



Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences



CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Sample Proposal

Temporary male outmigration and changing gender roles in Yucatan, Mexico

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Abstract

This award supports the dissertation research of a cultural anthropologist from Southern Methodist University. The project is to study two Mayan Indian peasant communities in Yucatan, Mexico to assess the impact of men's out-migration for periods of wage labor on women's status in the communities. Using ethnographic methods of participant observation and intensive interviews as well as a random census of households in two villages, one with extensive male laborer out-migration and the other with insignificant migration, the student will assess the status of women and of households.

This research is important because the migratory movement of rural people in response to wage labor opportunities is a major phenomenon in the developing world. This project will advance our understanding of the effects of such migration on the households left behind, and how the temporary increase in women's daily responsibilities to administer their households in their husbands' absence translates (or does not translate) into relatively significant changes in their social and economic status. Women's status has been shown to be a major factor affecting the welfare of children, so increases in our understanding of the causes of women's status has direct implications for households and families.

[Link to an image of the cover page of SBR-9616020, Lockwood & Weinstein](#)

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Project Summary

In Latin America, a shift from subsistence to mixed production has resulted in the temporary or permanent

exodus of men from rural communities as they move to urban centers in search of wage employment opportunities (Cancian 1989; ReCruz 1996). The resulting "feminization of communities" (Crain 1991) due to male outmigration is a pattern currently seen throughout the Third World (see Charlton 1984). In areas where there is significant male outmigration, economic transformation has been accompanied by changes in social relations and social structures. The goal of this research project is to study and compare two Yucatec Maya communities that are integrated differently into the capitalist economy, one in which men migrate and one in which they do not. I will identify ideological factors which have contributed to the restructuring and reshaping of gender roles and the reconstruction of gender ideology. I will then be able to assess in which ways the absence of men has positively and negatively affected women's daily lives.

This study will contribute to the building of theory on women and economic development because I will be identifying factors associated with the "estrangement" of men from the family and community (Crain 1991), and how patterns of gender relations, gender roles and gender ideology change during, times of economic transformation.

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NSF Form 1359 (7/95)

Temporary male outmigration and changing gender roles in Yucatan, Mexico

Project Description

As rural communities become increasingly integrated into a market economy, a shift from subsistence to mixed production takes place. In Latin America, this has resulted in the temporary or permanent exodus of men from rural communities who move to urban centers in search of wage employment opportunities (Cancian 1989; Palmer 1985; ReCruz 1996). The resulting "feminization of communities" (Crain 1991) due to male outmigration is a pattern currently seen throughout the Third World (see Charlton 1984; Momsen 1991). In areas where there is significant male outmigration, economic transformation has been accompanied by changes in social relations and social structures. The case of Yucatan, Mexico, provides an appropriate testing ground for examining how changing economic activities in the rural sector are setting in motion a transformation within the rural Maya household and family, particularly in domestic relations, gender roles and gender ideology.

Over the last 25 years, an important economic alternative for Yucatec Maya men in search of employment has been provided by the growing Mexican tourist industry. The Maya have become increasingly integrated into the tourist industry as wage laborers, mostly in the construction or service sectors. Some men leave their communities and return daily, others remain at the job site throughout the week and return home during weekends. One of the effects of this temporary outmigration is that women are filling the roles of the absent males, both within the household and in the community (Beyene 1989; Crummett 1987; ReCruz 1996). Women engage in day to day household chores and child rearing, in addition to supplementing household income by caring for the solar, or home garden, and by participating in the petty commodity production of crafts (mostly hammocks and embroidered items). Beyond the household, women are also taking on a greater social role in the planning of community events, such as a patron saint's celebration, and social events, such as weddings and first communions, with less aid from male family and community members (Beyene 1989; ReCruz 1996). In order to understand the impact of temporary male outmigration on Yucatec Maya women's lives, this study will examine how the absence of men is changing gender

roles and how these changes are affecting patterns of gender relations and ideology.

