

UC Santa Cruz

UC Santa Cruz Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Migrating Performative Traditions: The Guelaguetza Festival In Oaxacalifornia

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/029764fs>

Author

Chavez, Xochitl Consuelo

Publication Date

2013

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA CRUZ

**MIGRATING PERFORMATIVE TRADITIONS: THE GUELAGUETZA FESTIVAL IN
OAXACALIFORNIA**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirement for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

ANTHROPOLOGY

with an emphasis LATIN AMERICAN AND LATINO/A STUDIES

by

Xóchitl C. Chávez

September 2013

The Dissertation of Xóchitl C. Chávez
is approved:

Professor Olga Nájera-Ramírez, Chair

Professor Patricia Zavella

Professor Jonathan Fox

Professor Donald Brenneis

Tyrus Miller
Vice Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies

Copyright © by
Xóchitl C. Chávez
2013

Table of Contents

List of Images	iv
List of Maps	v
Abstract	vi
Agradecimientos/Acknowledgements	vii
Chapter 1 Mi primera Guelaguetza en California	1
Chapter 2 Migración mexicana y la comunidad Oaxaqueña	45
Chapter 3 Welcome to Oaxacalifornia: Making Community and the Migrant Guelaguetza	66
Chapter 4 The Delicate Dance of a Transnational Festival: Politics of Participation and Performance	122
Chapter 5 Conclusion	172
Appendix 1 Santa Cruz City Proclamation 2007 to Vive Oaxaca	184
Bibliography	186

List of Images

Image 1 Rogelio and Victor cooking Caldo de Pollo	3
Image 2 Danza y Bailes Grupo Centeotl of Santa Cruz representing the China Oaxaqueñas at the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium	9
Image 3 Coca-Cola publicity for the 2007 Oaxaca City Guelaguetza festival	20
Image 4 Tel-Mex calling card with 2007 official Guelaguetza festival poster	20
Image 5 ORO Guelaguetza poster from 1998	84
Image 6 Sr. Otomi explaining blue print sketch created for the Guelaguetza festival at Normandie Park.	87
Image 7 Picture of Governor Cué addressing the audience at Normandie Park	96
Image 8 Carlos adjusting his Danza de la pluma Crown	111
Image 9 Santa Cruz Sentinel newspaper Sunday, June 24, 200	120
Image 10 Posters denouncing the privatization of the Guelaguetza in California.	179

Lists of Maps and Charts

Map 1 State Map divided into eight geographical regions: Canada, Costa, Papaloapan, Valles Centrales, Isthmo, Mixteca, Sierra Norte, Sierra Sur	53
Map 2 Image of Migration from Oaxaca to California	54
Map 3 Municipalities in Oaxaca with the highest migrations to the United States (CONAPO 2000)	59
Chart 1 Location Guelaguetza festivals in California and others states	44-46
Chart 2 Top 10 Counties of Indigenous settlement 2000-2010	61
Chart 3 Calendar of Events for each organization	78
Chart 4 Guelaguetza Programs: Analysis of participating groups and dances performed.	160-167
Chart 5 List Dances performed at Guelaguetza festival in Santa Cruz, Los Ángeles, San Jose and Fresno	168-169
Chart 6 Participating Delegations in the 2013 Oaxaca City Guelaguetza.	170-171
Appendix Proclamation to Vive Oaxaca Guelaguetza 2007	183-184

Abstract

MIGRATING PERFORMATIVE TRADITIONS: THE GUELAGUETZA FESTIVAL IN OAXACALIFORNIA

by Xóchitl C. Chávez

Migrating Performative Traditions: La Guelaguetza Festival in

Oaxacalifornia, offers an comprehensive study of the Guelaguetza festival, an indigenous Oaxacan transborder cultural performance. Recognizing that festivals are important sites through which cultural ideals and values are displayed, transmitted, and reproduced or challenged, I conducted original ethnographic research over an eight-year period to produce the first transnational study of the Guelaguetza festival. My research not only analyzes the production of the festival in Oaxaca City, but also follows the same migratory route of Oaxaqueño migrants across what many scholars have called, Oaxacalifornia in order to document the multiple re-productions of the Guelaguetza festival on different social terrains, specifically Los Angeles and Santa Cruz, California.

Producing this elaborate festival requires a tremendous amount of labor, time and resources. Therefore, one of my principal concerns in this dissertation was to explore why and how Oaxacan migrants produce their own Guelaguetzas in California and to understand what the festival means to the people and community. By juxtaposing the Guelaguetza festivals in Los Ángeles and Santa Cruz, I highlight how Oaxacan migrants first devised it as a creative way to claim cultural citizenship

in California and Oaxaca, and then came to use it to counteract racism, discrimination and gang violence.

Over the course of my research, I have come to appreciate how the migrant-produced Guelaguetza festivals offers insight on the negotiations of indigenous migrants' daily experiences and the process in constructing a sense of community in new geographical locations. The Oaxacan migrant community's ability to sponsor the festival in the United demonstrates that the migrant communities have established themselves within the political and cultural landscapes of California. In sum, this study offers a window into how indigenous working-class migrant communities with limited resources navigate new bureaucratic structures, cultural norms, and public spaces to maintain and assert their cultural identities in a transnational context.

Agradecimientos /Acknowledgements

Just like organizing a Guelaguetza festival, completing a doctorate is not done by oneself. It takes a tremendous amount of energy, time, and resources by many people. Traveling this academic path has had its fair share of bumps in the road. I would have not been able to finish my secondary education without the support, mentoring, and faith of the following people:

First, to my immediate family, my parents Consuelo Irene and Jose Octavio Chávez, who from an early age introduced me to Mexican folkloric dance and to *fiestas* in Colorado and Chihuahua. Who would have thought that one of their children would fall in love with dance and take it on as a field of study. *Mis queridos padres*, I love you both and thank you for all the *cariño* and support throughout all my years of education. Your countless care-packages of homemade comfort food items like *chicharrones* and frozen Pueblo green chile kept me tied to my Colorado roots. To my brother Augi and sister-in-law Brenda, thank you for being beyond supportive! Thank you for the wonderful honor of being Danica's *madrina*.

I want to thank my amazing committee, Professor Patricia Zavella, Donald Brenneis, and Jonathan Fox. Thank you for the unwavering dedication, meticulous comments and engagement with me and my research, especially under such tight deadlines. To my chair, Olga Najéra- Ramírez, although I did not have the pleasure of being able to study under Dr. Américo Paredes, I have learned so much about his work and mentorship from you. I recognize how fortunate I am to have you as an advisor. Thank you for diligence in my academic success and personal well-being. Your advocacy and guidance are incomparable. I only hope to be half the advisor you are to future Chicana@ graduate students as you were for me.

I wish to recognize all the professors and fellow students that have crossed my path, influencing my research,. To the Transnational Popular Culture Cluster, Borders, Bodies and Violence Research Cluster, and Dissertating Latinidades Research Cluster -- I am appreciative for the intellectual stimulation and work shopping of early drafts of my dissertation. Thank you, Marcia Ochoa, for your "Learning to See, Hear and Write" seminar which helped me develop my descriptive story-telling voice. Carolyn Martin-Shaw, thank you for teaching me how to write successful grant proposals and allowing me to use your office during my Dissertation Fellowship year. To Rosalee Cabera from "El Centro" and Pablo Reguerin of EOP thank you for all your amazing support these past couple of years. A special thank you to Dr. Adrián Félix for assisting this Chicana with her conceptual conundrums - I am truly grateful for your insightful comments that helped me advance Chapter 3, "Welcome to

Oaxacalifornia.” Thank you to my U.T. Austin compadres: Pablo Gonzalez, for taking me under your wing since 2002 and guiding your *hermanita* through this graduate school process; Susy Chávez, *querida prima*, thank you for welcoming and introducing me to your vast network of friends in Oaxaca City. Your supportive *palabras* inspired me on so many occasions; Alexandro Hernandez, thank you for being a steadfast friend and colega in Los Ángeles and in Washington D.C. My dear friend, Robert Hernandez Jr. II, thank you for your wonderful friendship all these years since CU-Boulder. Angelina Duran, our friendship goes back to high school. I can’t express enough how much it means to me that we are still friends and now completing our Ph.D.s together. Thank you to Robert Barba for offering edits to earlier versions of the introduction. To Russell Rodriguez, thank you for welcoming me to UCSC. Like an older brother you always watched out for me, offering advice and making sure I was not getting into trouble in San Jose. From UCSC, Erik Ramos, it was pleasure having you as a undergraduate research assistant and mentee. Thank you for accompanying me to numerous Guelaguetzas across Oaxacalifornia. Perla Garcia, *mujer*, I am grateful to you and your family these past three years. I know you will be successful at U.T. Austin.

