iliatenco, it is painted bright red with a Coca

Cola trademark on it. On both outer walls of the concrete building, benches flank the doors (See Figure 11). Luisa has a degree in architecture, and she teaches when she is not running the *caseta*. Every six weeks she goes around the town with dozens of others and cleans up as part of a community effort. When I first met her, she was sitting at the counter of her *caseta* writing up a paper on her laptop computer. She told me she had heard of Lawrence, KS. I learned that her parents had died earlier that month in an accident on the perilous road between Tlapa and Iliatenco. Luisa and her brothers had been running the business since before the tragedy; but now dedicated more time to it.

On Saturdays and Sundays the benches outside were full of people waiting for phone calls. A majority of them were women over 50. Perhaps they were awaiting information about a remittance, or they just wanted to talk to a son or daughter. Inside, the store was the size of a walk-in closet. There were three phones on the wall installed by the national phone company Telmex, and three older personal phones on wall-mounted ledges which were probably installed when the *caseta* first acquired phones around six years ago.

The first several times I went to the *caseta*, Luisa's thirteen year old brother Miguel helped me make a phone call. He was seated at a low table in front of a counter. On the table was a sort of master phone, from which he could answer and make calls which corresponded to the older phones, a stopwatch with which he could time multiple calls simultaneously, a calculator, a notepad where he wrote down all the numbers to be dialed, and a change box. I once sat at this table. Miguel and his older brother played on a Sony Play Station using a TV on top of the refrigerator. Their living quarters are just behind a curtain. The PA receiver used for *anuncios* is in one of the bedrooms.

At the *caseta* they charge 10 pesos, or a dollar a minute for outgoing calls, which is the same fee that the *caseta* must pay Telmex, and incoming calls are free. The *caseta* owners must earn most of their profits by making *anuncios*, or announcements. Many customers are so accustomed to utilizing the *caseta* phones that they rely on its PA system to let them know when they get a phone call. Throughout the day, as long as the power is not out, the *anuncio* is heard throughout Iliatenco. “Miguel Aburto you have a phone call; Miguel Aburto you have a phone call.” Callers are told to try again ten minutes after the announcement is made. By that time, if the recipient of the call didn’t hear the announcement, then someone else has usually let them know and they have walked to the *caseta* to be ready for the next call. The recipient pays five pesos for the announcement before receiving a phone call. Most calls are from the United States, and many are from elsewhere in Mexico. Vendors also pay five pesos to advertise their products over the PA system. They usually hand a written statement to Luisa or one of her brothers to read.¹⁰⁸

Interview #5: *Abarrotes Nauj*¹⁰⁹

Perla has a small grocery store in Iliatenco (See Figure 12) named after her nephew Juan. Like dozens of other general stores in the *cabecera*, it is run out of the home and the family members take turns tending it. Perla’s store is unique because she and her husband have invested more time and money in its appearance than have most store owners. The floor is tiled, and so are the two steps outside. There is a light hanging from the ceiling in the center of a spacious interior. Behind the glass counter, above and to the left of the doorway leading to the living quarters, there is a TV receiving its signal

¹⁰⁸ Iliatenco Survey #9. “Luisa,” 23, teacher and store manager. Interviewed her in her store/home in Iliatenco May 28, 2008 (45 minutes).

¹⁰⁹ *Abarrotes*- grocery store *Nauj*- inverse of the name “Juan”

via a small satellite dish on the roof. The walls are painted white. The green and white building is connected to homes on either side. On the roof, above the retractable awning with the store name on it there is a line of potted plants on a ledge to adorn the store front.



Figure 12 *Abarrotes Nauj* (Photo by David López)

Perla is from Taxco in northern Guerrero. She is physically similar to the women in Iliatenco, but the way she dresses and does her hair make her stand out among many of them. Instead of simple, modest dresses, she often wears pant suits and adorns her wrists, neck or fingers with gold jewelry. Unlike Tlapanec women who wear their hair long, Perla's hair is short and styled. She was reluctant to talk to me but I explained that I wasn't asking her for any information that would jeopardize the wellbeing of her son or daughters in the US. I followed her outside and into a large gate to an open area where the family parks their car and line-dries their clothes. We sat at a small table shaded by the second floor of the building. She explained that she usually takes care of the house and the store, and that she also goes to cut coffee and clean the fields when needed. Her husband is a full-time farmer.

Perla cried during the interview. One of her daughters is twenty-one and lives in Kansas. This daughter has a medical problem with her eye and has no way of being properly treated without insurance. She tried seeking help from nonprofit organizations and clinics with no success. Perla still believes migration to the US is necessary for

economic survival. She explained that even though migration is difficult and dangerous, “one cannot do what they want to do in Mexico. People who migrate to the US help out their families a lot.”¹¹⁰ It is unclear how much money the average household receives in remittances each year. However, the expectations for remitted support are often high in the sending community.

Interview #18: Aristotle

A 35 year old photographer named Aristotle spent three years in North Carolina and now runs a photography and film developing service out of his home in the town of Iliatenco. Beyond his unique framed glass storefront is a well-lit, spacious room. Glass counters protect film, batteries, and other accessories; a computer register, a TV and a video camera are placed throughout the spacious room. Bright, newly-placed tiles beautify the concrete floor. In addition to developing film and framing and taking pictures, Aristotle also provides mail service to the municipality. He says his way is more reliable than the official postal service. The first time I visited Aristotle’s store his 16 year-old cousin was watching the place while he went to Tlapa to collect mail at the post office for anyone who had received mail at his address there. For Aristotle migration is causing a positive change in Iliatenco. He explained to me in English that, “people are coming and going, but they bring new ideas with them.” He referred to his business. “Now more money stays here.”¹¹¹

For Perla, Luisa, and Aristotle, family-run businesses are dependent on migration in their own way. People rely on the *caseta* to communicate with family members in

¹¹⁰Iliatenco Survey # 4. “Perla,” 49, homemaker and store manager in Iliatenco. Interviewed her at her home May 26, 2008 (50 minutes).

¹¹¹ Iliatenco Survey #18. “Aristotle,” 35, photographer and former resident of North Carolina. Interviewed him at his home/store in Iliatenco June 3, 2008 (30 minutes).

Mexico and the US. The quality of Perla's life is improved due to the remitted assistance that her family provides her. Aristotle worked in North Carolina for a few years and eventually invested most of his earnings in his business back home. He runs it with the help of his family. In each of these cases the family puts forth a cooperative effort in order to make ends meet and accomplish goals. Perla and her young children who are present help to run the store and assist her husband in the field during harvest and clearing time, while her children abroad remit their support. Luisa and her brothers each dedicate their share of time to the *caseta*, helping people to keep in touch with family members living elsewhere. With help from his family, Aristotle provides mail, film developing, and related services to Iliatenco. These are three of many cases in Iliatenco in which work, the family, and migration intersect.

Conclusion

It is difficult to discuss work in Iliatenco without mentioning the importance of cooperation and family. *Iliatenses* tend to find jobs through their close family members, and they often work at home. Migration, family, and work intersect in various ways in the cases of Ana and Mauro, Isadora, Epifanio, Perla, Luisa, and Aristotle. Peggy Levitt's assertion that members of the sending community who don't actually migrate may be part of migrant networks is applicable to Iliatenco in these cases. A second, interrelated postulation Levitt made is that migrants use their source community as a medium with which to gauge their success or status when abroad.¹¹² Though a migrant in the US may be located in a low socio-economic status, the money made in the US is likely to allow for upward social mobility in the migrant's sending community.

¹¹² See Chapter One for further description.

Among many *iliatenses*, there exists an often unspoken notion that one's success often depends on the social capital attainable in his or her relationships, and thus people with whom a person has close relationships should also reap the benefits of that person's success. For example, Claudia has disappointed her parents because she isn't fulfilling the expectation that she remit money on a regular basis. I wasn't able to determine how often these expectations were verbally acknowledged in different sending households. However, if it is normal for young people at home to contribute to their households with labor or income, then it is only normal that those living in a sending household would expect some contribution from a migrating member.