Theoretical Approach

Economic Development, Political Economy and Gender

Campesino, or peasant, communities in Mexico are currently threatened by the expansion of private, commercial production (Arizpe and Botey 1987; Brannon and Baklanoff 1987; Cancian 1989; Zazueta 1989). Much conflict exists today between those who still support ejido (communal land) policies and those who push for economic development, including the privatization of ejido land. For the Maya of Yucatan, current conflicts regarding land ownership (see Brannon and Baklanoff 1987), and the political and economic crises that have faced the nation (see Cancian 1992; Cook and Binford 1990), have resulted in drastic economic changes during the last four decades. Primarily, the focus of agriculture has changed from solely milpa (maize) production to henequen (hemp), citrus and tomato production. The ownership of land has shifted from ejido land for subsistence/milpa production to private land for commercial agriculture and cattle herding. In order to fully understand the various ways in which the rural Maya of Yucatan have adjusted to these pervasive changes, I will utilize a political economy approach to integrate macro-forces with local responses. This study will focus on two communities that have experienced the same macro economic forces of greater integration into the Mexican commercial economy coupled with a decline in federal aid and the stagnation of the agrarian sector. Using a comparative framework, I will be able to explain how the diversification of Mayan economic activities has been associated with a transformation in gender relations and ideology.

The study of women and development has received ample attention (Brydon and Chant 1989; Charlton 1984; Deere and Leon 1987; Momsen 1991; Momsen and Kinnaird 1993; Palmer 1985). These studies contribute to a current debate in anthropology which addresses the nexus between politicoeconomic forces and gender by exploring whether or not women benefit when

their communities are integrated into market systems and capitalist relations of production, or if such changes promote the subordination of women. A number of case studies suggest that women's social, economic and political position deteriorates with capitalist development (Boserup 1970; Etienne and Leacock 1980; Fernandez-Kelly 1981; Mackintosh 1981; Nash and Safa 1976, 1986; Okeyo 1980). In the rural sector, in particular, it is usually agreed that during the process of capitalist transformation, women's workloads increase without improvement in their social condition or status, and that they remain subordinate to men (Black 1991; Mies 1988; Moore 1988). A new dimension of responsibility is added to the women's workload when men must temporarily migrate in search of wage labor (Brydon and Chant 1989). When men migrate, women are still responsible for their domestic duties, but they must also make it possible for the men to work outside the household by ensuring household productivity; in many cases, women often assume responsibility for agricultural tasks when men leave (Charlton 1984; Momsen 1991). This "feminization of subsistence agriculture" (Moore 1988), however, is not applicable to the Maya case. Though women care for the solar, they remain outside the milpa altogether (Kintz 1990; Forrest 1991). If a man temporarily migrates, he leaves his male kin in charge of his milpa. Upon his return, a man may return the labor or share his harvest (ReCruz 1996). Nevertheless, Maya women are increasingly faced with a "double workday" (see Moore 1988; Murray 1981) of responsibility for household tasks, commodity production, and community affairs. They are also involved in more day-to-day decision-making, and they are forced to assert greater authority in the household because the men are absent much of the time.

Other studies, however, suggest that shifts in the mode of production, including those associated with male outmigration, have resulted in positive outcomes for women's position in the household and community (Linnekin 1990; Stoler 1977). In rural Portugal, Cole (1991) has found that in maritime households where husbands and wives fished together, the introduction of motorized boats and new types of nets and traps removed women from their role

as fisherwomen, allowing them to become marketers and managers of household income. Women now have control over the earnings from the sale of fish and seaweed, plus rental income from summer vacation homes.

These cases demonstrate that there is extensive variability in the way rural communities become integrated into capitalist productive relations. They also indicate great variability in women's situations and social responses to economic transformations. Male outmigration in particular is a process that has both negative and positive consequences for women.

Migration and Gender

Migration is oftentimes an inevitable component of development, and it significantly affects existing economic and social structures (Charlton 1984). In permanent migration, economic ties, and even cultural ties to home and community are often severed. By contrast, these ties remain in place in "temporary labor migration" (ibid.: 152) as most workers return to their home communities. Initially, migration studies focused on the impact of the emigration of family members—usually men—on those left behind (Gonzalez 1961). Very quickly, however, attention shifted to the study of women as migrants (Brettell, personal communication). Nevertheless, early work on the impact of migration on the family revealed that the length of time that family members were absent, as well as the pattern of migration itself (i.e. permanent, temporary) affected the kinds of social changes that emerged as those left at home dealt with the absences (Gonzalez 1961). Gonzalez' research suggests that male outmigration often promotes matrifocality, an increase in women's decision-making power and authority within the household, and increasing importance of mother's kin over father's kin. In another example, Lesotho women have come to dominate a community life built around strong female networks in the absence of men pursuing migrant wage labor (Mueller 1977). While the men are away, women in this patrilineal community are in charge of subsistence production and the household, and wield power in community politics. Such adaptations although initiated by periods of male absence and most obvious at that time, nevertheless reflect significant, pervasive, and oftentimes irrevocable transformations in gender roles, relations and ideology.

