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Maya Summer Program Papers and Presentations

How Field Programs Produce Research: Inviting Chiapas Contacts To Be Teachers
Ethnographic field schools are extraordinary instructional efforts, especially in remote, conflictive locations like Chiapas, Mexico. With adequate preparation and appropriate student engagement, field interactions can also become catalysts for research for involved students and faculty. Hosting enthusiastic students became a welcome break for Chiapas colleagues whose lives involve the stressful processes associated with sociopolitical transformation. For them, stopping to teach was a valued exchange. Because the geopolitics of the Zapatista landscape promotes the need for international allies and ritual family, we became part of each other's process of learning and inquiry, an investment in our mutual futures. In this session students describe their research and how it came about, set amid our commentary on logistics of doing field programs in an autonomous zone.

EARLE, Duncan (UTEP) *We Need To Talk: "Informed Permission" and Committed Collaboration* All anthropological research, including student projects, involves dilemmas concerning informed consent and the oversight of IRB's. In Chiapas, the autonomous municipal leadership has designed their own process of research approval. As part of the "24/7" structure of teaching a field program and assisting students to develop field studies, we learned how those with whom we work in the field structure their approval process, through meetings and consensus. This presentation discusses the community decision-making process and how mutually informed collaboration in applied field programs begins.

NIEHAUS, Elizabeth (U of Virginia) *Indigenous Autonomy and Community Development* One of the most difficult theoretical challenges in community development work is finding a balance between imposing western values and ideals on other cultures and denying people the opportunity to take advantage of the benefits of the modern world. In order to avoid falling into either of these traps, a new model of community development is necessary. This paper examines the ways in which an already existing model, that of autonomy, is already in use in Chiapas, Mexico, and how this model can be applied to community development efforts.

GAA, Melissa (U of North Texas) *Problems and Solutions: Education In Chiapas, Mexico* Mexico has multiple types of schools with many significant differences in what is taught. A major critique of government-funded schools is that they deny indigenous children a strong cultural education. In contrast, autonomous and nonprofit education systems are keeping culture animate within their communities by focusing teachings on

their own history. Believing that the children are the future of their community and deserve an effective and relevant education, autonomous schools teach in a way that differs from the government primary schools, which often offer education only to the fourth grade. In Cerro Verde, Chiapas children learn their own heritage while also becoming proficient in the 3 R's.

BOWELL, Ben (Wake Forest) *Maya Agriculture: Influences and Problems*. Agriculture has been of great significance in the lives of the Maya people since they began to cultivate their food. Though the contemporary farming practices of the Maya of Chiapas and Guatemala are well-founded and rational, outsiders often view them as inefficient. This presentation examines Maya agricultural practices using information from fieldwork in Chiapas and Guatemala. I conclude that micro-ecological crop diversification regimes may still provide the most sustainable strategies, even within the context of NAFTA, Plan Puebla Panama and structural adjustment.

BREAK

ROJAS, Raymundo Eli (UTEP) *Leadership Development and Transition in Grass-Roots Organizations in Chiapas, Mexico* Analysis of organizational structure has typically focused on examples from the First World, and points out many pitfalls. In contrast, this paper focuses on the structure and development of grassroots organizations among contemporary Maya. By studying the organizational structures of such groups, US organizations can avoid these problems. I focus on grassroots organization's stages of development. An analysis of these in contemporary Chiapas provides examples of leadership development and transition in power, derived from research with co-ops, solidarity movements and autonomous counties. Finally, I examine consensus within an organization in light of personal dynamics. The presentation uses examples gathered during fieldwork and provides recommendations for avoiding organizational pitfalls.

OWENS, D. Jody (U of South Florida) *A Woman's Place: Gender, Development and Collective Organization Among the Highland Mayas* Economic development, once viewed as a panacea for Third World poverty, continues to fall short of goals and expectations. Nowhere is this more evident than in the highlands of Chiapas, Mexico and the department of El Quiché in western Guatemala. Social, economic and political factors converging with the failure of development serve as catalysts for collective organization among indigenous people in the region. This paper examines increasing collectivity among the Maya and the ways in which women mobilize and contribute to these collective movements. It is part of an initial exploratory research project utilizing anthropological and historical perspectives, with emphasis on the Chiapas field experience.

BALL, Jennifer (Vanderbilt) *Controlling Exploitation: Twenty-first Century Tourism in Maya Communities* Cultural tourism constitutes one of, if not the most important global product within Mayan areas of Latin America. However, Mayan communities cannot reap the full benefits of cultural tourism without complete economic and political

autonomy over tourism decisions affecting them, and without a working knowledge of what tourists expect and desire from their vacation. This paper explores the benefits and drawbacks of tourism in relation to the levels of indigenous autonomy and tourist knowledge possessed by a community. In particular, the paper looks at the specific tourism situations of five communities with indigenous populations in Chiapas, Mexico and Guatemala.

SIMONELLI, Jeanne (Wake Forest) *From Autonomy to Gastronomy: Taking Service to Research to Practical Application* The Maya Summer program included a service component, as well as teaching and research. Though in some field locations we arrived with a preconceived service goal, communities often had other, more pressing needs. Through meetings, we did on the spot needs assessments yielding service projects, research topics, and long term development possibilities. This presentation discusses the community decision-making process and how collaboration in applied field programs can continue.

DISCUSSION

MARTINEZ, Marcial (UTEP) *The Impact of Religion, Politics and Zapatismo on Indigenous Communities in Chiapas*. This research depicts consequences of religious, political and social forces on indigenous communities in Chiapas. Even before the indigenous revolt of 1994, some indigenous divided themselves from other members of their communities because of religious and political differences. However, after the uprising, the division among indigenous became more intense, especially with the creation of autonomous municipalities. Uncontrolled manipulation of diverse leaders led to violent attacks and thousands of displaced people. Since the uprising, religious, political and social tolerance is still not being exercised. Neither Zapatistas and the Mexican government, pro-Zapatistas and anti-Zapatistas, traditional Catholics and Catechist Catholics, or reform Catholics and Protestants have reached a consensus that would guarantee a permanent peace in Chiapas.

SOTELO, Teresa (UTEP) *Still Water Moving: Creative Adaptation Among the Maya*. The region and people of southern Mexico and Guatemala have seen many changes. In spite of unbelievable hardships and suffering, the numbers and presence of native languages and customs reflect the survival and resistance of the olvidados. This presentation focuses on the cultural resistance of the persecuted. From weavings to religious symbols to colors to language, it is evident that although much has been "lost", there is a tremendous link within the traditions and customs of the current indigenous to those of their ancestors. Creative adaptation has won out over total obliteration and conquest.

STORY, Elizabeth (Wake Forest) "One Long Sunday": Women's Work in the Context of Two Chiapas Ejidos. Based on fieldwork in two Maya communities in Chiapas, Mexico, this poster presentation explores women's work in the context of community cohesion or

individuality. Examples are provided of factors that contribute to the varying degrees of cooperation, including religious beliefs/practices and the political views/positions of a particular community. To understand how women's work is structured, it is crucial to understand the political and religious atmosphere in which women live.