Iliatenco is undergoing many changes. One uncertainty is whether or not the population will continue to grow. Based on the increase in investments in small businesses, several cases of goal-oriented migration, and a high rate of return among migrants in general, the population may benefit from an increase in size. However, if it is necessary to migrate to make small investments, and hundreds of people are absent at any given time, how will small businesses survive? Can the people of Iliatenco—especially those between 18 and 30-years-old—find other ways to afford investments, or have they become dependent on migration?

The increasing value of education in Iliatenco may lead to continued outbound movement from the municipality, either to go to school or to find work. Both men and women teach and run businesses in Iliatenco. A less gender specific economy may also lead to less rigidity in the gendered divisions of labor, which have been mostly observable in the occupations of homemakers and farmers. A higher ratio of women-men migrating may also indicate less rigid gender roles at home.

Chapter 5: Iliatenco in Lawrence?

This chapter begins by establishing the context in the receiving community in Lawrence, KS. Mexicans migrants in Lawrence potentially face linguistic, socioeconomic, cultural, and legal barriers that separate them from non-migrating members of the community. I learned about Tlapanecs in Lawrence as an interpreter. Were it not for my position as a Spanish-speaking, social service provider, I may have never come to know that members of one indigenous group reside in Lawrence.

By examining networking strategies in eight Tlapanec migrant households in Lawrence, KS, I show that Tlapanecs highly value the family, and seek to live with family members in Lawrence. Among Tlapanecs in the sending community, migration ideally results in the migrant remitting money or returning to Mexico to use money earned abroad to further develop the household. However, by establishing new family ties in Lawrence through marriage and childrearing, I show that some members of these eight households may be less dedicated to the ties they left in their sending communities.

Mexicans in Kansas

Network-based migration patterns between Mexico and Kansas have been observed for over a hundred years.¹¹³ They were part of an influx amounting to over one million Mexicans entering the US by 1930, mostly to build and maintain the railroad.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ For example, the municipality of Tangancícuaro, Michoacán (Mexico) sent more immigrants to the Mexican community of Argentina (Argentine), KS in the early 1900s than did any other single Mexican town. See Mendoza 32.

¹¹⁴ Larry G. Rutter. Mexican Americans in Kansas: A Survey and Social Mobility Study, 1900-1970. (Thesis (M.A.)--Kansas State University, 1979) 13.

At least 11,183 of these itinerant laborers lived in Kansas in 1930.¹¹⁵ Mexicans established settlements along railroad lines throughout the state. Around the middle of the twentieth century, employment trends among Mexican migrants shifted away from railroad and toward the agricultural industry. By the 1990s, a shift away from agriculture to a low-skilled, service oriented labor market for Mexican migrants had occurred.¹¹⁶ Though the types of low-skilled jobs have changed, most of the receiving communities in Kansas have continued to host newcomers. Some of the towns in which Mexicans settled, that remain important receiving communities today, especially since the 1990s, are Garden City, Topeka, Kansas City, Parsons, Ottawa, Salina, Emporia and Lawrence.¹¹⁷

Often referred to as *colonias*, early Mexican settlements in Kansas were physically separated from the non-migrant population on the outskirts of many towns in the state. Cynthia Mines says that, for several decades, Mexicans “remained a homogenous religious, linguistic, economic, occupational, and cultural group.” Eventually, Mexicans in Kansas became less physically separated from the towns in which they resided.¹¹⁸ Mines’ statement is important for this thesis because of the current living patterns of Mexicans in Lawrence, KS. Even though there are not any Mexican *colonias* in Lawrence, cultural, linguistic, legal, and socioeconomic factors tend to maintain the general separation of Mexican migrants from the non-migrant community in the Kansas town.

¹¹⁵ In Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population. As cited by Robert Oppenheimer in “Acculturation or Assimilation: Mexican Migrants to Kansas, 1900 to World War II.” (The Western Historical Quarterly 16:4, Oct. 1985, pp. 429-48) 434.

¹¹⁶ For a more detailed description of these labor trends in the twentieth century see Chapter One.

¹¹⁷ Mines 28-9.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* 86-8.

Mexicans in Lawrence Today

It is difficult to know how many Mexican migrants now live in Lawrence. According to Joel Mathis, of the Lawrence Journal World, the foreign-born population in Kansas more than doubled in the 1990s, from 62,840 (or 2.4 % of the state's population) in 1990 to 134,735 (or 5.2% of the state's population) in 2000. Some 2,614 (2%) of those 134,735 classified themselves as "Hispanic American Indians" in the 2000 US Census.¹¹⁹ In the same year, about 5,000 of Douglas County's roughly 100,000 residents were foreign born.¹²⁰

In the fall of 2007 Lawrence-based non-profit organization Centro Hispano and faculty from the anthropology department at Kansas University coordinated a needs assessment survey of the Latino population in Lawrence. One hundred and seventeen out of the 128 respondents were from Mexico. Out of 15 specified Mexican states of origin, Guerrero was the most frequently mentioned. Eighteen out of 117 (or 15%) of the Mexicans surveyed were from Guerrero. Below is a map of the participants' home states, along with the distribution of subjects from each state.

¹¹⁹ 2000 US Census as cited by Javier Huizar Murillo and Isidro Cerda. "Indigenous Mexicans in the 2000 US Census: 'Hispanic American Indians.'" in Jonathan Fox and Gaspar Rivera-Salgado eds. Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States (La Jolla, CA: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, UCSD/Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, UCSD, 2004) 285.

¹²⁰ Joel Mathis. "Kansas' Foreign Born Population Booms during 1990s." LJWorld.com (December 24, 2003. http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2003/dec/24/kansas_foreignborn_population/)

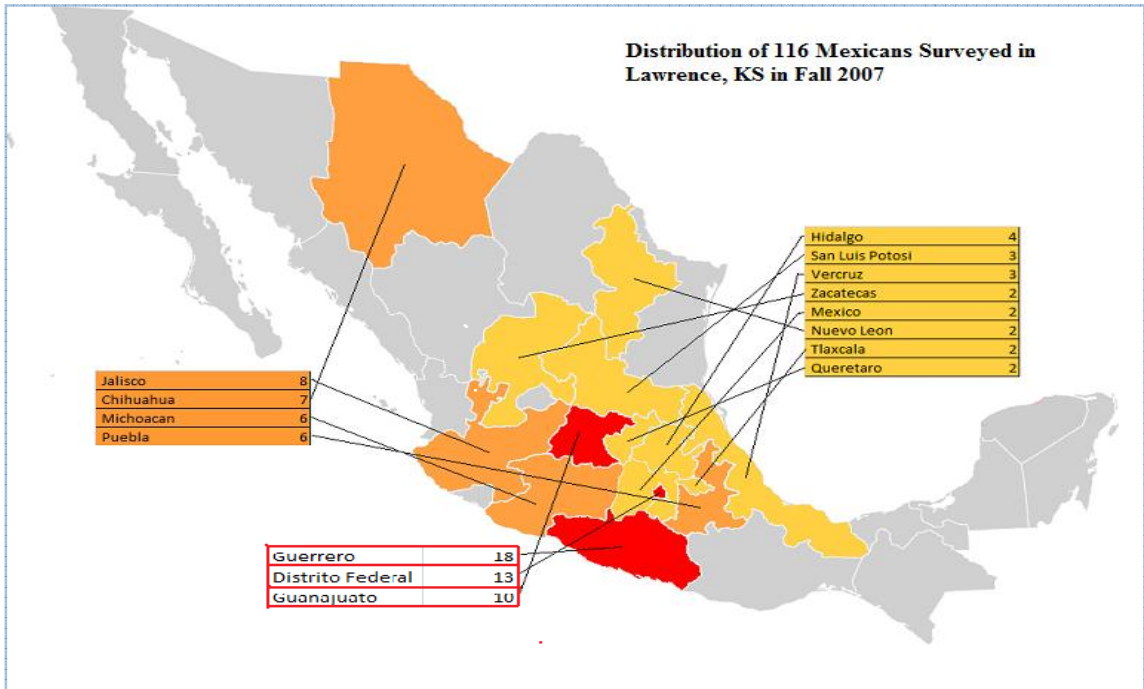


Figure 13 States of origin of 116 Mexican-born residents of Lawrence, surveyed in fall 2007. (Illustration by author)