This study, then, will examine the highly variable impact of male outmigration on the women left behind. Some researchers argue that there is a "pure gain" (Palmer 1985) for the migrant and his family, or a "private gain" (ibid.) coupled with a social loss. Supporters of the pure gain theory argue that the migrant is able to send steady remittances to his family, and that, in addition, the family gains by having one less family member to feed. By contrast, theorists of private gain and social loss believe that the migrant enjoys a private net gain, but that the household and community as a whole lose a productive member. This proposed study broadens this narrow view of "impacts" by investigating in what ways Maya women's social, economic and political position in the household and community is enhanced or undermined by male outmigration.

This research project will compare two Maya communities that are integrated in different ways into the capitalist economy: one in which men migrate and one in which they do not. The goal is to analyze the resulting differences in the two communities in women's roles, and in patterns of gender relations, stratification and ideology.

Research Population

The Maya, numbering slightly over 2 million, are the single largest group of indigenous Americans north of Peru. Found mostly in Mexico, Guatemala and Belize, they are geographically and culturally divided into two groups: lowland and highland Maya (Beyene 1989; Elmendorf 1976; Vogt 1969). The largest single grouping of Maya are the Yucatec Maya living in Mexico in the states of Campeche, Quintana Roo and Yucatan; they numbered over 252,000 in 1990 (INEGI 1991).

Most early Maya ethnographic studies resulted from large-scale research projects and focused on highland groups.

For example, the Harvard Chiapas Project initiated in the 1950s specialized in the collection of linguistic and ethnographic materials from Tzetzal and Tzotzil Maya (see Cancian 1965, Collier 1968, Vogt 1969). At the same time, the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) of Mexico sponsored a growing number of ethnographic studies by Mexican scholars (Olden 1973). Highland groups in Guatemala also received attention during this time. The classic works of Manning Nash (1958) and Sol Tax (1953) represent some of the earliest economic studies of the highland Maya. Though comparable to the highland Maya in many ways, the lowland communities, such as those considered in this project, differ in the absence of a formal and ritualized cargo system.

Rural Yucatec Maya consider themselves to be farmers (Cancian 1992), although most Maya communities today mix subsistence and market production with wage labor (Re Cruz 1996). The men cultivate milpa and other subsistence crops, including beans and squash. Men also perform heavy labor around the household, such as mending roofs and fences. For the most part, the household itself is the woman's domain. She is responsible for all household chores, including cooking, cleaning, and mending of clothes, as well as the rearing of children. Girls are taught how to run a household from an early age; boys are taught about the milpa, and they generally attend school longer than girls. Boys are also encouraged to seek wage labor as soon as they are physically able to handle the demands of such employment.

The woman is also responsible for the solar and the small domesticated animals housed there. The solar consists of fruit trees, vegetables, herbs and spices that are grown mostly for household consumption, although some products are sold to local stores or markets whenever there is a surplus or a need to earn extra cash. Women have traditionally cared for and exercised considerable control over production in the solar (Elmendorf 1976; Forrest 1991). The increasing involvement in commodity production and wage labor activities has resulted in a mixed response toward solar production. A decrease in production (both in quantity and diversity) in the solar (Forrest 1991) has been documented for households that have chosen to devote more time to income-generating activities; thus, the role of the solar in household production is declining. However, because the solar provides a small, but continuous, flow of products for the subsistence of the household and often a surplus which is sold, some women have increased solar production and thus increased a major source of income. The solar is therefore a very versatile productive activity which is modified by women to best meet household needs.

Gender roles are also distinct outside of the household. For the most part, men dominate civic affairs (Beyene 1989). They run for local office and fulfill the roles of President, Secretary and Treasurer of the ejido. If the town serves as the municipio (county) head, the Presidente Ejidatal is also the Presidente Municipal. The officers are in charge of parceling out ejido land and government aid. They also work closely with the Presidente Municipal who, in turn, reports to the state governor. The officers also handle civil disputes (Maya villages usually do not have a police force) and, together with the male heads of household, vote on local affairs (ibid.), such as where and when to hold a patron saint's celebration, whether to donate ejido money to support a local soccer team, or whether to write a letter to the proper authorities requesting better healthcare options.