My research was funded by numerous grants and fellowships: University of California’s Eugene V. Cota Robles Fellowship; UC-MEXUS Dissertation Research Grant; University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC) Lionel Cantu Memorial Award; UCSC Chicano Latino Research Center (CLRC) Mini grant; University of California Santa Cruz Department of Anthropology Writing Sabbatical; University of California Santa Cruz Teaching Assistant Sabbatical; and the University of California, Santa Cruz President’s Dissertation Fellowship.

I have an amazing family of friends that have kept me sane and grounded. *Mujeres*, you know I cherish our academic and non-academic *platicas*, study sessions, and *desmadrosa* outings. Claudia Andrade, thank you for the wonderful friendship, being a housemate and work colleague. Susy Zepeda and Sandra Alvarez, thank you for being my neighbors those first few years of graduate school- you both helped me in countless ways. Claudia Lopez, *querida amiga*, thank you and your family for allowing me into your home, being part of your wedding, and for reading drafts of my chapters. Alicia Romero, fellow Rocky Mountain and Crafty Chicana, *igual* thank you for welcoming me into your home, sharing many meals and for your friendship. Patricia Alvarez thank you for helping me visually document the Guelaguetza. I’m going to miss out weekly check-in sessions. My Chicana Herstorians, Christina Morales-Guzman and Marianne Bueno—you two rock my world! You two are my amazing *colegas*, *amigas* and trip companions (GDL 2006). A heartfelt thank you to

Marianne for always calling to inquire how I'm doing, in addition to being my writing coach/editor. To Rosa Ficek, mi amiga, colega, *comadre pero más que nada mi hermana*. You, Dany and Daisy have given me so much this past year. I am at a loss of words to express my appreciation and gratitude.

To my southern California friends: Juana Rosa Cavero, Stephen Smith and Rene Castillo, thank you for always keeping your doors open to me and allowing me to stay with you while I did my research in Los Ángeles. To the Oyoque Family de Santa Ana *les agradezco todo tu apoyo y cariño. Gracias a Cesar Cruz Santiago por acompañarme a Oaxaca in 2005. A mis amigas en Oaxaca, Paola Resendiz, Imelda Mendez, Diego Castillo y Baldo Robles gracias por tu amistad y por tu ayuda en Oaxaca. A mi familia en el norte de California: gracias al "Oaxaca House" en San José, gracias por siempre dar me ánimo en mis estudios y permitir convivir con ustedes. A la casa de Orquidas-La Familia Gómez: Don Antonio, Sr. Sergio, Robert and Thomas, gracias por recibirme en su casa, por recordarme que tengo que alimentarme bien y nunca olvidarme de mis sueños. A toda la comunidad Oaxaqueña radicado en Oaxacalifornia un inmenso agradecimiento por compartir su cultura y hogares conmigo todo estos años.*

Finally, while finishing my dissertation this summer, my family experienced the joy of a new family member, Dylan Chávez, my nephew, on June 29, 2013. Unfortunately, we also lost my paternal grandfather, Francisco Chávez –Rico, on August 18, 2013. I was unable to travel to be present with family during these moments. One promise I had hope to complete was to have my grandfather in attendance for my graduation – *aunque no estes aqui fiscamente -- se que estas cerca y le dedico este tesis en su honor, Abuelo Kiko.*

Chapter 1 *Mi primera Guelaguetza en California*

My journey following the Guelaguetza festival began the summer of 2005 when, as a feasibility test for my dissertation research, I traveled to Oaxaca City to observe the state-sponsored celebration. While in Oaxaca I traveled to several surrounding villages to see how the local communities produced the same event. After observing several Guelaguetza productions in Oaxaca, I thought about the differences between the festivals organized by the state and those produced by the communities. The festivals in the pueblo are called, *Guelaguetza Popular*, because they are produced by the local community where everyone has access to attend free of charge. The *Presidente Municipal* (mayor) and other local volunteers share a traditional meal with everyone. The Guelaguetza festival in capital city is produced through an orchestration of city officials and the *Comite de Autenticidad*, Committee of Authenticity.¹ At this performance, attendees have to pay and no traditional meal is shared.

Upon my return to California, I sought out and became acquainted with several Oaxacan migrant communities in the cities of Los Angeles and Santa Cruz by attending religious, food-related and memorial events throughout the year. Intrigued by the fact that they also organize a Guelaguetzas in their communities, I wondered, what is it about this festival that brings communities together and finds people to invest vast resources? More intriguing, what is it that about the festival that compels

¹ The Department of Tourism of State of Oaxaca created the Comite de Autenticidad in 1986. This group is comprised of “urban local experts” on dance, music, gastronomy and regional traditions of Oaxaca (Personal communication Juan Roman Vilorio for member of the Comite de autenticidad, April 2011).

Oaxacan migrants to reproduce the festival in California? What does Guelaguetza mean to the Oaxacan migrant community in California? I established contact with the Santa Cruz community via email, and soon thereafter I began attending weekend dance practices as an observer until one particular day when one of the leaders requested my service.

“Chávez! Call us back! This is an urgent matter!” exclaimed Sra. Felicia Saldívar, a migrant Oaxacan and Santa Cruz resident, in a voice mail in early June of 2006. Saldívar had been trying to get in touch with me for over a week. Afraid something terrible had happened in the community I returned the call. “Hello Sra. Felicia, this is Xóchitl, is everything fine? Your message sounded urgent.” Sra. Felicia told me, with a confident and excited voice, “things are great Chávez, but we need your help. Several of the families and I have decided to produce the first Guelaguetza festival in northern California. If all the paisanos in Los Ángeles can recreate the festival, we want to let them know that Oaxaca does not only exist in southern California. That it also extends to the north and beyond — wherever Oaxaqueños live. Come to the house this Sunday for dinner at 5pm. La Casa is at the end of Parkway Avenue; it’s the red corner house behind Whaler’s carwash. They call the neighborhood Banana Belt.”

I never did get the actual physical address of the house, but the verbal directions were good enough. Following the directions based on given landmarks, I arrived at the red corner house replete with red trim siding. My invitation to the red corner house signaled the first step in gaining trust and establishing rapport with the

community since this house is the cultural hub for the Santa Cruz Oaxaqueño community.

After only three months of preparations, I walked along a dim road to a corner house where only the flames illuminated the backyard area. The fire tickled four large caldron pots in which Rogelio Rodríguez and Victor Jimenez stirred the caldo de pollo (chicken soup) with large wooden ladles. The smell of fresh herbs filled the crisp late night air as Sra. Tesoro steadily sliced off the hierba santa (root beer plant) stems on a glass table nearby. Crista Rodriguez plucked feathers from listless chickens at an adjacent table, while Eulario

Zepeda rinsed them clean and cut the meat into pieces for the cooks. Hanging from the garage door, a bare light bulb hoisted to a wire fixture shined onto an area of the driveway that was filled with cases of water bottles, cartons of eggs, stacks of cardboard



Image 1 Rogelio and Victor cooking *Caldo de Pollo*.

boxes of pineapples, green onions, apples and a variety of vegetables. As I walked up the driveway into the cooking area, I took a moment to greet each person with a sincere handshake and a “buenas noches.” I asked Sra. Tesoro Zepeda, “how long have you all been cooking today?” Brushing back her hair with the back of her hand, she released a deep sigh, “Since midday. We’ll be here another couple of hours and start again by five in the morning to make scrambled eggs with liver for breakfast because over sixty paisanos are traveling tonight to join us at tomorrow’s

Guelaguetza. You should go inside the house and give them a hand they need more help than we do outside.”

As I made my way into Sra. Felicia’s house, I noticed that several of the dancers were perched along the doorway listening for their names to be called in order to pick up their trajes (costumes) for the big celebration. Janet Rodríguez, the community’s nineteen-year-old dance instructor, single-handedly distributed regional dance attires to a group of thirty young dancers. Her soft voice gave direct instructions to one female dancer, “You’ll be dancing in Chinas, Istmos, and Piña. Don’t forget your accessories, please pick your pineapple outside and tie a red ribbon in a bow at the stem. Get some rest tonight. We have an early tomorrow morning at the civic auditorium to do make-up and braid everyone’s hair.”