Out of 128 people surveyed, 88 were male and 40 were female. One hundred and nine were under the age of 40. Though the time each had spent in Lawrence varied from one month to 32 years, 86 out of 128 people surveyed (or 67%) had been in Lawrence for less than six years. When asked their reasons for coming to Lawrence, the most common responses were a combination of work and family or friends. The most common types of employment were food service, construction, landscaping, apartment or hotel work, and cleaning. When asked about impediments to seeking and accessing community resources, 79 out of 128 (62%) of respondents stated that their inability to speak English was a barrier. Fifty seven (45%) cited lack of knowledge about resources, and 51 (40%)

told surveyors that their undocumented status kept them from seeking available services.¹²¹

Valuable Resources and Social Ties

What makes Lawrence, KS appealing to often undocumented, non-English speaking migrants? As suggested in the results of the Centro Hispano Survey, employment is the single most important factor, and family or friends is a close second. Because of linguistic and legal barriers, social connections are vital to migrants' ability to obtain jobs.

Israel Reynolds, president of the construction company Apple Tree Homes, has seen Mexican immigration grow in the last 15 to 20 years in Lawrence. Many immigrants or migrants work for subcontractors in his business. The reporter who interviewed him, Eric Weslander, writes that Hispanics come to Lawrence, KS "to fry fast food, scrub dishes, landscape yards and put roofs on homes." Many immigrants travel to Lawrence and other Kansas towns because they know someone else who came first. Raymundo Eli Rojas, a KU law school graduate who works with Latinos in the area explained to Weslander that when a family ends up there, it is often after a man arrived first to determine if the "community is good" before he brings his family. Thanks to programs like "Migrant Worker Solidarity of Douglas County," workers who are hired with false documentation are well aware that local businesses cannot be held accountable

¹²¹ Data in text and Figure 11 from Brent Metz, Rebecca Crosthwait, Lydia Leon, et al. "2007 Survey of Recent Latino Immigrants to Lawrence, Kansas." (Unpublished notes on survey of 128 Latinos in Lawrence. Lawrence, KS: Centro Hispano, 2007). Map illustration mine.

for hiring workers with phony documents unless it can be proved that the employer was aware of the fact.¹²²

Just as close social ties are the channel through which many jobs are obtained, so too are other resources which may be vital to a migrant's survival in Lawrence. Among Tlapanecs, for example, several apartments are leased for years as different family members move in and out of them. Apartments, like jobs, are precious and scarce for someone who is unable to seek them out anywhere he or she wishes.

With this in mind, I suggest that two important phenomena in Lawrence make it an appealing place for most Mexican migrants who choose to live there: resources and social connections. Resources tend to be initially accessed through social ties, making those social ties just as important as the resources themselves.

A Survey of Tlapanec Households in Lawrence, KS

In April of 2008, I began calling the people I knew from the *Montaña* region to request survey-guided interviews. In most cases I had met the person in my experience as an interpreter. In a few instances, a friend introduced me to Tlapanecs they had met. I set out to visit and meet with one member of each household with which I was familiar. After completing a few interviews, I discovered that although people did not refuse to participate, most were very reserved. This reluctance may have had to do with their suspicion of my intentions in writing about la *migración*. Could they trust me? I later learned that Tlapanecs in *La Montaña* are very wary of outsiders. Even though I conducted these surveys in Lawrence, I was an outsider to my respondents.

¹²² Eric Weslander. "Hispanic Immigration Changing the Face of County." [LJWorld.com](http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2005/nov/14/hispanic_immigration_changing_face_county/) (November 14, 2005. http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2005/nov/14/hispanic_immigration_changing_face_county/)

Between April and October of 2008, I surveyed eight Tlapanec households in Lawrence, KS. A total of 28 migrants and eight US-born children resided in seven small apartments and one trailer home. Twenty four migrants were from the municipality of Iliatenco; three were from Malinaltepec; and one was from Tlacoapa.¹²³ Of the 28 Tlapanec migrants (18 males and 10 females) no one had been living in Lawrence for more than four years. Most had lived there for less than two years. Similar to household patterns that I had observed in Iliatenco, Tlapanecs in Lawrence tend to work in the same location as other members of their household. This is probably owed to the trend of acquiring both a job and a place to live through a strong social connection.

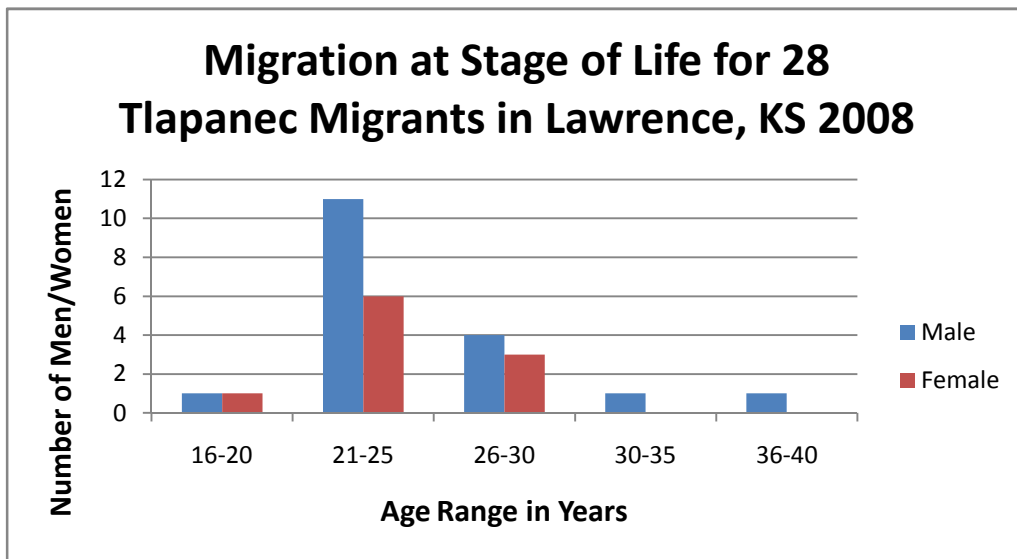


Figure 14 (By author)

Since Tlapanecs tend to travel where they have at least one family member, patterns can develop quickly. In Lawrence, most Tlapanecs in households I surveyed work in the food service industry. Housekeeping for private residences is the second most common occupation.

¹²³ See Figure 2, p.6.

Occupations of 28 Tlapanec Migrants in Lawrence, KS. Summer 2008

Job	Female(s)	Male(s)
Cook	5	17
Housekeeper	4	1
Homemaker	1	0

Figure 15 (by author)

The high instance of cooks among Tlapanecs in Lawrence is likely due to the nature of networking. It is entirely possible that the first Tlapanecs who arrived in Lawrence found jobs in restaurants, and thus those who followed were “hooked up” through the strong ties with individuals who had arrived before them. The number of cooks also suggests a high demand for them in Lawrence’s economy.