Maya households are generally comprised of nuclear families, although it is not unusual to find an extended household, usually including an older couple with one of their sons, his wife and children (Beyene 1989; Everton 1991). Some families have separate residences, but share a solar; this usually happens with siblings (Forrest 1991). The head of the household is usually the oldest male, unless he no longer contributes a steady income, in which case the son becomes the head. The oldest woman delegates authority and oversees the work and activities of all the women in her household. Marital residence is generally neolocal and kinship is bilateral. Women marry between ages 15 and 18; men usually a few years later. More recently, male outmigration has resulted in the exodus of young men, sometimes permanently. Some young men marry outside of their community, although many prefer to return to their hometowns to marry a "proper" woman, that is, one who is approved by their parents (Everton 1991).

The ideal Maya woman is a hard worker who obeys her parents and, later, her husband (Beyene 1989; Kintz 1990). She is softspoken, nurturing, compliant and subordinate. The ideal Maya man is also a hard worker who honors his

parents and respects his wife, although a husband's will should dominate his wife's. Nevertheless, the relationship between husband and wife is best defined as complementary; together, a man and a woman form a home (Kintz 1990). As the head of his family, a man must provide for them by working hard in the milpa and earning money. A woman complements and supports her husband's work by transforming corn into food for the family.

Research Communities

Sudzal

The village of Sudzal is located 75 km. east of Merida, and 7 km. from the town of Izamal. Despite its proximity to the largest urban center in Yucatan, there is no road that directly links Sudzal with Merida, and a trip to the capital usually takes three hours. According to the 1990 census, approximately 1300 people live in Sudzal (INEGI 1991). Most live in traditional thatched homes; piped water and electricity are available, but not all families can afford these services.

The population of Sudzal is divided into two main classes: the large ranch owners, who also control the town's six general stores, the bars and the corn mill, and the larger part of the population which cultivates milpa, and depends on the former class for employment opportunities. Nearly 85 percent of the population is bilingual (Spanish and Maya); less than 10 percent speaks only Spanish, and only 3 percent speaks only Maya (ibid.) Today, the majority of the population (59 percent) is Roman Catholic, while the rest (38 percent) belong to evangelical Protestant churches. Some Maya rituals dealing with the blessing of crops are still performed by the elders of the community (Mossbrucker 1994).

The main economic activity of the village is milpa cultivation (utilizing ejido land), although a few families also grow vegetables. During the last decade, however, an increasing number of cattle ranchers (mainly wealthy investors from Merida) have bought land in and around the village, and many Maya men earn income by working for these large landowners as day laborers, caring for cattle, clearing land for grazing, mending fences, etc. (Mossbrucker 1994). The availability of wage labor and cash income has meant that few men (or families) have emigrated in search of employment. In 1993, 15 men migrated to an urban center each week and returned to Sudzal during the weekends (see Mossbrucker 1994). Generally, those who choose to migrate take their families with them and leave the village permanently.

Since the beginning of the boom in the tourist industry approximately two and a half decades ago, the cash income generated by men has been supplemented by the earnings of women. Tourist demand has resulted in the weaving of hammocks by women for sale (Arceo and Morales 1993). For the most part, women buy thread or nylon from a middleman in Izamal or nearby towns; he also picks up the finished product several weeks later (Mossbrucker 1994). In sum, families retain ejido land by cultivating milpa; their main source of income is male wage labor, and petty commercial production of hammocks by women.

Chichimila

Chichimila is an old colonial town located 5 km. south of Valladolid, with a population of 2,300 in 1981 (Beyene 1989). Although larger than most Maya communities, it only has one paved road and few public buildings, including a clinic (but no doctor), an elementary school room, and a municipal office building. Most homes are constructed in the traditional Maya manner of a thatched roof hut with dirt or sascab¹ floor. Like Sudzal, piped water and electricity are available, but few families can afford it. The spoken language in Chichimila is Maya, although Spanish is taught in school. Chichimilenos describe themselves as Roman Catholic, although most people believe in and perform Maya rituals and ceremonies (Everton 1991).