Once I made it through the doorway, I could see within the living room piles of pink bakery boxes that were arranged on the floor where two teenagers assisted Sra. Nancy Rodríguez package pastries into individual plastic baggies to give as gifts to audience members. As I continued into the house and gave a general salutation to everyone, Sra. Felicia, the head of the Oaxacan central valley community, called me over to the dining table. “Xóchitl, can you help me on the computer and review the program for tomorrow’s event?” I quickly sat down beside Sra. Felicia and listened for her instructions. While finishing the final revisions to the program, Sra. Felicia told me, “you’ve been with at us at dance practice for several months now - you know the name of the dances and music, the choreographies and what songs belong to each region. I need a person to coordinate the parents that will help with giving out the

Guelaguetzas that each participating community will bring tonight. Can I count on you to help me tomorrow with this responsibility?” Honored by her request, I answered, “of course, I just need to review with you what food items belong to the respective communities.”

Shortly after we finished talking, Sr. Patricio Saldívar, approached his wife with a slight hint of joyous singing in his voice, ‘*ya llegaron los de Ejutla*²’, they are waiting outside for us to greet them. I’ll bring out the bottle of mescal.” Sra. Felicia jumped to her feet and turned to me, “Come outside with us and stand with the adults. We are going to receive our first group of paisanos that have traveled with their entire community to be with us at the Guelaguetza.” Although she invited everyone to go outside at this point, I noticed an order— children gave way to the adults and stayed on the periphery as observers while the adults stood towards the front. I waited to follow other adults into the driveway and stood next to Sra. Tesoro and her family. Sra. Felicia stood alongside her sister Sra. Nancy, Sr. Patricio and Maestro Nestor Zepeda, as the representatives for the central valley community. A group of twenty people emerged from several vehicles stretching their arms and rubbing the sleep from their eyes. Sr. Juan Ismael Contrera and his wife, Sra. Ramona, walked forward with a large vine-woven basket filled with bags of mole, chocolate, coffee and tlayudas (large, thin and circular corn tortillas). This basket of food items is a Guelaguetza, a gift, from their community to aid in the communal celebration. Sra. Felicia and Sr. Patricio were the first to welcome and extend a warm *abrazo*

² Translation: People from Ejutla have arrived!

(embrace) to their guests. Sra. Ramona handed Sra. Felicia the basket of Guelaguetzas while Sr. Patricio handed a slender short sugar cane reed filled with mezcal and offers the ritual drink to Sr. Juan Ismael and Maestro Nestor. Once the male elders partake in the first ceremonial drink, the women elders are then offered mezcal, followed by the remaining adults from both communities. Sra. Tesoro then took the center stage by inviting the travelers to the now ready *caldo de pollo* and rice. Sra. Felicia, Sra. Nancy and Sr. Patricio accompanied the Ejutla community, who drove over five hours from Santa Barbara, for dinner at the table. The rest of us returned to the house to finish our respective tasks.

No more than thirty minutes past midnight, another caravan of white vans pull around the corner and park. Janet is the first to notice. “The Ylaltecos from Los Angeles are here!” Everyone rushes outside again and stands in formation. Sr. Juan Ismael and Sra. Ramona join in the front with the Central Valley leaders, as Isaac and his mother Sra. Candida Palacios ceremoniously approached the driveway. This time the greeting was done in the Zapotec language from the region of the Sierra Juarez. Sra. Candida calls for two young boys to bring robust three-foot tall baskets filled with *pan de cruz* (bun-like bread with a cross cut into the bread). It dawned on me, that the gifts of food that the community leaders brought forward are the items to be used in the festival. Each food item or handmade article represented their community. This was the time that I was supposed to be writing things down in preparation for my role in the celebration tomorrow. While taking mental note of all the food items I waited for the welcoming ceremony to finish and then ran to my car

to write down my list. When I returned to the house I realized it was almost one in the morning and everyone was tired. “*Ya, es hora de descansar,*” its time to rest, announces Sra. Felicia, “we need to figure out sleeping arrangement for all our guests.” That was my cue to bid good night to all the communities and went home to rest.

The next morning, we all met at the Civic Auditorium dressing rooms by 8:00 A.M. ready for the last three hours of prep work before the start of the first Guelaguetza festival in Santa Cruz. People dashed around in all directions, adults and children decorating the stage with donated plants from local greenery. Young men carted in more boxes of fruits and vegetables into the back stage area. Women arranged the stacks of baskets of bread and *tlayudas*. Uniformed polo t-shirt teenage boys walk in with several black instrument cases and a bass drum. Alongside the stage, young brass band members arrange shiny silver music stands, while another man secures a stand to place a newly polished gold plated tuba. As I walked down the dressing room hallway, each door had a sheet labeled with a city from Oaxaca on top and the California city on bottom: Zimatlán de Álvarez-Seaside, Ejutla de Crespo-Santa Barbara, Tlacolula- Los Ángeles, Yalálag- Los Ángeles, Valles Centrales-Santa Cruz. It was a microcosm of hometowns to migration destination. From inside the rooms you could hear a mixture of languages: Spanish, Zapotec and some mixed in words of English. I stopped in the Valles Centrales’ room and saw mothers braiding colorful ribbons in the long black hair of little girls. The white walls vanished as an array of magnificent traditional dresses hang. Embroidered birds and

flower on white linen huipiles drape from makeshift clothing lines, strands of ornate gold necklaces and palm size earrings lay perfectly outside their jewelry case.

“Chávez! What are you wearing?” I heard from behind me. Smiling Sra. Felicia, hands me a long ivory colored linen huipil with decorative sunflowers embroidered down the front. “Since you will be handing out Guelaguetzas you need to wear something more Oaxacan looking. Go get your hair braided quickly.” Grateful for the gift, I took the huipil and left to the Valles Centrales room to change my clothes. Walking down the hall Sra. Felicia calls out, “Get ready everyone we start in five minutes. Line up along the hallway for the Convite.” Sra. Felicia walked off to gather the rest of the groups. Soon more than one hundred and fifty people dressed in their respective ethnic and regional attire filled the backstage area. First-generation Oaxacan migrants alongside U.S.-born youth and other Mexican heritage dancers nervously positioned to make their grand entrance march around the main floor and onto the stage.

“Listos! Ready!” a bilingual shout echoes down the hall. I take a quick look through a doorway into the auditorium and see that it is almost at its 1,300-person capacity. The brass bands conductor’s hands are held high in the air ready for the count of one. A lively marching tune begins and an electric current of energy fills the space. Nerves turn to smiles, heads held high as dancers begin to file out to the main floor. The Central Valley’s Chinas, steadily walk out with baskets adorned with flowers on their head. They are the market women of the capital of Oaxaca that customarily open the festivities. Rhythmically, the Chinas use their right hand to

sway their long satin skirts while the left hand secures the basket on her head. The procession of dancers energetically follows the Chinas onto the stage marking their attendance at the festival. Once all the groups pass through the stage a slow deep sound is belted out from the tuba and then, suddenly, the music tempo changes to a



Image 2 Danza y Bailes Grupo Centéotl of Santa Cruz representing the China Oaxaqueñas at the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium.

lively syncopated melody, called Jarabe del Valle. The Chinas return to the stage, skipping with the baskets on their heads, crossing one another in circular formations. As the dancers skip and turn, their skirts open to make satiny waving circles.

This is the first dance to officially begin the Guelaguetza festival. Intently watching from the periphery, I stand ready with a team of volunteers with our large baskets filled with gifts for the crowd. When the music drew to a close I waved my hand to the group of volunteers and then we took to the bleachers where open hands eagerly awaited their Guelaguetza.

I provide this introductory vignette to illustrate how I came to study the festival and to show the multiple layers of what “Guelaguetza” means and how it can be applied within the migrant Oaxacan community across California. Whether it is a communal practice, a gift, or a staged performance, the Guelaguetza has many levels of interpretation at play. What interests me most is how the practice of Guelaguetza (gifting) may be employed when producing the performance of dance and music. A

Guelaguetza festival is a communal celebration that requires a constellation of networks to produce this event. It requires the collaboration of many people, so how do Oaxacan migrants across California create ties with other *paisanos* in other areas of the state? How do cross-border ties and networks assist in the production of the festivals? As I became more involved in this research I noticed that every spring the Oaxacan communities began a season of Guelaguetza pilgrimages that ran through the late summer months. The Santa Cruz Oaxacan community traveled to Los Angeles and Santa Barbara to participate in their Guelaguetza festivals. Similarly, members of the Los Angeles community travel to Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz to do the same. Over the years, more Oaxacan communities began to organize their own festival and invite the other communities.

The cycle of collaboration and reciprocity all in the name of the Guelaguetza evoked numerous other questions. Primarily, what makes the Guelaguetza so important to the migrant Oaxacan community of California? What is it about this festival that draws crowds of Oaxacans from far distances? Who were the first communities to organize the event in the U.S.? How did they navigate bureaucratic structures and regulations? How many migrants had previous experience seeing the Guelaguetza before they immigrated? Or was this their first time participating in a Guelaguetza festival, like me? In search of answers, I joined the yearly Guelaguetza pilgrimages across Oaxacalifornia and traveled alongside the migrant communities who participate in them.