The high instance of male cooks among Tlapanecs in Lawrence goes against the more rigidly gendered household and work mores in Tlapanec, Guerrero. Seventeen out of eighteen Tlapanec men in surveyed households in Lawrence work in a kitchen. In Iliatenco, men typically do not take part in cooking or washing dishes, either in the workplace or at home. The low number of stay-at-home mothers among Tlapanec women in Lawrence also breaks Tlapanec norms. I discussed in Chapter Four that women with young children in *La Montaña* tend to be stay-at-home mothers. Three out of the five Tlapanec women living in surveyed households who work in the food service industry in Lawrence have children younger than three years old in their care.

One explanation for why Tlapanecs in Lawrence, KS break tradition is economic opportunity. Tlapanecs’ presence in Lawrence is owed to the demand for their labor, and their willingness to supply it. Thus, having a source of income is the unwritten assignment that most Tlapanecs give themselves while they are in Lawrence.

Though most surveyed households in Iliatenco were home to nuclear families, Tlapanec households in Lawrence are more limited in age range, and include more extended family members than households in Iliatenco. But the family remains highly valued. At least one couple resided in every household. Some of the couples were united on the path to Kansas or after they arrived, while others made the journey together. In each case, the “marriage” is through *unión libre* (common law), and serves to unite members of a household. For example, one of my interviews was in an apartment in which a brother and sister from Iliatenco live with the woman’s husband. When I asked the woman’s brother where he lived, he answered, “*con mi hermana y mi cuñado*” (with my sister and my brother-in-law).¹²⁴ Were it not for the union between the man’s sister and her husband, not everyone in the household would be related to one another. In addition to political relationships (i.e. in-laws, godparents, etc.), four out of eight households were home to at least two people who said they were cousins. The only young children in Tlapanec households in Lawrence were the ones born in Kansas. Due to the difficulty of entering the United States, those who had children prior to coming to the US were not able to bring them.

In the following five brief descriptions of Tlapanec households in Lawrence, various patterns are discernable. For one, several of these domestic units are home to members of different municipalities in *La Montaña*. In these instances, the people probably met sometime after they left the sending community to migrate. In every case, there are parents (or soon-to-be parents) of US-born children living together. In two of

¹²⁴ From Lawrence Survey #3: “Margarito,” 23, cook. Interviewed him at his Lawrence, KS apartment on May 13, 2008 (20 minutes).

those cases, at least one parent also has a child in *La Montaña*. In two situations I encountered male protectiveness of a female. Ultimately, every situation was unique.

Survey #1: Claudia

Claudia, 22, is a single mother. I began interpreting for her in the summer of 2007. When I saw her in February 2008, she told me I could interview her on any Monday, her day off from cleaning at a private residence in Lawrence. She was sharing a two bedroom apartment with three cousins and one of their spouses. One bedroom was for her and her baby, and the other was for her cousin, her cousin's husband, and their daughter. The other two men slept in the living room.

She said it was her individual decision to migrate, but she needed household support as well, or it wouldn't have been possible. Though she departed from Iliatenco when she set out for the US, she moved to the state of Hidalgo, MX to live with a relative while she attended school at the age of fourteen. She also said that in Spanish "*puedes decir mucho con pocas palabras*" (You can say a lot with a few words), whereas in Tlapanec "*dices poco con muchas palabras*" (You say little with many words). She told me she had trouble expressing herself. This was also something she reiterated when I asked her if there was discrimination against Tlapanecs in Guerrero.¹²⁵ It seemed like Claudia was somewhat resentful of Tlapanec because of this barrier. This may have to do with her having been educated in the state of Hidalgo. Like many Tlapanecs today, she has gained an outsider's perspective on her indigenous identity. It is probably not a coincidence that she is not fulfilling her parents' expectations by remitting money.

¹²⁵ Lawrence Survey #1: "Claudia," 22, housekeeper at private residence. Interviewed at her Lawrence, KS apartment April 21, 2008 (30 minutes).

Culturally speaking, she may not feel as obligated to remit as someone who was raised in Iliatenco.

Survey # 3: Margarito

Twenty-three year-old Margarito works in a kitchen on Massachusetts Street in Lawrence. When I interviewed him in May 2008, he had been in Lawrence for about a year. Before his cousin had contacted him to let him know about a job opportunity there, Margarito says his primary job was cutting coffee in his home municipality of Malinaltepec. He is one of the few Tlapanec-speaking migrants in Lawrence who has told me he plans to stay in the US. At least ten others have told me that they will only stay for a while. He says that he first wanted to come to the US when he saw people returning with wealth.

Margarito and his expectant wife Namad share a two bedroom, low rent apartment with Margarito's cousin and Namad's brother. Namad and her brother are from Iliatenco, and Margarito and his cousin are from Malinaltepec. All of them are under 25-years-old. I interpreted for Namad on several occasions starting in the winter of 2008. When I called to set up an appointment, Margarito always answered, and he spoke on Namad's behalf. When he and Namad showed up for her appointment, I translated all of the initial paperwork for them in the lobby, so that I could fill out the forms on her behalf. When I asked questions about her medical history, he answered. When I explained something about the paperwork or procedure, he would reply, "*Órale*" (right on). He even signed his name on the lines where I said that her signature was required. When I requested an interview, it was only natural that he would be the one to speak with me.¹²⁶

Two characteristics that stood out in my interview with Margarito were his protectiveness

¹²⁶ Lawrence Survey #3: "Margarito."

of his wife and his negative attitude about life back in Malinaltepec. Perhaps his occupation as a coffee cutter meant a lot of idle time, and he began to think negatively about his situation when he saw people returning from the US with wealth.

Survey #5 Estér and Tomás

Margarito wasn't the only respondent in Lawrence who exhibited relatively rigid ideas about gender. Estér is almost 23-years-old. She lives in a trailer with her husband and infant son, two uncles, an aunt and a cousin, and she works at a fast food restaurant near her home. I met her at the Health Department in Lawrence and had an opportunity to ask her for an interview when she asked me if I would drive her and her baby to the other side of town where they live. I remember our conversation as I started to drive down Maine Street after the appointment. She was sitting in the passenger's seat and her baby was strapped into a car seat in the back.

G: I have to remember to drive slowly. I have never had a baby in my car.

Estér: Are you afraid?

G: No, I just usually drive kind of fast.

Estér: Yes, you are a man. Men are fast and strong. Women are weak.

I dropped her off at her trailer without much more conversation. A few weeks later I was in her living room interviewing her uncle and her cousin. She was in the kitchen listening in, but it was her uncle Tomás who did most of the talking. At 38-years-old, Tomás is the oldest Tlapanec I interviewed. He is also the only member out of eight surveyed households in Lawrence with a university degree. He spoke for everyone when he told me that they don't plan to be there for very long. Everyone in the room agreed and began to describe how much they missed home. Estér said that she missed

the food the most. Tomás also gave me his sister Maritza's name. He told me I could ask for her when I arrived in Iliatenco.

I returned from Iliatenco several weeks after meeting Tomás. Maritza had given me several pounds of dried meat, coffee, and linens to pass on to Estér's household when I was back in Lawrence. I couldn't believe how shocked Tomás was when I gave him all of the items. "Do you want some?" he offered. "No thanks," I replied, "I have plenty of my own." I only stayed for a minute, and before I left I heard him mumble the Spanish equivalent of "Holy crap!" I think he was surprised that I took the time to deliver them. I had been worried that I would be stopped at the airport by customs, and stripped of the items. It felt good to repay the favor to them, since they had given me Maritza's name, and she had introduced me to most of my respondents in Iliatenco.