The main occupation is agriculture, mostly slash and burn milpa production (Beyene 1989; Everton 1991). Corn, beans, squash and tomatoes are grown in the milpa while other vegetables, herbs, and peppers are grown in the solar. The two kinds of land ownership are communal ejido land and private land. There is a shortage of ejido land, however, and some villagers have to rent land for milpa. Ten stores provide the community with staples such as salt, sugar, poultry, eggs and peppers. No cash crops are grown in Chichimila. In contrast to Sudzal, family income is supplemented by temporary wage labor outside of the community, although both communities also depend on the sale of hammocks and embroidered items. The men of Chichimila generally migrate east to Cancun (Everton 1991) where they usually find employment in construction or in the service sector.

As in Sudzal, women's activities are centered around the household; they are rarely involved in civic affairs. A large portion of the women weave hammocks and embroider huipiles² for sale at Valladolid, and by age 13, girls can weave hammocks and embroider items for sale.

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1. Sascab is a Elite, powdery material available in limestone caves. It is often used to coat the floors in Maya homes.
 2. Huipil is the traditional women's dress. It is white with brightly colored embroidered flowers along the square neckline at the base of the dress.

Recent research in this area has described the consumption of alcohol among men as a significant social problem. Women have to make more money to support their children because men are spending money on alcohol (Bevene 1989; Everton 1991). Beyene (1989) argues that the problem with alcohol in Chichimila is mostly among men engaged in wage labor outside of the community, possibly because of the extra income earned or because of being exposed to drinking behavior outside of Chichimila. Alcoholism is most problematic among young men who feel that they no longer fit into the traditional lifestyle of their parents because they have gone to school and are literate, but still lack the necessary skills to fit into the world beyond their community.

Thus unlike Sudzal, Chichimila's integration into the Mexican commercial economy has resulted in the temporary labor emigration of a large portion of the male sector. The household economy is based on a combination of milpa cultivation, outside wage labor by men, solar production, and hammock and embroidery production by women.

Sudzal and Chichimila: A Comparative Study

Sudzalenos have managed to remain in the village because of the wage labor opportunities available nearby. Chichimilenos, however, have to migrate further away to seek wage labor employment. Both communities, however, depend upon the important economic contributions of women. As men lose their capacity to fulfill their roles as sole breadwinners, and women increasingly contribute to household income, gender relations are subtly transformed (Beyene 1989; Eber 1995, ReCruz 1996). In Chichimila, male outmigration has transformed the domestic domain by stripping the typical Maya family of its male head. The creation of female-headed households has had great implications for women's roles in this community. These changes generate conflict as women try to assert greater authority and men try to retain their traditional roles of heads of household. A comparative study will allow me to assess how rural Maya households have adapted to different forms of integration into the Mexican commercial economy, and what this differential adaptation has meant for women in terms of domestic relations, gender roles and gender ideology.

Specific Research Goals

- 1) To document, for each of the two communities, general household socioeconomic and demographic information. This includes taking a census of each community, in which data on household size and distribution, marital and family patterns, and economic activities will be collected.
- 2) To document, for each community, beliefs about domestic relations, gender roles, and gender ideology. This involves documenting which personality traits are valued in men and women and beliefs about how the Maya understand what is male and what is female.
- 3) To assess the economic contributions to the household by men and women. This involves the identification of men's and women's economic activities, as well as documenting both cash and subsistence contributions to the household.
- 4) To describe, for each community, how economic, social and cultural factors favor the differential valuation of male and female work. This involves the identification and analysis of (i) the perceived (ideological) and actual economic contribution by men and women; (ii) the perceived and actual availability of work for men and women, and (iii) the attitudes and values about what is considered the work of men, women, boys and girls. What happens to patterns of female subordination when women become household providers?
- 5) To identify variability between the two communities regarding patterns of gender relations and gender ideology. I will identify and analyze (i) the components of gender relations, including family relations, female subordination, and gender stratification; (ii) the changing status of women: are women valued differently if they generate an income? Has this resulted in more independence or autonomy for women?
- 6) To examine the growing problem of alcoholism. This involves the documentation of the financial and social consequences of male alcohol consumption. Are the men who drink regularly contributing any money to the household? Is alcohol a major household expenditure? How has alcohol affected domestic relations? How does drinking affect the overall livelihood of the household?
- 7) In light of the data, I will identify and analyze how male outmigration has affected gender ideology and gender roles between the two communities, and how Maya women cope with these contested roles. This involves the examination of a shift in authority and autonomy within the household for women. Are women simply "placeholders," or are they achieving more say in domestic and public affairs? I will also explain why women acquire certain roles within the household, while other roles remain strictly within the male domain. To what extent are women constrained to the household? I will then explain how this role "transformation" benefits (i.e. more autonomy, more decision-making abilities) or impairs (i.e. more subordination, "doubleworkday") women's daily lives.