My dissertation, titled *Migrating Performative Traditions: La Guelaguetza in Oaxacalifornia*, is based on a multi-sited field study that examines the Guelaguetza festival in Oaxaca City, Mexico and the emergence of the Guelaguetza festivals in Santa Cruz and Los Angeles, California. Both in Oaxaca and California, this cultural production symbolically displays the ethnic diversity of Oaxaca and its indigenous communities. However, in Oaxaca City, the Guelaguetza is a state-sponsored commercialized production with a long history of institutionally controlled markers of authenticity. In the U.S., however, the organizers and performers are working-class Oaxaqueño migrants.

In this dissertation, my concern is to identify why and how Oaxacan migrants produce their own Guelaguetzas in California and to understand what the festival means to the people and community. In particular, I examine how each new cultural context affects or shapes the meaning and significance of the Guelaguetza festival. I ask, does it retain the same meaning as before migration or what type of new significance does it acquire for the migrant communities in the U.S.? To that end, in my study I follow the same migratory route of Oaxacan migrants across *Oaxacalifornia* to document how working-class, many whom are undocumented, indigenous migrants from Oaxaca, create their own autonomous approach to this celebration. The term Oaxacalifornia represents a cross-border public space that Zapotec and Mixtec indigenous migrants have continuously traversed since the 1980s in search of employment and economic stability. The territory claimed within this socially constructed space encompasses the state of Oaxaca, the Mexican states along

the Pacific coast, and the state of California. Recent scholarship addresses how the “social, civic and cultural engagements” that Oaxaqueño migrants actively partake in “bring[s] together their lives in the U.S. with their communities of origin,” creating the deterritorialized community of Oaxacalifornia (Fox 2006, Kearney 1995, Greishop and Varese 1993). There has been much attention given to the civic participation and political activism of Oaxaqueños; however, far less academic consideration has been placed on emergent cultural engagements, such as the Guelaguetza festival. The Guelaguetza festival is an example where traditions and other forms of cultural expressions based on a common identity has shown resilience through economic instability and political conflict, and has surpassed sometimes harrowing processes of transnational migration. I begin by providing a brief history of the festival.

La Guelaguetza

Before defining the meaning of Guelaguetza, I believe it is important to provide a clear understanding of *usos y costumbres* (customary law) utilized by indigenous communities. *Usos y costumbres* is a form of self-governance and juridical practice that dates to the pre-Columbian period. Within the practice of *usos y costumbres* is the practice of *tequio*, form of voluntary support. The custom of *tequio* is a form of labor that one gives for the collective benefit and solidarity of their community. Participating in *tequio* also provides the person with social capital within their community and prevents them from being isolated from their *paisanos*.³

³ Please refer to the following authors for more information on *Usos y costumbres*: Straffon, Lopez and Castellano, 2013; Sanchez-Gomez, Barcelo- Quintal 2011, Carlsen 1999)

The *word* Guelaguetza holds both cultural and practical meaning for the people of Oaxaca. Guelaguetza is a Zapotec word meaning “offering” or participation in an exercise of communal reciprocity or mutual assistance (Pasternak 1997, González Santiago 1985, personal communication Gustavo Morales 2010).⁴ It is the basis of a formal system of indigenous cooperation during times of harvest and special events such as weddings and funerals.

The concept collaborative communal practice is rooted in *usos y costumbres* (customary law), which is an indigenous form of self- governance and juridical practice that dates to the pre-Columbian period. As Clarke explains,

Usos y costumbres is an expression of an Indian, corporate, cultural, and material existence, which enjoins the sharing of language, land, male assembly, cargo, festival and tequio. These features of Indianness are experienced and expressed at the community level, not at the scale of the language or ethnic group. (Colin Clarke, 2000:168)

An important element of *usos y costumbres* is the custom of *tequio* which is a form of collective (communal) labor for the welfare of the community. By offering tequio an individual fulfills their civic duty and establish themselves as responsible member of the community. Although not explicitly stated, this sense of collectivity and collaboration is the basis of the Guelaguetza. Guelaguetza, as a practice, carries a culturally sanctioned obligation to give and receive gifts and or service. This system of reciprocity ties households together by creating informal social networks that can cut across economic and social classes (Cohen 2001). When mutual aid is rendered it

⁴ Personal Communication Gustavo Morales April 2010 provided the translation of Guelaguetza in Zapotec signify; Guela, *milpa* (family farm), Guet, *Tortila*, Za, clouds in relation to the Zapotec people.

is then recorded in a Guelaguetza book by the elder of the family or an appointed person. The service or gift is then returned when the other person is in a moment of need.

During the pre-colonial period, the Guelaguetza festival was an annual Zapotec ceremony, which included honoring Centéotl, a corn goddess, and sharing that year's harvest. The reverence to the corn goddess included sharing of a meal with everyone present on the hillside called *el Cerro del Fortin*. With the imposition of Christianity during the conquest of the *Ámericas*, colonizers no longer tolerated reverence to indigenous gods. The Spanish arrived to Oaxaca in 1521 and Franciscan and Dominicans missionaries forbade the worship of the female deity Centéotl and destroyed her altar located on the *Cerro del Fortin*. According to the Catholic calendar, July 16th marks the celebration of the saint day, the *Virgen de Carmen*. Consequently, the missionaries tried to make the natives celebrate the *Virgen de Carmen* Alto in place of *Diosa Centéotl* (Perez Jimenez 2003). Despite the introduction of new saint, indigenous people continued to honor the Corn goddess. As a compromise, Catholic missionaries moved the date of patronage for Saint Carmen to the Sunday closest to day of native communities honored *Diosa Centéotl* and on the following Monday held a "secularized indigenous fiesta" calling it the *Lunes del Cerro*.⁵ This celebration is held on the last two Mondays during the month of July on a hillside that overlooks the valley of Oaxaca City. Between the period of conquest to

⁵ Iglesias, S. (1995). *La Guelaguetza*. La Guelaguetza, fi esta del lunes del cerro, published by the Museo Nacional de culturas populares, Mexico, 1995. Department of Tourism for the State of Oaxaca. Retrieved November 25, 2007, from http://zedillo.presidencia.gob.mx/welcome/PAGES/culture/note_guelaguetza.html

the early twentieth century, the celebration of Virgen de Carmen and the indigenous festival continued.

After the Mexican revolution, the new governing party began the process of forging a national identity at both the state and national levels. In Oaxaca during the 1920s, racial discourse took shape in conjunction with cultural and political projects where intellectuals and artists sought to “articulate a distinctive regional identity” of the state’s ethnic diversity (Poole 2004). Oaxaca began its own “official revolutionary policy of mestizaje,” led by former governor Genaro V. Vasquez, entitled the “Oaxacanization” program (Montes-Garcia 2005, Poole 2004). The intention of this regional initiative was to create a “cultural sentiment” by echoing Mexico’s efforts to overcome the political and economic differences by centralizing state power under one revolutionary front (ibid). The Oaxacanization program addressed the challenges faced by the new national state and its interest in “harnessing Oaxaca’s many different local cultural affiliations,” (Poole 2004). In order to unify diverse ethnic groups, Vasquez and his administration implemented a version of the federally enacted and sponsored project known as *Cultural Missions*, created by fellow Oaxacan and Minister of Education José Vasconcelos.⁶ Vasquez and his administration approached the unification project by focusing on the cultural and “racial” territories, in hopes of quelling contentious political divisions in the state while the federal Secretariat of Public Education designed curriculum for each region

⁶ The purpose of Vasconcelos’ Cultural Missions asserted that Mexico’s revolutionary vision could be achieved through racial and cultural assimilation as a national project. This project to “Mexicanize” the indigenous in effect homogenized numerous ethnic communities of Oaxaca.

of Mexico to be taught at respective *Institutos Sociales*.⁷ Vasquez and the *Instituto Social de Oaxaca* repackaged the cultural genealogies by attempting to link pre-columbian Zapotec and Mixtec kingdoms to Oaxaca City. This program emphasized Oaxaca's "tribes" and their resistance to the domination of Aztecs and Mexica of central Mexico (Poole 2010). According to anthropologist Deborah Poole, elements of indigenous women's traditional attire became key symbols for specific ethnic groups and local identities; furthermore, these images were used as profiling tools for educational efforts (Poole 2004). Iconographic, artistic and folkloric styles became the basis for competitions where individuals would vie to "best represent both the specific spirit of their region and the general 'soul' of all Oaxacan people" (2010, 210). In effect, this created a visual catalog of idealized archetypes of the ethnic diversity of Oaxaca's sixteen indigenous communities. These images became geographical and ethnic guides published in annual festival magazines and newspapers. Pictures of males and females dressed in traditional attires stood alongside poetic explanations contextualizing the topography and economy of each of the eight regions of Oaxaca. Romanticized female archetypes were further solidified through the 1932 Miss Oaxaca pageant and later in the 1969 Diosa Centéotl pageant.⁸

1932 marked the 400th anniversary of the official founding of Oaxaca City.