Estér wasn't home when I dropped off the items. She called a few days later and asked me to set up an appointment with her doctor as soon as possible. She said her baby wasn't feeling well. When I picked her up for her appointment she was outside waiting. Her uncle waved at us. This time she rode in the back seat of the car with her son. She asked me all about my experience in Iliatenco, and wanted me to tell her who I met. I gave her a few pictures I had taken of her town. I told her about a pair of *huaraches* (sandals) that I bought. She insisted that I wear them the next time I interpreted for her.¹²⁷

Unlike some Tlapanec women I encountered in Lawrence and Iliatenco, Estér didn't seem to be intimidated by men when she was not in the presence of her uncle or her husband. She was well aware of the unwritten gender roles by which she abided, but

¹²⁷ Lawrence, KS Survey #5: "Estér and Tomás," 22 and 38, cooks. Interviewed them at their trailer in Lawrence, KS on May 15, 2008 (45 minutes).

she wasn't shy. Her aunt Maritza in Iliatenco was also more independent than many other Tlapanec women. She had met David and me in front of the house I would rent from her when we arrived in Iliatenco. After observing other Tlapanec households in Lawrence and Iliatenco, it seemed exceptional that Maritza would meet us without a male there too.

Survey # 4 Rosa

Twenty-three-year-old Rosa is from Tlacoapa, another municipality that neighbors Iliatenco. I interviewed her in my car after I had interpreted for her on three or four occasions. Rosa was very quiet and soft spoken. She was polite when I interviewed her, but didn't elaborate beyond what I asked her. In fact, sometimes she didn't answer me at all. She told me that she came to Lawrence after her cousin, who is now home in Tlacoapa, called and invited her to live in an apartment. Rosa now shares the domicile with her husband from Iliatenco and her brother. Rosa made a choice to leave her seven year-old daughter behind when she came to the US. She has been in Lawrence for less than a year and intends to stay for a year or two before she goes back.

When I asked her what life was like in Tlacoapa, she told me that you have to grow corn so you can eat if you live there, reflecting that land remains an important part of indigenous identity for Tlapanecs in Tlacoapa today. She also said that people there have to drink water from a well. She seemed to suggest that there aren't any opportunities for her there. Like many Tlapanecs in Lawrence, Rosa had spent several years away from *La Montaña* before she arrived. When she was 16-years-old she moved to Tlapa to work in a *tortillería* (tortilla factory). Rosa will soon have a baby in Lawrence.

Survey #2 Joél

I met Joél, 27, after a friend of mine told him I was doing a project about migration from his home of Iliatenco, and he offered his phone number to be passed on to me. He had been working at McDonald's with his roommates—his wife, nephew, and cousin--until he was injured and had to miss work for several weeks. He has since begun working at a different restaurant in Lawrence. Joél and his wife have two young children who were born in Kansas. He also has a seven year-old daughter in Iliatenco.

After our initial survey-guided interview, Joél called me back and asked me if I wanted to interview him again. He asked me if he could go along with me to Iliatenco, and was disappointed when I explained that I was going in an airplane. That day, he told me about all the places he had been before arriving in Lawrence about four years before. Sometime after his daughter was born, he became a police officer in Chilpancingo, the capital of Guerrero. He later found the money to pay a smuggler to get him across the border because of the low pay he was receiving. He said the *pollero* pointed in a direction and told him to walk for a few hours, and two or three days later he was at a safe house in Arizona.

When he first came to Kansas, he was dropped off at someone's house in Lawrence. But he says he was unable to get a job, and he learned that he knew someone in Manhattan, about an hour and a half west of Lawrence. He worked in Manhattan for "a while" and then returned to Lawrence. I saw his wife in August and she told me Joél had decided to return to Iliatenco in December.¹²⁸

Conclusion

¹²⁸ Lawrence Survey #2: "Joél," 27, cook. Interviewed at his Lawrence, KS apartment on April 25 and April 27, 2008 (50 minutes and 45 minutes).

The Tlapanecs in Lawrence have travelled a long way to get there. They are socioeconomically, linguistically, culturally, and legally limited in their mobility once they arrive, yet they seem to be well organized. They aspire to live with family members and, even in cases where they live with someone unrelated, marriage often unites them. In contrast to household patterns in Iliatenco, Tlapanec households in Lawrence unite more extended family, and there seem to be more cases of people marrying outside of their municipality.

Especially for Joél or Rosa, who have at least one child in the Lawrence and one in *La Montaña*, it is hard to know where they will choose to be in the future. For Tlapanecs, migration may lead to an aperture in traditional methods of cooperation, as they begin to identify more broadly with other Tlapanecs and create new family ties abroad. Margarito and Claudia, who seem to be more detached from their respective sending communities, may give their family members back home different, more negative ideas about migration. What's more, in Claudia's and Margarito's cases, Cohen's dualistic notion of *norteños* and Mixtecs seems applicable (See Chapter One). Regardless of the attachment Tlapanecs abroad may have to their homes and families in Guerrero, some will inevitably decide to remain in the US.

Male protectiveness of females and ideas about gender inequality are instances that I observed in Iliatenco and among Tlapanecs in Lawrence. However, I interviewed Claudia in her room while her male cousins were outside. Estér was only quiet around me in the presence of her husband or uncle, and her aunt in Iliatenco was authoritative. This ambivalence in ideas about gender might be an indication that a gradual change in ideas about gender is taking place among Tlapanecs.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

As dynamic as indigenous identity has been for *iliatenses*, it may be a matter of the transmission of a few more generations before Tlapanecs are *mestizo*, or not even arguably indigenous. Some of the most important characteristics of Tlapanecs' indigenous identity discussed in this thesis are knowledge of the Tlapanec language, rigid divisions of gender in the household and workplace, an occupation in agriculture, a combination of Mesoamerican and Catholic worldviews, an affinity to one's community, and a reliance on highly valued family ties to gain access to resources. However, these characteristics combine to create a cultural identity that is meaningful enough for Tlapanecs in the US today that they prefer to associate with and become familiarly related to other Tlapanecs (and not other Mexicans).

Migration is only one of several ways in which Tlapanecs are adapting to the world around them. In Iliatenco, people have been learning Spanish for over three decades. Parents in the municipality are investing more in their children's educations, and jobs are becoming more diverse every year. Regardless of their gender, *iliatenses* today might become teachers, migrants, or business owners. Though loss of some aspects of indigenous identity has often held negative connotations, much of the reason Tlapanecs have survived as Mexican Indians for so long has been due to socioeconomic and political marginalization. In a way, Tlapanecs in Guerrero have learned to rely heavily on the family because they had few other sources of support. Migration, like many aspects of globalization, might be detrimental in some ways to community based values and the tendency for Tlapanecs to cooperate. Time will be the best determiner of this uncertainty. However, there are often opportunities to rely on family ties in the

migration process. In many ways migration also leads to the development of the sending community.

Tlapanecs in Iliatenco and Lawrence practice cooperation in order to accomplish tasks and gain access to resources. Membership in a family or household is the most important form of social capital for Tlapanecs, while territorial denominations based on *colonia* or *municipio* are also significant. In many ways the ideals of migrating to support family members back home or bringing back wealth, and the value placed on family ties, seem to promote networking and return migration among Tlapanecs in the US. In each of eight households I surveyed in Lawrence, Tlapanecs only lived with other Tlapanecs to whom they were related. Most Tlapanecs in Lawrence told me that they intend to return to *La Montaña*, and I also met many people who had successfully migrated and returned to Iliatenco while I was there.

Returning to the sending community might seem like a better option than staying in the US in general for many Tlapanecs. Due to legal, socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural barriers, Tlapanecs in the US must rely on one another. In addition to these barriers, the wages Tlapanecs make in the US are worth much more in the sending community. With all this in mind, the high value of family ties and cooperation in Iliatenco, the affinity *iliatenses* have for their home communities, and the nature of undocumented migration for low-skilled labor to the US, potentially limit the amount of permanent outbound movement from Iliatenco and its neighboring municipalities.

