Synopsis of Proposal

(Revisions)

PI Name: Cristina Ocón

Globalization and Migration Patterns in Nahá, Chiapas

The primary focus of my research is the affect of migration and the process of economic globalization in the Lacandon Maya community of Nahá in Chiapas, Mexico. In this project I will study the economic factors that affect Lacandon Maya community members, in particular, migration and globalization. During a 12 week research project I will study the significance migration. If so, how does income generated by migrants affect the community? Is the community becoming increasingly globalized due to the income generated by the migrating workers? If so, how are migration and globalization impacting youth people in the community? These questions explore the heart of a larger issue that is how indigenous communities relate to two of the global economic issues affecting Mexico today, migration and tourism. If Lacandon families depend on income that is generated as a result of migrating family members, and this may include either migrating abroad or moving from rural areas to local cities within the nation, how does this affect families and the larger community structure in a society that twenty years ago was based on rainforest farming?

1. Participants will include all adult residents of Nahá, and former Nahá residents that have migrated to Palenque in search of tourist related employment. Participants will include adult individuals ranging from 18 years and older. Individuals that will not participate in this study include: individuals who suffer from physical illnesses, are mentally ill, are known to be violent, individuals known to engage in illicit behaviors or activities, minors, and children.
2. Ethnographic field methods such as participant observation, informal and formal interviews, focus groups, oral histories, surveys, and archival research will be conducted. I will inform all participants of my research topic. I will ask for permission from all participants to record information acquired from the methods listed above. Since participants may be illiterate or have minimal reading skills I will rely on verbal consent because written consent will not be fully understood. Participants will be recruited through participant observation and initial informal interviews. Furthermore, my participants will be recruited using Dr. R. Jon McGee’s past collaborators acquired from past research in the community of Naha. I will receive permission from participants to observe labor activities, and conduct interviews.

When I employ interviews I will provide a thorough explanation of my project and be sure that potential participants fully understand my topic and any potential risk. I will assure participants that their data will be confidential, and I ask if they consent to participate. I will also inform participants of how I will guard the data they provide. This will include protecting all electronic files by using password-protected folders in a password-protected laptop. All paper data will be turned into electronic files. Notes and notebook data will be stored in a locked safe box; upon my return to the United States, they will be shredded. Furthermore, I will ask for their consent for audio recordings. The participants will decide the location and time of interviews, if they insist that it is my decision I will suggest their homes or the home where I will be residing. Focus groups will also take up to an hour and all participants will decide the location for these focus groups. I am certain that focus groups will also occur in homes. All interviews will last up to an hour. Upon arrival, I will verify that participants understand the project and once again verify consent to be interviewed and/ or recorded.

As the researcher I will introduce myself and my project to potential participants in the following manner: My name is Cristina Ocón, am conducting a research project on migration patterns and the effects of globalization. I am specifically interested in economic pressures that cause migration such as tourism, and cultural changes that occur as a result of migration and globalization. Furthermore, I will also focus on how the community changes due to the Mexican government’s tourist and economic policies. The migration patterns that I want to investigate include; who is migrating, education levels, and if migration is becoming a pattern within family units. I will investigate if migration and globalization is creating a dependent economy or developing their economy. I will ask if they are willing to discuss these issues. If individuals do not agree to participate I will thank them for their time. If participants agree to participate, I will proceed by following the procedures listed in the paragraph above.

1. The potential risks for participants are minimal: minor social anger, embarrassment, or sadness associated with oral histories, community history, and personal experience may all be possibilities. If the participants express signs of discomfort during the interview I will ask them if they want to continue with the interview. If they do, I will change the topic. These reactions may be unavoidable but have minimal consequences. In order to protect the participants information from non-researchers, I will translate their information to English, all information will be transported on to my password protected laptop (if laptops are an option), and maintain all electronic and paper copies of research material under lock and key.
2. Procedures to protect against or minimize potential risks will include paying attention for any signs of emotional discomforts include immediate acknowledgment of their feelings and by asking the participants if they wish to continue with the interview. The topics that will be discussed will not be of sensitive, private, or controversial in the community. In order to protect the participants information from non-researchers, I will translate their information to English, all information will be transported on to my password protected laptop (if laptops are an option), and maintain all electronic and paper copies of research material under lock and key.
3. This research has the potential to discuss the livelihoods of the Lacandon Maya through a new perspective. In the past the Lacandon Maya of have been subjects of research that focuses on their probable past ancestors which has resulted in a portrayal of the “unconquered Maya”. Researching the effects of migration on the community will provide new perspectives on the economic changes that have occurred in Nahá since McGee first documented the effects of tourism in his published work of 2002. Further, studying the globalization of Naha can help document the processes of change that are occurring in indigenous communities around the world, and whether this change offers new opportunities or leads to community disintegration. My research will contribute a new perspective of the Lacandon, which has been misunderstood in the past.
4. Minor risks to participants may include temporary sadness, anger or embarrassment during interviews. I will stop the interview in the event of such emotions, and remind participants that they do not have to discuss any topics that are discomforting them. Any other potential risks include loss of confidential data. Refer to the procedures listed in #4 to secure the participants’ data. If theft is to occur, the data provided is not highly sensitive, nor will it include private information, plus any written documents will be translated to English.
5. I will attend private homes, churches, local businesses, and government agencies to conduct research. I will thoroughly explain the purpose of the project to everyone I interact with. Potential participants will decide if they want to continue interaction with me, invite me to their home or institutions, and whether they want to be interviewed and recorded. Participants will decide to which degree I can observe, interact with, and interview them. Once again, I will rely on verbal consent since my research will be better understood through verbal communication than through written documentation.
6. I am a pursuing my Master’s thesis in the department of Anthropology at Texas State University. I will conduct research under the guidance and direction of Dr. R. Jon McGee and other professional anthropologists including Dr. A. Juarez (Texas State University faculty) and Dr. J. Palka (University of Illinois at Chicago faculty). My supervising sponsor, and head advisor is Dr. R. Jon McGee.
7. Refer to response # 8.
8. This project has not had previews review by other Institutional Review Boards.
9. Aside from my access to the research materials produced from this study, my thesis committee members will also have access to data acquired. Further research access will be based on continued confidentiality.