To celebrate this date, Governor Francisco López Cortez (1929-1932) and three

⁷ The state is now administratively divided in eight regions which are known geographically as: the Isthmus, Papaloapan, the Coast, the Mixteca, the Sierra Juárez, the Southern Sierra, the Cañada and the Central Valley. The Central Valley is home for the capital city is in addition to the political and economic power.

⁸ Later in this section I will elaborate on the Diosa Centéotl Pageant held in Oaxaca City.

leading architects of former Governor Vasquez' Oaxacization project organized a “racial homage”.⁹ The “racial homage” was sponsored by the Mexican President, Abelardo Rodríguez, and included five delegations of “racial ambassadors” and their indigenous delegation; each delegation represented a “cultural territory” or region from within the state (El Mercurio 1932, Poole 2004). The selected racial ambassadors paid homage to a Miss Oaxaca who represented the capital city and the image of “a beautiful dark-haired woman [*morena*] svelte in build [and] of solemn bearing” (El Mercurio 1932). According to scholarly accounts, indigenous representatives were chosen specifically from the rural areas of the state as the elite and intellectuals organizing the event did not believe that urban indigenous peoples offered the appropriate representation of indigeneity (Lizama Quijano 2003, Poole 2004, 2010). However, those invited to come were from the most powerful (and white) families of each respective region. The ethnic communities that were “invited” were asked to dress in autochthonous garments from their respective ethnic group (Lizama Quijano 2005). The *Homenaje Racial* is claimed to be the predecessor of the contemporary state-sponsored Guelaguetza festival which currently focuses on ethnic representation (Perez Jimenez 2003). The 1932 celebration makes clear that Oaxaca's regions were conceived of as “races” embodied through traditional attire (Poole 2004). By 1953 the idea of the Racial Homage and Lunes del Cerro were combined and called the *La Guelaguetza*, Guelaguetza Festival.¹⁰

⁹ Policarpo T. Sánchez, Alberto Vargas, and Guillermo A. Esteva, Lizama-Quijano 2005; Perez-Jimenez 2003; Poole 76:2004.

¹⁰ During the late 1940 -1960s was Mexico's Golden Era for tourism under Mexican Presidents Miguel Aleman and Lopez Mateos. This merging of the Racial homage and Lunes del Cerro celebrations fell

Presently, the Guelaguetza festival continues as a pan-ethnic cultural performance in Oaxaca City that accentuates the diversity of Oaxaca's sixteen indigenous ethnic groups through an elaborate display of traditional dress, dances, music, and the sharing of food. As such, it is one of the most ethnically diverse indigenous gatherings in Latin America. The "official" Guelaguetza festival is held on the last two Mondays of July, while the overall celebration lasts two weeks.¹¹

In 1986, the Department of Tourism instituted the *Comite de Autenticidad*. Maestra Arcelia Yani an established Oaxacan journalist who engaged in cultural preservation projects, selected individuals to join the committee because of their expertise on traditions from specific regions of Oaxaca. However, these individuals were not anthropologists nor were they all dancers. They were attorneys, business-owners, or relatives of elected officials. Sr. Juan Ramón reports that the committee was formed because ethnic groups began to dance with plastic hats, plastic bags, and dress shoes and other articles that did not 'come' from the pueblo. He states "*El gobierno* (the state government) felt that the ethnic groups representing their pueblos should use *morrales* (woven shoulder bag), not plastic bags, and either go perform barefoot or with huaraches, not dress shoes" (Personal communication, April 2011).

Every spring the *Comite de Autenticidad* holds auditions to select *grupos de comunidad* to represent their region. The judges specifically evaluate the appearance

along the lines of the national trend at that time. The Guelaguetza was promoted as spectacle, in other words a commercialized festival that would bring in economic.

¹¹ I highlight the word "official" because it is the term used by Oaxaca City residents. The "official" Guelaguetza refers to the performance produced by the "state" Secretary of Tourism. The Guelaguetza "popular" refer to the productions created by and for the local community in various pueblos in the Central Valley.

of traditional attire, accouterments, choreography, and body movement. However what constitutes “traditional” or “authentic” is muddy. Some criteria are well-defined. For example, they do not allow plastic or synthetic items, visible brand names, or fluorescent colors. But other elements such as choreography and body movement are less clear. Despite this ambiguity, members of the *Comite de Autenticidad*, take it upon themselves to offer advice to the auditioning groups how they can best represent themselves.

Since 1969, the Department of Tourism has invented auxiliary performances to culturally enhance the celebration of the Guelaguetza festival (Hobsbawm 1983). One such invention based on the indigenous tradition is the inclusion of the pageant of La Diosa Centéotl, the corn goddess, in 1969.¹² Young indigenous women from across the state vie by demonstrating their cultural knowledge in front of a panel of judges and the general public in the *Zócalo* one day before the start of the Guelaguetza. After a daylong pageant, one young woman is chosen to inaugurate and grace the Guelaguetza festival and other cultural events with her presence for an entire year. An example of the invention of tradition is the presentation of “*Bani Stui Gula*,” which is a spectacle illustrating the formation of the Guelaguetza festival over the ages in the Guelaguetza amphitheater. Most recently, the tourism department invented a dance drama based on a Zapotec folk tale, the “*Legend of Donají*.” The production re-enacts a battle between the Mixtec and Zapotec and the sacrifice made

¹² The Diosa Centéotl pageant preceded the 1932 Miss Oaxaca Pageant. As previously mentioned the Miss Oaxaca Pageant came out of the harnessing of a national identity that swept through Mexico post revolution.

by a Zapotec princess, Donaji, to save her people.¹³ In addition to aforementioned festivities, Sunday evening a large *calendas*, procession, a parade led by *marmotas*, and *gigantes*, followed by the seven indigenous ethnic communities perform at the event the following day, local residents, national and international tourists weave their way down from auditorium Guelaguetza along Crespo Street and into the colonial zocalo.¹⁴ During the month of July, the Guelaguetza is omnipresent in Oaxaca City. Classic red Coca-Cola® bottles and Tel-Mex pre-paid telephone cards display images of Flor de Piña or Danzantes de la Pluma (2007). Major national (Tel-Mex) and international (Coca-cola) corporations sponsor the state-organized festival



Image 3 Coca-Cola publicity for the Oaxaca City Guelaguetza festival.

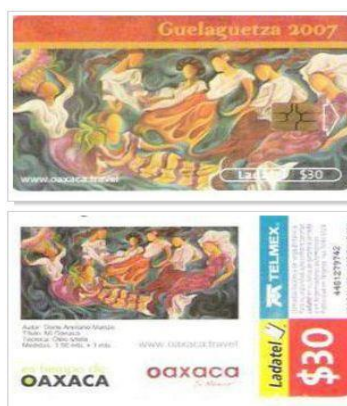


Image 4 Tel-Mex calling card 2007 official poster for the Guelaguetza festival

through funding for the mass marketing of the festival throughout

Mexico.

¹³ The choreographed aspects of these reenactments where narratives of origin and contemporary identity come into contact merits further research. I did obtain interviews that speak to the selection of the indigenous community groups that participate in the festival. In what ways have the “invitation” and “selection” process of communities changed? What is the criterion for selection based on? How does class and social location (urban vs. rural) play a role in the idea of authenticity in Oaxaca City? These are future areas to investigate.

¹⁴ *Marmotas* are large spheres shaped lanterns made of either colorful paper films mounted on bamboo sticks to illuminate the path, or cloth with the names of the community hand painted on the material braced by wood poles. *Gigantes* are the nearly 10- 15 feet tall human looking figures, normally 3 sets of couples, representing Indigenous, Mestizo and African ethnic communities. “Auditorium Guelaguetza” was built in 1974 to seat 11,000 spectators, mainly to target national and international tourist. The cost to attend the “official Guelaguetza” between 2005-2009 cost \$55.00 U.S. dollar purchased through Ticketmaster.