How does migration, in turn, affect the strong family values and cooperation among Tlapanecs? Most Tlapanecs in Lawrence have established new ties in their journey north. They have gained a spouse, child, or brother or sister-in-law. With each

of these new relations comes a strong connection that may be associated with a new place. US-born children's status as citizens may give Tlapanecs incentive to stay in Lawrence or go elsewhere in the US, perhaps to give their children opportunities unavailable in *La Montaña*. In cases where Tlapanecs married someone from a different municipality, one of the two must be willing to move to the other's municipality if they are planning on moving back to *La Montaña* together. Marriage outside one's municipality is common for *iliatenses* who don't migrate to the US, but network-based migration to the US seems to make the exogamous pattern more common.

These values in the family and the sense of cooperation do not just go away when loved ones are back home or migrating. However, it must be difficult for families whose members are absent from the household for an unknown length of time. In Iliatenco and Lawrence, I encountered numerous instances of separation between a parent and a child, or between spouses. Children often stay behind. Spouses may split up so that one is able to maintain a household, or simply because they may not both agree to go. When this occurs, it is impossible to predict whether or not there will be remittances or reunification—both signs of the migrant's dedication to the relationship. When the spouse or parent does remit, it is still possible that he or she is maintaining an additional relationship in the receiving community. It is also possible that a member of the sending community loses interest in his or her relationship with a migrant. Thus migration might lead some people to relinquish their dedication to strong ties in their sending community, often in order to pursue other strong ties.

It is likely that most Tlapanecs who migrate don't leave on such terms of separation as those described in the previous paragraph. In general, people who leave are

at an age where they are concerned about their future, they don't have any options locally available to them, and they find a way to go to the US. They may go with a spouse, or find a partner along the way. In these cases, based on my observations, expectations for remittances and hopes for return remain very high among family members. In cases where migrants might not keep in touch with the family back home, or don't honor a promise to remit, there is some degree of ambivalence in the sending household about the migrant. I must point out that most respondents didn't elaborate on these issues during our interviews.

In Iliatenco, migration is often and observably part of the family based cooperation to which this thesis has referred. Individual household cases vary. But observations of Iliatenco, especially in light of the economic prosperity and sense of autonomy gained from its initiation as a municipality, suggest that migration is an endeavor from which the family and the community often benefit. It also seems likely that *iliatenses* have not always been able to afford migration to the US. The future of this positive situation depends greatly on the population's ability to sustain itself while sending migrants as part of a household-level economic strategy. Based on evidence in this thesis, migration has the potential to be a source of empowerment and development for community members in the municipality of Iliatenco, Guerrero who have made itinerant lifestyles a generally accepted norm.

The 3x1 for Migrants Program

In Iliatenco, there are benefits from migration, and there are also advantages of being a *cabecera* (municipal seat). Municipal funds ideally go toward collective, community endeavors such as bridge construction, library books, and the creation of jobs.

Benefits of migration largely take the form of remitted money and information that is usually used to improve life at the individual, family or household level. Guerrero's 3x1 Program (See Chapter Two) has the potential to link the community with its migrants.

Eighteen out of twenty people surveyed answered "no" when I asked if they had heard of the 3x1 Program for Migrants, in which the Federal and Municipal governments collaborate with home town associations or clubs to improve their communities. One interviewee said he'd heard of it but hadn't been involved. Another responded that the program had been implemented in other parts of *La Montaña*, but it hadn't been put into practice in Iliatenco. With the municipality only three years old in the fall of 2008, and high migration rates, implementation of a 3x1 program could be imminent. If a group of *iliatenses* in the US were to contact the *ayuntamiento* and collaboratively establish a community goal, then the federal government would provide 50% of the total project cost. At least two obstacles exist: a) migrants may have to decide between supporting the municipality as a whole or their families; and b) it is not likely that migrants from different municipalities (even if they are Tlapanecs) would agree to work on the same project, considering the geopolitical rivalries heretofore discussed. It is nevertheless something to consider for growing populations of Tlapanecs in receiving areas.

Future Research on Indigenous Migration from *La Montaña*

The geographic divide between Tlapanecs and the rest of Guerrero is not as severe as it used to be. I rode from Iliatenco to Acapulco in eight hours with two taxies. But years of isolation and marginalization have created a void between people in *La Montaña* and those who reside elsewhere in the state. Before my visit to Iliatenco, I remember telling people from Acapulco about my plans. They cautioned me that people in *La Montaña* are bad and poorly educated, and that they kill and kidnap one another.

While these admonishments were generally unrealistic, I soon learned that connections would be important, not just to my project, but for my wellbeing as an outsider in Iliatenco. By the time I had arrived in Iliatenco a migrant in Lawrence from Acapulco had insisted that his son (living in Acapulco) accompany me there. After interviewing Margarita Nemecio in Tlapa the day before going to Iliatenco, she and her assistant urged us to wait until they could establish contact with Iliatenco's president before we left. Unable to reach Iliatenco's City Hall by phone, they asked the director of Tlachinollan Center for Human Rights in *La Montaña*, Abel Barrera, to write letters on our behalf.¹²⁹ He addressed one to the president of Iliatenco and the other to the cleric. I also had a Western Union receipt signed by Estér's cousin in Lawrence, which would verify my identity to Maritza in Iliatenco. Once in Iliatenco, the cleric and the secretary each demanded that I provide a written account of my intentions there, including a copy of my survey, and contacts from the University of Kansas.

To enter Mexico was one thing, but in many ways, traveling to Iliatenco was like going to a separate country, independent of Mexico. Lynn Stephen's preference of the term "transborder" over "transnational" is appropriate here.¹³⁰ Due greatly to the geographic isolation and socioeconomic and political marginalization of *La Montaña* in the past, it was necessary to pay attention to local rules and norms. For example, *iliatenses* are wary and vigilant of strangers.

This short thesis could lead to a more thorough project on transborder indigenous movement between Mexico and the US. Among limitations in my research are the brief

¹²⁹ See Appendices G and H.

¹³⁰ Of indigenous Mexicans migrants, Stephen writes that, "the borders they cross are ethnic, class, cultural, colonial, and state borders within Mexico as well as at the U.S.-Mexico border and in different regions of the United States." (2007) 6.

amount of time I was able to spend with people in the sending and receiving communities, and the short period of time that I observed the context in general. Time is one of the most important elements to consider in the study of migration. Migration is complex, and the circumstances of each case in transborder movement are unique. Both the source and destination communities should be understood in migration studies. However, such as in the case of Tlapanecs, understanding Mexican indigenous migration to the US begins with being aware of life at home.

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Glossary of Terms

abarrotes- groceries

acapulquense- (pl. acapulquenses) a person from Acapulco

ama de casa- a stay-at-home woman

anuncio- announcement made over a PA system, usually for incoming phone calls or advertisements

ayuntamiento- the municipal hall or all of its members

cabecera- the “head” or capital town of the municipality, like a county seat

campesino(a)- rural dweller

carretera- road

caseta- name given to a business which provides public phone use and announcements to the community

chamaco(a)- colloquial term for a young person

chamba also chambota (slang)- a job or mission; also a botched job or mission

chavo(a)-a colloquial term for a young person

chocomil- somewhat like chocolate milk or a chocolate milkshake

cibercafé- a business that offers computers and internet service at an hourly rate (not a café)

colonia- a neighborhood or pueblo

comisaría- a status one town might have, second to *cabecera* on the geo-political hierarchy

compadrazgo-a system of political kinship (Compadre- godfather, comadre- godmother)

curandero- in the Mesoamerican worldview, a healer

drenaje- an outbound water waste line, often leading to a septic tank

ejido-a parcel of communal land used for farming in rural Mexico

encomienda-a system of tributary labor put in practice by Spain

estadounidense- (pl. estadounidenses) a US national

gabacho(a) (also gavacho)- foreigner, often from US or Western Europe

güero(a)-blonde or light-skinned person

guerrerense (pl. guerrerenses)- a person from Guerrero

iliatense (pl. iliatenses)- a person from Iliatenco

machista- male dominated

manta- poncho

me'phaa- self identification of Tlapanecs

mestizaje-mix or combination, especially of race or ethnicity

municipio- a geo-political division of territory, below the state in hierarchical status