Hypotheses

- 1) Women in the community where men migrate will assert more authority within the household, including having more decision-making authority regarding child-rearing, household expenditures, and healthcare.
- 2) With male outmigration women will consider themselves to be household heads during the absence of men. The men who migrate will embrace machismo attitudes and beliefs from their fellow workers in the urban areas promoting conflict as their wives gain control of household affairs.
- 3) In the community where men migrate, it will be difficult for women to integrate themselves into the public sphere

as this has always been a male's domain. Those women who actively participate in the planning of community events will face conflict as they venture over into formerly male-dominated roles.

4) In the community where men migrate, alcohol-related incidents, such as spousal abuse and public fights, will be significantly greater than in the non-migrating community. This will generate conflict within the domestic sphere as women cope with abusive behavior. In addition, conflict will arise as more money is funneled toward alcohol than toward household expenditures.

5) With male outmigration, younger families (according to the stage in the developmental cycle) will be more accepting of changing gender roles than older families. This is because younger families lose more members and must restructure and renegotiate gender roles and relations during an early phase of the stage in the developmental cycle.

6) In the community where men migrate, men will continue to perform traditional Maya rituals (modified to fit their new schedules) as a way to assert and retain their role as household heads and main providers.

Other research hypotheses dealing with the impact of male outmigration (the independent variable) on gender roles, relations and ideology will be formulated in the field following the initial household censuses.

Methodology

Data Collection

The research will be divided into two phases and will consist of two parts for each community:

Phase I. Sudzal

- a) household socioeconomic census (months 1 & 2)
- b) interviews, event analyses and life histories (months 3- 6)

Phase II: Chichimila

- a) household socioeconomic census (months 7-8)
- b) interviews, event analyses and life histories (months 9-12)

Household Socioeconomic Census

The first two months in each community will be spent conducting a comprehensive socioeconomic census of 100 households (the unit of analysis) in Sudzal, and 150 households in Chichimila. This constitutes approximately 50% of all Sudzal households, and 33% of households in Chichimila. To ensure a representative sample, I will examine church and community records in order to assess the overall makeup of my research population. (i.e. percent Catholic, percent protestant, landowners, store owners, etc.) A local research assistant will be hired to direct me around the community and help me locate informants. Whenever possible, I will census every other household in Sudzal, and every third household in Chichimila, making sure to include a representative number of households located on the fringes of town. I will gather information on household size and composition, marital patterns,

religion, productive resources and activities, sources of income and income earners, amount of income earned, expenditures, and types of consumer items owned. These data will enable me to understand the household economy household relations and organization, and family socioeconomic stratification.

The sample of households will be carefully constructed to ensure representativeness in terms of variability across household; the major differences among Maya households stem from a) their choice of household economic strategy (occupation/income) b) stage in the developmental cycle of the family (young, middle-aged, and elderly families) and c) religion (Catholic or Protestant). Major household economic strategies include: 1) subsistence production (milpa and solar), 2) commodity production/marketing (hammocks and embroidered items), 3) combination of subsistence and commodity production, 4) combination of wage labor (with or without migration) and commodity production, and 5) combination of subsistence, commodity production and wage labor.

Previous research in Maya communities (see Cancian 1992; Elmendorf 1976; ReCruz 1996) suggests that the stages in the developmental cycle can be defined as: Stage A: household heads are less than 40 years old, still reproductively active, household includes small children; Stage B: household heads are middle aged (40-60 years), children are teenagers, may include adult children's spouses; Stage C: household heads are over 60 years old, may include adult children and their families.