Although vast attention is given to the Guelaguetza festival in Oaxaca City, several towns in the Central Valley region organize their own festival, including: Cuilapam de Guerrero, Mitla, San Antonino Castillo, Tlacolula de Matamoros, Villa De Elta, Zimatlán de Álvarez, Zaachila.¹⁵ The neighborhoods in each village are divided into groups called Comité de Festejo who then organize the logistical and financial components of the festival. In contrast to the official Guelaguetza festival, the “popular” Guelaguetza are mainly the result of the collective effort of residents. Partial sponsorship from the Oaxaca state government comes in the form of providing security guards, chairs, or tables for vendors.

These towns are unable to afford the cost of transportation and lodging for representatives from other indigenous communities throughout the state to present their dances. Therefore, the local residents, student dance groups, and neighboring towns take it upon themselves to learn the diverse dances and present them at the community’s Guelaguetza festival. Instruction of indigenous dances takes place through a communal effort where elders may instruct a dance group, or a folkloric dance instructor may teach school children and/or community members. According to informal conversations with Oaxacan migrants, the Guelaguetza festivals del pueblo are events where entire families spend the day and have lunch. At the Guelaguetza del pueblo, organizers give free food and drink to all spectators, whereas in the official Guelaguetza food items are included in the price of the \$50 ticket. The

¹⁵ Even in scholarly writings on the Guelaguetza festival there is little mention, if any, about the locally produced Guelaguetza festivals that take place in the surrounding towns of Oaxaca City.

popular Guelaguetzas are inclusive celebrations where all community members, regardless of age, class, gender or disability, are able to enjoy the free food provided by the municipal president and represent their dances and traditions.

Migrating Cultural performance

Most studies of the Guelaguetza festival are descriptive in nature and focus on the cultural event as a tourist attraction in Oaxaca (Pasternak 1997, Goertzen 2009). There is one dissertation that is dedicated to the examination of the Guelaguetza festival and the interethnic relations between the “indios” and “mestizos” in Oaxaca City (Lizama Quijano 2002). Mexican anthropologist Jesus José Lizama-Quijano offers fundamental information regarding the construction of racial categories and relations in Oaxaca through a performative and historical context. His work is comprehensive in detailing historical accounts of post-revolutionary politics and the annual festival cycle in Oaxaca. Lizama-Quijano’s work interests me, as he challenges popular descriptions which attest to the pre-Columbian image of the Guelaguetza. He asserts that the Guelaguetza festival was invented as part of the festivities for the 1932 “Homenaje Racial” (2005:217). His analysis is useful in considering how class and ethnicity factor into the production and celebration of the IV Centenario, 400th anniversary, of Oaxaca City as this particular event was organized by a group of local intellectuals and governmental institutions. Lizama-Quijano elaborates the inventions of particular spectacles produced in association with the Guelaguetza through the 1960s to 2001; however, he does not acknowledge the emergence of the festival as a transnational cultural production.

Guadalupe Adriana Cruz-Manjarrez's dissertation, *Transnational Identities and the Performance of Zapotec Culture* (2006), offers an example of a cultural performance study in a transnational context. Her study provides a useful framework for looking at cultural performance as a vital process within transnational migration of an Oaxacan community to California. While looking at the Yalalteco community's fiesta de San Antonio de Padua in Los Angeles, Cruz-Manjarrez demonstrates that this cultural performance illuminates cross-border activities and homeland ties, and illustrates ways that migrants attempt to maintain a sense of community while also staging their current history, and how migrants negotiate situations of change, social inequality and survival (ibid 78). Her dissertation examines the multiple process of transnationalism and the impact that migration has on indigenous Oaxacan.

Her study contributes to the understanding of indigenous Mexican migrants in the United States, by explaining "the ways that Zapotecs have deployed and resignified their cultural practices to give new meaning to their culture sense of community and being (2006, 7)." Her discussion of active participation in religious and social activities (bailes, saint days, etc) brings to light how these events contribute to a sense of community, speak to practice of community membership, and deal with the isolation and anti-immigrant attitudes in the United States (2006 42-44:2006). Cruz-Manjarrez work is useful to my investigation as she employs a transnational framework to examine the threads of networks and activities that take place within the Yalalteco community of Los Angeles.

To date, no study has focused specifically on the production of the Guelaguetza festival in the United States and Mexico as a venue through which to analyze cultural performance and processes and negotiations of transnational migration.¹⁶ What I mean by the processes and negotiations of transnational migration are the adaptations that each production of the Guelaguetza undergoes as it is reproduced in each city based on the different communities and the resources that are available to organizers. Examining the Guelaguetza festival as a cultural performance, allows me to explore the interrelationships and identities that are generated, experienced, and communicated across localities (Bauman, 1986; Geertz, 1973). A cultural performance can be festivals, rituals, and dances, or grassroots celebration starting from within the community and for the community (Stoelje, 1983; Cadaval, 1998). Cultural productions are important sites that enable community members to understand, criticize, and even change the world they live in (Guss 2000). I place my study in conversation with scholars who also have sought to understand the role of cultural performances in contemporary society and how that role is influenced by globalization (Mannings, 1983; Nájera-Ramirez, 2002). Drawing attention to cultural performance illuminates symbolic construction of social life and how identities can be generated or re-imagined by festival participants.

Each Guelaguetza festival is a dynamic site that provides us with the opportunity to select, magnify and analyze ongoing processes of migration and

¹⁶ There have been numerous studies done on the migrant Oaxacan community that mention the Guelaguetza festival but does not give specific attention to the event (Kearney and Nagengast 1990; Fox and Rivera Salgado, Norget 2006).

community formation. Given the expansion of the festival beyond the United States-Mexico border, this event clearly merits in-depth scholarly attention.¹⁷ As a performance form, I followed the Guelaguetza festivals as an event framed in time, staged at particular locations, organized with activities and cultural forms, with set of organizers, performers and with an audience (Singer 1972, Schechner 1990, Cadaval 1998). The Guelaguetza festival as a social event requires the participation of many people and draws a large public. Because of the magnetism of the event it is important to pay attention to the ways in which individuals participate: organizers, cooks, general volunteers, dancers representing the ethnic communities, musicians, Diosa Centéotl, distinguished guests of honor, city officials, vendors, and audience.

I looked at these areas of the festival in order to gain a better perspective as expressive forms can hold new layers of meaning in the migratory experience, thus I give particular attention to the entire performance sequence, transmission of performance knowledge and how performances are evaluated. These methods are fundamental in my approach as I study the festival not as a one-day performance, but rather the entire sequence, from the planning meetings, rehearsal, preparation, set up, backstage, and clean-up. I find these “backstage” encounters as insightful for understanding the interrelationships among the migrant communities and why they organize the festival, but also in how cultural knowledge among families and paisanos is transmitted. I pay close attention to how expression of an indigenous

¹⁷ For the eighth consecutive year Seccion 22 SNTE CNTE has hosted a Guelaguetza festival Mexico City. I first heard of the event in 2009 was organized by a group of Oaxacan migrants now residing in the capital city. Data retrieved August 5, 2013 <http://www.seccion22.org.mx/2013/07/14/con-gran-exito-se-presenta-la-guelaguetza-infantil-en-la-ciudad-de-mexico/>

identity is represented on stage – without losing sight of the negotiations as to why and how the event is organized among the Oaxacan migrant community (Schechner 1990).

The Guelaguetza Festivals are displays of shared experiences that “emphasize the past, but occur in and for the present” (Stoeltje 1983). On both sides of the United States and Mexico border, this festival is a symbolic cultural production that has been and continues to be manipulated for political and communal interests as a way to reflect, interpret and influence the public (Cadaval 1998, Manning 1983). Scholars have shown in various studies that festival and its many variants offer a stage for the exercising of power (Guss 2000, Harris 1996, Stoeltje 1993, Poole 2010). The power of cultural events can facilitate both reactionary and revolutionary platforms. Power and negotiations of power are relevant points of inquiry in the Guelaguetza festival. With ten productions in California, the festival has generated a considerable amount of fame and recognition. Each interpretation of the festival displays the interworking of each community’s leadership and alliances with key city officials.