norteños- somewhat pejorative concept in migration and migration studies, refers to a Mexican migrant who culturally or physically prefers the US over her/his homeland

ocote- resinous pine wood used as a torch in the past

órale- common exclamatory colloquialism roughly similar to the English sayings “Right on” or “I hear you”

ojo de agua- (“eye of water”) a source in the ground to a subterranean spring

pollero- person who smuggles people across the border from Mexico to the US, also *coyote*

pollería-a poultry store

preparatoria- adjective for high school (escuela preparatoria)

primaria- adjective for elementary school (escuela primaria)

ranchería-a small cluster of houses

secundaria- an adjective for middle school (escuela secundaria)

síndico- trustee, second in municipal hierarchy behind president

tambo- a large black container used to store water in the household

temascal- a steambath or sweat lodge used to treat illnesses

tlacoape ño- person from Tlacoapa

tlapaneco(a)- adj. or n. Tlapanec

unión libre- lit. “free union,” a common law marriage

Appendix A Lawrence, KS Interview and Surveys

Telephone interview: Dr. Marion Oettinger, anthropologist who based his PhD. work in Tlacoapa and Malinaltepec. Interviewed him on the phone February 25, 2008 (30 minutes).

Lawrence Surveys:

1: “Claudia,” 22, housekeeper at private residence. Interviewed at her Lawrence, KS apartment April 21, 2008 (30 minutes).

2: “Joél,” 27, cook. Interviewed at his Lawrence, KS apartment on April 25 and April 27, 2008 (50 minutes and 45 minutes).

3: “Margarito,” 23, cook. Interviewed him at his Lawrence, KS apartment on May 13, 2008 (20 minutes).

4: “Rosa,” 23, cook. Interviewed her in car on way to her Lawrence, KS apartment on May 14, 2008 (20 minutes).

5: “Estér and Tomas,” 22 and 38, cooks. Interviewed them at their trailer in Lawrence, KS on May 15, 2008 (45 minutes).

6: “Pablo,” 22, cook. Interviewed him at his Lawrence, KS apartment on June 14, 2008 (30 minutes).

7: “Heriberto,” 24, cook. Interviewed him on the phone September 26, 2008 (20 minutes).

8: “Sabrina,” 25, housekeeper at private residence. Interviewed her on the phone September 27, 2008 (25 minutes).

Appendix B Iliatenco Interviews

Personal interviews

1. Margarita Nemecio Nemesio, anthropologist and coordinator of the Migration Department of Tlachinollan Center for Human Rights in *La Montaña*, in the town of Tlapa. Interviewed her at her office May 21, 2008 (60 minutes).
2. “Lorenzo,” 50, teacher and resident of Iliatenco. Interviewed him on several occasions at his home between May 22 and June 3, 2008.

Survey-guided interviews:

- 1: “Inocencio,” 21, school teacher. Interviewed at his residence in Iliatenco May 25, 2008 (75 minutes).
2. “Alicia,” 23, homemaker and restaurant manager. Interviewed at her restaurant/home in Iliatenco May 26, 2008 (25 minutes).
3. Librarian, 23. Interviewed her at Municipal Public Library in Iliatenco about her household in Portozuelo del Clarín, May 26, 2008 (25 minutes).
4. “Perla,” 49, homemaker and store manager in Iliatenco. Interviewed her at her home May 26, 2008 (50 minutes).
5. “Alfredo,” 27, school teacher and former resident of Lawrence, KS. Interviewed him at his school in Portozuelo del Clarín about his household in Loma de Cuapinole May 27, 2008 (30 mintes).
6. Teacher, 35. Interviewed him at his school in Portozuelo del Clarín about his household in Iliatenco May 27, 2008 (20 minutes).
7. Teacher and principal, 54. Interviewed him at his school in Portozuelo del Clarín about his household in Portozuelo del Clarín May 27, 2008 (20 minutes).
8. “Julia,” 42, homemaker and salesperson. Interviewed her at her store/home in Iliatenco May 27, 2008 (75 minutes).
9. “Luisa,” 23, teacher and store manager. Interviewed her in her store/home in Iliatenco May 28, 2008 (45 minutes).
10. “Isadora,” 57, homemaker and school board member. Interviewed her at her home in Cruz Tomáhuac May 29, 2008 (40 minutes).
11. Cleric, 37. Interviewed him in his quarters near church in Iliatenco May 30, 2008 (50 minutes).
12. Teacher, 43. Interviewed him at his sister’s house in Iliatenco about his household in Iliatenco May 31, 2008 (20 minutes).

13. "Epifanio," 57, farmer. Interviewed him at his house in Iliatenco May 31, 2008 (35 minutes).
14. Unemployed teacher, 23. Interviewed him in downtown Iliatenco about his household in Iliatenco May 31, 2008 (30 minutes).
15. Government employee, 25. Interviewed him at his home in Cruz Tomáhuac June 2, 2008 (55 minutes).
16. "Mauro," 53, farmer. Interviewed him at his home in Cruz Tomáhuac June 2, 2008 (70 minutes).
17. School teacher and principal, 38. Interviewed her at her office in Cruz Tomáhuac about her household in Cruz Tomáhuac June 2, 2008 (15 minutes).
18. "Aristotle," 35, Photographer and former resident of North Carolina. Interviewed him at his home/store in Iliatenco June 3, 2008 (30 minutes).
19. Shoe repairer, 45. Interviewed him at his home/shop in Iliatenco June 3, 2008 (70 minutes).
20. "Maritza," 40, school teacher and homemaker. Interviewed her at her home in Iliatenco June 3, 2008 (20 minutes).

Appendix C Lawrence Information Statement (Translated)

Information about my project:

Approved by the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus, University of Kansas.
Approval expires one year from 4/15/2008.

As a student in the University of Kansas' Department of Latin American Studies, I am conducting a research project about migration for my Master's thesis. I want to better understand the experience of the modern migrant in the U.S. My research uses both interviews and bibliographic research.

I would like to ask you some questions to obtain your views on the experience of migrating. The interview will not be recorded. It could take up to an hour, but you have no obligation to participate and you may discontinue your involvement at any time.

Your name will not be used in any part of the thesis, nor will it be given to any other person, agency or institution. A pseudonym or fictitious name will be used to describe you only as it relates to your experiences discussed in the interview.

Participation in the interview indicates your willingness to take part in this study and that you are at least 18 years old.

Should you have any questions about this project or your participation in it you may ask me or my faculty supervisor, Elizabeth Kuznesof, at the Department of Latin American Studies 785-864-1124. Someone will assist you in Spanish.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the Human Subjects Protection Office at (785) 864-7429 or email dhann@ku.edu or mdenning@u.edu.

Please don't hesitate to contact me for any reason. Grant Blanchon/ 913-424-7181/
grantblanchon@yahoo.com

Appendix D Lawrence, KS Household Survey (Translated)

2008 Survey of Tlapanec Household in Lawrence, KS

Date _____ Interviewee _____

General location and description of household

Gender/ relationship ¹³¹	Age	Civil Status	Home Town	Years of Education	Lang.(s)	Type of work

I. The Household and the Family

II. Lawrence and Mexico

1. Where did you work when you lived in Guerrero? What kind of work do you prefer?

2. Do you have family in Guerrero? In other parts of Mexico?

¹³¹ In the first row I recorded the gender of the respondent, and I wrote each additional household member's relationship to the respondent in the additional rows (i.e. *prima* or female cousin, *tío* or uncle, etc.).