Yucatec Maya have strong religious roots in the Catholic Church. During the last ten to fifteen Years, however, a number of Maya have converted to various evangelical sects. The evangelicals teach their members that if they work hard they will overcome their economic problems; this contrasts greatly with the Catholic teachings of endurance and suffering. These ideological differences appear to be associated with differences in household economic activities. Today, the majority of the population is still Catholic, but the evangelical movement has promoted greater economic stratification between households.

Structured Interviewing,

The remaining four months at each community will be spent interviewing a smaller representative sample (Bernard 1994) of 50 households in Sudzal, and 75 households in Chichimila, stratified by major economic strategy, stage in the developmental cycle of the family, and religion. I will interview household heads and their spouses. The interviews will help identify how individual and household characteristics and behavior correlate with the various economic activities for men and women and with views on gender roles and relations. I will conduct interviews separately in order to obtain individual male and female opinions. The interviews will include specific questions on:

1. motivations concerning household member's economic activities,
2. actual and perceived economic contribution to the household by males and females,
3. patterns of intra-household decision making and authority,
4. patterns of domestic relations,
5. attitudes concerning gender ideology, gender relations and gender roles, and,
6. attitudes concerning prestige, esteem and status for men and women.

Motivations Concerning Household Economic Activities: Why did you decide to make hammocks, embroider, get a wage job, migrate, etc.? Describe the types and amount of resources produced. What amount of productive resources

is generated by subsistence production? wage labor? commodity production? How is the money earned by each activity spent? How much time do you spend in the milpa? the solar? weaving? on the job? Would you like to spend more time in subsistence production, wage labor, or commodity production?

Economic Contribution to the Household: How much of the productive resources do you contribute? Who contributes more productive resources to the household, the husband or the wife? Who contributes more income to the household? What other contributions, aside from income, do you make to the household? What are the household activities appropriate for women? for men? How much time do you spend daily on each activity? Does anyone help you with your work? Which do you think is the most important economic activity in your household?

Decision Making and Authority: Informants will be asked to relate decision making and authority patterns between themselves and their spouses in the context of the a) domestic/productive domain (milpa, solar, childrearing) and the b) public or community domain (social events, church).

a. Domestic Activities: reproduction (how many children should you have?), household maintenance decisions (chores, repairs), food shopping/gathering and preparation, family health care, children's education, choices regarding economic activities (including migration), and income expenditures.

b. Public/Community: members' participation in church (including Saint's Day celebrations, first communions, Protestant celebrations, etc.), and other community groups and activities (political parties, Maya rain ceremonies, school graduations, etc.)

Informants will be asked specific questions regarding current events in the community and daily events in the home. For example: who decided to participate in the Patron's Saint Day celebration? who can participate in political rallies? who decided how much time and money is spent in religious activities? social activities? who decided to go to the store? the market? who decided how much money to spend on clothes? school books? medicine? food? who decided to send the children to secondary school?

Informants will be asked about the decision to migrate or not migrate. How did your family decide that someone (i.e. spouse, son) should migrate? What factors led your family to decide where this person should migrate to? Who made the final decision concerning migration or non-migration?

These data will help identify the factors causing variation between households and between the two communities, especially between migrating and non-migrating households.

Domestic Relations: who is the head of the household? what is the appropriate behavior of a husband? a wife? a mother? a son/daughter? how are disagreements or disputes dealt with? For women: what happens when the husband is away? who is responsible for making household decisions? For men: who is responsible for making household decisions when you are away?

These data will help identify how women organize their lives around domestic, productive and reproductive activities.

Gender Ideology: what is expected of you if you are a man? woman? Describe the ideal male/female. Describe the ideal spouse. How is your spouse similar/different to the ideal spouse? What are women's activities? what is proper/improper for a woman to do? (same for men). For women: what other activities do you have to do when your husband is away? Who takes over your husband's milpa while he is away? For both men and women I will ask specific questions regarding changing gender attitudes and ideology since the men's migration: Have you/your spouse

changed your views about the ideal male/female since you/your spouse migrated? What do you think about your community (i.e. family gatherings, social events, political movements, etc.) in comparison with Merida, Cancun, etc.?

Attitudes about Esteem and Prestige: what is the characteristic that you most value about your husband? wife? what is the characteristic that is most valued about a man? a woman? which is the most prestigious role for a man? a woman? what types of activities provide esteem to a person? how does a person merit respect in the community? what can a woman/man do that will bring them esteem? value?