There are few recent studies on fiestas that highlight the tensions caused by the implications of modernization on communal festivals and the (re)construction of community identity in rural Mexican communities (Gross 2009). One comprehensive investigation by Nájera-Ramírez (1997) on La Fiesta de los Tastoanes in Jocotan, Jalisco sheds light on how residents of Jocotan resist or adapt to socio-political power structures, preserve cultural practices, such as the festival, and define their collective

identity while also creating an alternative interpretation to the term “indio” through their festival (1997). Opening the scope to Latin American festivals, scholars have provided rich analyses of ethnicity, class, gender and other distinguishing social markers among festival participants (Mendoza 2000, Borland 2006). David Guss’s (2000) work on four Venezuelan festivals offers insight into concerns related to nationalism, cultural heritage, ethnic identity in association with commodification and appropriation by foreign interests.¹⁸

Transnationalism

To address the topics of migration and identity formation I draw from scholars within Latin American Studies, migration studies, and cultural studies. The concept of *transnationalism* is widely used across multiple disciplines to identify the social connections between receiving and sending countries (Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004). Literature on transnationalism provides conceptual tools and vocabulary for examining long-term processes of cross-border migration (Kearney and Nagengast 1989; Guarnizo and Smith 1998, Glick-Schiller, Basch, Blanc-Sczanton 1992).

Transnational migration has had a profound impact on indigenous peoples.

Nagengast and Kearney (1990) pioneered the study of Mixtec migration and the processes of how Oaxacan indigenous migrants began to identify themselves

¹⁸ The study of festivals in Mexico has received substantial attention in the last three decades among scholars and various institutions (Green 1981, Vogt 1965). Traditionally, ethnographic projects in rural Mexico primarily focus on issues of ethnicity, class divisions, rural/urban distinction, and religious practices, with only brief attention to community festivals (Vogt 1965). For example, Anthropological scholars have given significant attention to civil- religious cargo systems, (Cancian, 1965; Chance, 1990; Cohen, 1999; Greenberg, 1981; Kearny, 1971; Pérez, 1997; Wasserstrom, 1983). For indigenous communities, the cargo system is a form of governance; yet it can also be a way of sponsoring the festival, since many celebrations are financed by and for the community. However as a result of various forces of globalization such as, out migration, capitalist markets, secularization and introduction of evangelical churches the role and meaning of civic-religious systems are changing.

ethnically as Zapotec or Mixtec. More recent studies, on the other hand, examine how indigenous migrants define ethnicity (Velasco Ortiz 2005), and how Mexican state agencies attempt to identify indigenous peoples (Martínez Novo 2006).

The concept of transnational citizenship addresses analytical discussions regarding how migrants' participation in civic and political action may or may not bring citizenship within a U.S. context (Fox 2005). Fox understands citizenship as taking two forms – one based on state recognition and the other through societal membership. Due to the social, political, and economic exclusion that indigenous Mexican migrants have endured in Northern Mexico and in the U.S., many migrants have formed civic and political organizations and hometown associations to fight against ethno-racist discrimination (Fox and Rivera-Salgado 2004). Studies on collective organizing among Oaxacan migrants directly influence my study on cultural performance.

Collective organizing can be used for the maintenance of community membership and the expression of the ethnic identity through a cultural performance. For many, a way to mark indigenous identity and community membership is through the continuous practice of language, dance, music and consumption of foods. My research not only speaks to how indigenous migrant-led organizations work toward social justice projects but also how they incorporate expressive practices, such as the Guelaguetza festival, towards the same ends.

This festival is a lens through which we can see multiple forms of transnational practices in action, such as in the use of social networks, the daily

connections that are maintained in social, religious, cultural, political and economic activities in more than one locality. In recognizing that Oaxacan indigenous migrants have settled in various locations across California, another important area of inquiry for my research is how varying geographical and social contexts contribute to the creation and promotion of the festivals. I analyze how cultural and economic conditions affect the meanings of traditions and the expression of ethnicity as displayed through the performance of regional/ethnic dances. I explore how performance of indigenous identity is complicated by difference in generations, gender, and non-Oaxacan participants.

Methodology

I conducted an ethnographic study in Santa Cruz and Los Angeles, and Oaxaca City, from April 2005 to June 2011. Fortunately, the Oaxaqueño communities across California allowed me to fully immerse myself in nearly every aspect of the making of the Guelaguetza festival and their daily lives. I was privileged to participate as a dancer, member of the coordinating committee, as a prep cook, translator, as a spokesperson garnering financial support and required permits with city officials, media representative and a transnational carrier for an entire musical score, acquiring traditional costumes to delivering gifts to migrants' family members.

A multi-sited approach is necessary to examine the distinct modes of cultural production of migrant communities. The first mode focuses on the translocal and transnational networks that aid in the *production* of the Guelaguetza festivals in both

sites.¹⁹ Regardless of the location of residency cultural systems of assistance are invoked in this new context of settlement, such as the practice of Guelaguetza. The practice of *Guelaguetza* is reemployed as individuals may call upon the assistance of fellow paisanos, village members, or neighboring Oaxacan migrant communities to assist in construction and importation of cultural articles, food preparation, lending money and most importantly sharing of dances and music. Second, each festival is independently produced by a committee or community, I pay close attention to discourse in order to understand how cultural practices and meanings are transmitted to others (i.e. younger generations and non-members). In order to further examine how the communities promote the event, I offer a content-based analysis of Guelaguetza festival and Oaxacan community by drawing from gathering various types of write-ups in local and binational media (newspapers, websites, social networks, and Youtube).

I observed and collaborated with the *Organización Regional Oaxaqueño* (ORO) and *La Federación Oaxaqueña de Comunidades y Organizaciones Indígenas en California* (FOCOICA) in Los Ángeles and with the *Comite de Vive Oaxaca* in Santa Cruz. I chose Los Ángeles and Santa Cruz as my two sites of study in order to document the variations of migration patterns, transnational networks, and modes of collective organizing within the Oaxacan migrant communities. Some estimates Los Ángeles' Oaxacan migrants at 250,000 and their strong base of

¹⁹ What I mean by translocal is the continuous circulation of not only people but of ideas and materials. (Rouse 1991; Glick-Schiller and Levitt 2006; Goldring 2003; Fitzgerald and Waldinger 2004)

community organization have produced the Guelaguetza festival since 1987.²⁰ Santa Cruz County has a growing Oaxacan population estimated at 2,000.²¹ In 2006 a small group of parents and youth organized the first Guelaguetza festival in northern California. I chose to look at these two cities due to the differences found between a major urban city and the central coast beach town, the density of Oaxacan migrant communities in each city, and the access to various forms of resources. The various forms of collaborations that grew in such a short period of time warranted investigation.

Living in Santa Cruz afforded me the opportunity to observe year-round activities and networks of the local Oaxacan community. My geographical proximity and personal involvement helped me to understand how through translocal relationships and actions Oaxacan migrant communities produce the festival through its various stages; fund raising efforts, planning, recruitment of volunteers, dance rehearsals, coronation of the Corn Goddess *Centéotl*, ceremonial “*recibimiento*” of fellow Oaxacan communities, assembling of the stage, the performance, the “*despedida*” dinner and the aftermath (clean up and paying vendors).

Even though I lived in the same *barrio*, as the Santa Cruz Oaxacan migrant community, the Beach Flats neighborhood— I could not assume that I would be granted instant access. I spent the summer and fall of 2005 traveling to Oaxaca City

²⁰ Hansen, B. (2002). The Oaxaca connection; Immigrants from southern Mexico have brought real moles, *clayudas* and avocado leaf *barbacoa* to LOS ÁNGELES *Los Angeles Times*, May, 1, 2002. Retrieved on Sept 2, 2011.

²¹ Kresge, Lisa. (2007). Indigenous Oaxacan Communities in California: An Overview. California Institute for Rural Studies. Also see Patricia Zavella, *I'm Neither Here Nor There*, 2011 in her chapter Migrant Family Formations addresses Mexican migration patterns to Santa Cruz County.

and up and down California attending various Oaxaqueño cultural events. I regularly sent emails to the community organizers in Santa Cruz and Los Ángeles asking when the next event was planned or thanking them for allowing me to attend. Finally in early spring of 2006, Felicia Saldívar and Nancy Rodríguez of Santa Cruz invited me to dance practices with Grupo Centéotl, stating, “...ya que te vimos en Los Ángeles y fuiste a Oaxaca, hemos concluido que eres igual de loca como nosotras para la cultura. Tenemos ensayos por el fin de semana en Costanoa Continuation School a las diez de la mañana. Nos vemos pronto.”²² It was clear that I had to build trust with the community and show them my commitment before being given permission to observe them. The women of Santa Cruz were right in their concern, Oaxaca has been the focus of many anthropological studies for decades; one of the demands of the community was to not observe them like *conejos de laboratorio* (lab test rabbits).