3. Where were you before you came to Lawrence? Who decided that you would come

here? (You, your family, or both)

4. How long have you been in Lawrence? Have you been back home since you arrived?

5. Are you planning on staying here? If not, where will you go

6. Have you lived in other parts of the US or Mexico?

7. Why did you leave Guerrero?

8. Aside from the necessary contact (i.e. work, grocery store, etc.) do you have contact

non-migrant members of the community?

9. Do you feel like you are part of the community in Lawrence? Why or why not?

10. How does life here compare with life in *La Montaña*? Are there similarities?

11. How do you keep in touch with people back home?

12. In general, how would you describe your experience here in Lawrence?

Appendix E Iliatenco Information Sheet (Translated)

Information about my Project in Iliatenco:

My name is Grant Blanchon and I am a Master's student at the University of Kansas in the United States. The subject of my Master's thesis is migration between *La Montaña* and the United States. I have met people from Iliatenco in Lawrence, KS. I have a survey-guided questionnaire for which I would like to ask your participation. However, before I ask you for an interview, I am obligated by the Human Subjects Committee of Lawrence, KS to provide you with the following information:

- The information provided in each interview will possibly be discussed in my thesis. If this is the case, I would not use your real name. Instead I would refer to you anonymously or with a pseudonym.
- The information that I am requesting in this interview is not for the use of any person, agency, or institution outside of the University of Kansas, the municipality of Iliatenco, and the people participating in this study. In the event that someone who doesn't fit into this category requests information about my project, I reserve the right to refuse such a request.
- I am prohibited from interviewing minors, or anyone under the age of 18.
- I am not receiving any payment of profit for this study.
- If you have problems or questions, please call:

(English only:)

David Hann dhann@kucr.ku.edu
Coordinator
Human Subjects Committee
Lawrence Campus
University of Kansas
785-864-7429

(Spanish available:)

University of Kansas
Elizabeth Kuznesof: latamst@ku.edu
Center of Latin American Studies
1440 Jayhawk Blvd., #320
Lawrence, KS 66045
Phone: 785-864-4213; Fax: 785-864-3800
www.ku.edu/~latamst

Appendix F Iliatenco Household Surveys

Household Migration Survey for the Municipality of Iliatenco, Guerrero Grant Blanchon/ Kansas University/May 23 – June 3, 2008.

Survey No. _____ Date _____ Colonia _____

Gender/relationship ¹³²	Age	Civil Status	Occupation	Birthplace	Language(s)

Work

1. What is your everyday routine?

Family in the United States

2. Do you have family in the US?

¹³² In the first row I recorded the gender of the respondent, and I wrote each additional household member's relationship to the respondent in the additional rows (i.e. *prima* or female cousin, *tío* or uncle, etc.).

3. If so, would you disclose their age, gender, and how long ago they went?

4. Who decided that they would go (individual, household, family)?

Perspectives

5. In your opinion, is it necessary to migrate? Why or why not?

6. How do you imagine Iliatenco to be different from the United States?

7. Do you think that migration to the US is positive or negative for Iliatenco?

Tradition and Change

8. Could you tell me about a tradition in Iliatenco?

9. Have you seen this tradition/these traditions change in your lifetime?

10. How has Iliatenco changed?

Conclusion

11. Have you ever heard of the 3 x 1 Migrants Program?

Appendix G Letters from Abel Barrera to Iliatenco



Tlapa de Comonfort, Guerrero; a 22 de mayo de 2008

C. Erasto Cano Rivera
Presidente Municipal de Iliatenco
P R E S E N T E

No me ha sido posible entrar en comunicación contigo vía telefónica, por esta razón te envío este saludo y está de presentación de los compañeros Grant Blanchon y David López, quienes realizarán una investigación académica en el municipio que presides. Para nosotros es de suma relevancia que haya interés de personas calificadas en el campo académico para poder documentar y constatar la problemática migratoria que existe en la región de la Montaña y de manera concreta en Iliatenco. Es un proyecto importante porque da seguimiento al proceso migratorio que desde hace años han tenido familias de este municipio que ahora radican en el estado de Kansas y que desde le puntote vista social y académico representa un caso muy significativo, por lo que implican estos desplazamientos que representan una reformulación en las estrategias económicas de los pueblos indígenas y una reapropiación de las formas culturales que redefinen la identidad de los tlapanecos radicados en Kansas.

Confío en que tú valoraras en su justa dimensión este esfuerzo académico y por eso mismo, te solicito tu gran apoyo para que los compañeros arriba mencionados puedan tener las facilidades apropiadas que les permita realizar satisfactoriamente su trabajo en el municipio.

Agradezco de antemano la atención que brindas a la presente enviándote un cordial saludo.

ATENTAMENTE:

~~ABEL BARBÉRA HERNÁNDEZ~~



Tlapa de Comonfort, Guerrero; a 22 de mayo de 2008

Pbro. Abad Cantú
Párroco de Iliatenco
P R E S E N T E

Estimado Abad:

Me dirijo de la manera más atenta para informarte que el día de hoy se presentaron a nuestra oficina dos compañeros cuyos nombres son Grant Blanchon y David López, quienes tienen encomendado realizar una investigación sobre el fenómeno migratorio internacional que se da entre los tlapanecos de Iliatenco que radican en el estado de Kansas.

Como tú sabrás en la región de la Montaña cada día el fenómeno migratorio se ha extendido y diversificado al grado que el aporte económico de la población migrante se ha transformado en el pilar de la subsistencia entre las familias indígenas. Lo más importante es tener información con mayor veracidad que pueda dar cuenta de lo complejo que es este fenómeno pero al mismo tiempo de la necesidad de entender cómo se construyen nuevos caminos desde la Montaña para que la gente pueda sobrevivir en otros contextos culturales y lingüísticos.

Tomando en cuenta tu papel que desempeñas como párroco y por tu reconocimiento como sacerdote dentro del municipio te solicito tu valioso apoyo para que puedas presentar y recomendar a los compañeros en las comunidades donde trabajas y en la misma cabecera municipal. Se trata de facilitarles su entrada y estancia en el municipio para evitar que la población pueda pensar que van con otro interés.

Agradezco de antemano tu comprensión, esperando que puedas orientar y apoyar a los compañeros con el fin de que puedan realizar su investigación conforme lo tienen planeado. Recibe un cordial saludo

ATENTAMENTE:

Abel Barrera Hernández

Appendix H Human Subjects Committee Approval Letter



4/15/2008
HSCL #17310

Grant Blanchon
2130 Rhode Island
Lawrence, KS 66046

The Human Subjects Committee Lawrence reviewed your research update application for project

17310 Blanchon/Elizabeth Kuznesof (LATIN AMER STUDIES) The Migration Household from Guerrero to Kansas

and approved this project under the expedited procedure provided in 45 CFR 46.110 (f) (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Since your research presents no risk to participants and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context HSCL may waive the requirement for a signed consent form (45 CFR 46.117 (c) (2)). Your information statement meets HSCL requirements. The Office for Human Research Protections requires that your information statement must include the note of HSCL approval and expiration date, which has been entered on the form sent back to you with this approval.

1. At designated intervals until the project is completed, a Project Status Report must be returned to the HSCL office.
2. Any significant change in the experimental procedure as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
3. Notify HSCL about any new investigators not named in original application. Note that new investigators must take the online tutorial at http://www.rcr.ku.edu/hscl/hsp_tutorial/000.shtml.
4. Any injury to a subject because of the research procedure must be reported to the Committee immediately.
5. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents for at least three years past completion of the research activity. If you use a signed consent form, provide a copy of the consent form to subjects at the time of consent.
6. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.

Please inform HSCL when this project is terminated. You must also provide HSCL with an annual status report to maintain HSCL approval. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date. If your project receives funding which requests an annual update approval, you must request this from HSCL one month prior to the annual update. Thanks for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

David Hann
HSCL Coordinator

c.c. Elizabeth Kuznesof