Event Analysis and Life Histories

In order to gain an in-depth ethnographic understanding of the two communities, I will also conduct an event analysis (Pelto 1970) of some of the major community events, such as religious ceremonies, political elections, school graduations, etc. I will participate in as many events as possible during my stay in each community, and interview key informants about any major event that I miss. This will enable me to document the social organization and gender organization of community activities. It will also allow me to verify how much time is spent working on different tasks, and how the tasks and organization differ between the community where men migrate and where they do not.

To understand change over time in men's and women's lives in both communities, I will also gather the life histories (Ellen 1984) of twenty women and men in each community, stratified by age (ten women and ten men in each community ages 50-60; ten women and ten men in each community in their thirties). I will interview a mix of migrant and non-migrant couples. The life histories and the event analyses will aid in identifying variability between the two communities regarding patterns of gender relations and stratification.

Data Analysis

Storage and preliminary analysis of the data will be conducted utilizing a notebook computer. I will develop codes for the census data, the event analyses, and the interviews. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for Windows will be used to enter into the computer the responses to the household census. An advanced college student in anthropology from the Universidad Autonoma de Yucatan will be hired to help enter census data into the computer. Qualitative data (fieldnotes, life histories, direct observations) will be entered into the computer

using Microsoft Word; a detailed household database will be created using Filemaker Pro. Categories and themes such as why families choose to migrate and whether migrants are marginal or mainstream (financially/socially) members of the community will be identified and analyzed using Ethnograph.

In order to test for differences between the migrating and nonmigrating communities, I will correlate the independent variable of migration (or nonmigration) with the following dependent variables: household income, decision-making authority, women's involvement in public affairs, etc.. In order to show similarities and differences in gender relations and ideology, I will examine components of prestige, gender stratification, gender ideology, and the valuation of work, and correlate these with migration, income, decision-making authority, religion, stage in the developmental cycle, etc. For example, decision-making authority will be coded into the following range of attitudes: no authority, some authority, equal authority, most authority, full authority.

Significance and Feasibility

Significance

The migratory movement of rural people in response to wage labor opportunities is a major phenomenon in the developing world. This study will contribute to the building of theory on migration, women and economic development because I will identify factors which result in the "feminization of communities," the "estrangement" of men from the family and community (Crain 1991), and factors associated with identity construction during times of economic change. The study of the impact of migration on those left behind, in this case women, is an area which has not been thoroughly examined in previous migration studies. In particular, my research will explain how gender relations are transformed, and how this transformation has affected women's roles, domestic relations, and family structure in Yucatec Maya society.

By studying two communities, I will identify the economic and social factors which result in the necessity of male outmigration in one community and not the other. I will also identify ideological factors which have contributed to the restructuring and reshaping of gender relations and the reconstruction of gender roles in this society. I will then be able to assess in what ways the absence of males has positively and negatively affected women's daily lives.

In addition to its theoretical contributions, this study has practical significance for government agencies currently contemplating the implementation of development projects which seek to improve the economic situation of rural communities. My study will shed some light on the options faced by women and the accommodations they make when faced with the issue of male outmigration. By understanding the condition of the Maya household in migrating and nonmigrating communities, development planners will be better able to design culturally and gender appropriate socioeconomic projects for the Yucatan's rural sector.

Feasibility

As a Mexican citizen, I have had the opportunity to travel extensively throughout the republic. Because of my research interests, I am most familiar with the Yucatan peninsula region and have visited villages throughout the state of Yucatan. In addition to my fluency in Spanish, I have also completed a course on Yucatec Maya; I spent the summer of 1994 living in a Yucatec Maya community where I was able to practice my speaking skills on a daily basis. My fluency in Spanish and familiarity with the people, language, and culture of Yucatan ensure that my project is highly feasible.

In addition, I have established a collaboration with government and academic **institutions in Mexico**. During January of 1996, I met with anthropologists at the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) in Merida, Yucatan, to discuss my project. I was informed by Dr. Ella F. Quintal that formal government permission is not necessary in order for me to conduct ethnographic research. I also met with Professor Francisco Fernandez at the Universidad Autonoma de Yucatan (UADY) and with Professor Mauricio Macossay at the Universidad de Chapingo (UC). Both offered to establish an affiliation between me and their respective institutions. I also have access to the library facilities at the INAH, UADY and UC. In turn, the results of my study will be shared with the INAH and the universities.

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