My local residency and anthropologist identity were not the only obstacles I continued to negotiate when first working with the Oaxacan community. My *hija de migrante* Chicana identity may have helped the community leaders to culturally locate me but it did not provide the access and trust I was hoping to quickly garner. To the Oaxaqueño community, I was in graduate school which equated me as coming from a privileged class. My family is from Chihuahua, “norteños” (northern), tall, fair skinned and *cortantes*, curt. It was not until I shared pictures with them of my paternal grandparent’s rural home in the northern Sierra Madre mountains, that one of the women in an informal gathering stated “...look, her family’s town and home look

²² January 2006.

like ours...poor and full of dust.” Those pictures facilitated the beginning of a conversation where several parents asked about my family and parents’ migration experience. This was the first time that I explained that my mother, who identifies as Chicana but is of Native American descent and a United States citizen, and her family worked as a seasonal migrant worker picking peaches and beets in Colorado. I shared stories with them of how my mother and her family were part of the Chicano movement in Colorado. Nancy, commented *pues entonces tu eres lo que es mi hija, nacida aca, pero de padres migrantes*, you are like my daughter, born her, but with migrant parents. This exchange gave us the opportunity to talk about our cultural and social differences and similarities as people of “Mexican” heritage, and my interest in the Oaxacan community.

My participant observation included spending time at dance practices and numerous community performances. After a couple of months of me hanging out, I was invited to be a more active observer and participate in the dance practices. The directors of the group discovered that I had a background in Mexican folkloric dance and that I was, at one point, the leader of my own group in Colorado. My involvement began by helping lead warm-up exercise and offering workshops on stage make-up. Then I began to fully participate in dance rehearsal as a student and I was able to see, from another perspective, how indigenous traditions are communicated. I was being taught how to perform different ethnic identities (based on embodiment of posture and emotion) according to different regions. As my

relationship with the Santa Cruz Oaxacan community grew I was invited to accompany them at Saint's Day festivals and *quinceañera* celebrations.

Collaboration among the migrant organizations in Los Angeles and Santa Cruz peaked in 2007 and continued through 2009 when I accompanied community leaders traveling to quarterly meetings in Southern California. During this period I learned to negotiate between my role as a participant observer and when I was being treated like an "insider" when asked to be an additional dancer and backstage manager; when I traveled with members of Vive Oaxaca committee to organizing meetings across the state, and to appointments with city officials in Santa Cruz and in Oaxaca City. I also traveled along with the Santa Cruz community to participate with them at Guelaguetza festivals in Los Angeles and Oxnard, CA and at the first festival in Salem, Oregon 2009.²³

I conducted three short term research stints in Oaxaca City in 2005, 2008 and 2009 to observe the state-produced festival in the capital, Oaxaca City, and the community-organized Guelaguetza in the adjacent town, Zimatlán de Álvarez. While in Oaxaca in 2008 and 2009, those transnational ties to the California migrant communities were more visible than ever. In 2008, I accompanied six returning migrants and the former Diosa Centéotl USA 2007, Janet Rodríguez, from Santa Cruz to the Guelaguetza festival in Oaxaca City. I found myself walking in the same path with a group of "migrants" who were recognized for their efforts in preserving the

²³ I never assumed that I was an "insider" with the Oaxacan community and this point was made clear on a number of occasions. One example will be mentioned in belief later in the methodology section. Also, later in the dissertation I will share the story of how my ability to "embody" the posture of the women that dance Flor de Pina will be discussed.

Oaxacan culture in California. At the same time, I came to see the paternalistic treatment of indigenous migrants by government officials. This is where I witnessed how relationships with certain state administrators, *maestros de danza*, and *artesanos* are fostered and maintained. I found myself going along with migrant community leaders to state meetings to ceremoniously “*pedir apoyo*” or in-kind donations. I learned that to produce the Guelaguetza festival in California it takes an orchestration by people on both sides of the border. In 2009, I accompanied Sandra Rodríguez, sister of the director of Vive Oaxaca, Felicia Saldívar, to the Mercado 20 de Noviembre to “price” or bargain for needed Guelaguetzas (gifts) such 500 palm hats, 100 handkerchiefs, and whole set of regional dresses.

The methodological approach that I employed consists of participant observation, with an emphasis on informal interviews that often took place in the kitchen while cooking, driving, and assembling dance attire. These non-structured conversations were perhaps the most informative interviews. In these settings members would share candid opinions about intergroup relationships, the stresses of organizing the festival and they would share their strategies for negotiating daily life as undocumented people. During these times I would listen intently and only comment when appropriate or when asked for my point of views. Through these *encuentros familiares*, familial encounters, I gained a deeper understanding of collective organizing across ethnic and regional differences, language and migration status (i.e. newly arrived migrant, undocumented, resident, citizen). Formal recorded interviews in Spanish covered a range of questions inquiring about personal history in

Oaxaca, migration and relocation experience to California, and reason for their participation in the Guelaguetza festival. Interviews ranged from ninety minutes to three hours in length. I conducted fifteen interviews where I asked questions such as: What does the word Guelaguetza mean to you? When was the first time you attended a festival? Had you participated in any Guelaguetza in your hometown? How old were you when you left Oaxaca? Did you have any other family members or neighbors in the United States? How did you become involved in (hometown association, dance group, etc) here in California?

In these personal histories, I attained a glimpse of the reality of the Santa Cruz and Los Angeles Oaxacan migrant communities. The interviews addressed cultural practices in Oaxaca, migration experiences and how participant they became involved in collective organizing of the Guelaguetza Festival. These interviews revealed tensions within cultural practices in their home communities and why some of those practices are (or not) reproduced in California. A critical point brought up in a number of interviews dealt with forms of discrimination (i.e. racial, linguistic and labor) experienced in the migration process to and in California. Juxtaposing Santa Cruz and Los Angeles, I observed stratifications in the migration experience, difference in locations of employment as well as the varying patterns of interaction with Oaxacan state government officials. Interviews addressed migration trajectories and location of settlement, followed by the forms of employment specific ethnic communities found, for instance, Zapotec migrants are employed more frequently in

the service industry, while Mixtecs are found more in the agricultural sector (López and Runsten 2004).

In these conversations, community organizers and dancers spoke about how and why they became involved in organizing efforts for Oaxacan cultural events in their respective city. Interestingly, the migrant Guelaguetza festival is organized through collective community effort, however there continues to be a strong presence of the Oaxacan state officials and the Mexican Consulate at most events. State and national political figures from Oaxaca and California play an active role in officiating community events representing Mexico's and Oaxaca's continued acknowledgement of their compatriots on the other side of the border. This supports a discourse of an "authentic Guelaguetza" and that message that Oaxaca has not forgotten its *paisanos* (countrymen and women).

Not all sixteen of Oaxaca's ethno linguistic groups have a presence in California. Even if a particular ethnic group resides in California they may not have a community dance group. Additionally, even if a community does have a dance group some may not wish to travel to perform in another city because of the risk of apprehension on the road due to their legal status. Representation and participation of Oaxacan migrant communities in the Guelaguetza festival is complicated by legal status, reliable forms of transportation and group dynamics. In order to have full representation of each indigenous communities, festival coordinators ceremoniously invite various *mayordomias*, religious and town-based groups, ethnic communities

and dance groups to participate in that year's event. My observations revealed that communication among community representatives could take place through personal home visits, telephone calls, faxes and email. In these discussions, groups agree upon what type of Guelaguetza (material, financial, or cultural assistance) they can offer.

A common theme that runs through my study reflects how the Guelaguetza as a cultural performance yields important information about the complexity of the Oaxacan migrant community in California, as well as the motivations and organizational strategies involved in producing the festival. As a cultural performance, the Guelaguetza festival can be a window to understanding crucial community processes.

I believe that a close reading of these festivals may reveal the negotiations that the Guelaguetza festival undergoes as it travels across national and cultural borders. Take the issue of institutional sponsorship for example. In Oaxaca City, state officials, tourist industry and intellectuals produce the "Official Guelaguetza festivals" with the support of national and international corporations such as Coca-Cola and Telmex. In California, however, organizers and performers are working-class Oaxaqueño migrants. Typically, they include construction workers, food industry workers, agricultural workers, students, public school personnel, retired workers, and home care workers. Collectively they engage in extensive community organizing, fundraising and navigation of bureaucratic structures over the course of the year to produce this festival in their new communities.

Reproducing the festival in the U.S. necessitates certain modifications. Two key differences mark all of the U.S. based Guelaguetza festivals: the festivals are one-day events, and they attract a socially diverse audience from local and surrounding communities. The brevity of the festival in the U.S. is due to time constraints, lack of money, numerous and costly mandatory city permits, and availability of an appropriate venue. In response to these limitations and to accommodate the work schedule of organizers and participants, festivals are typically planned on Sundays. This allows Oaxacan migrants living throughout California to travel long distances in order to collaborate with fellow *paisanos*.

Over the course of my observations I noted how the migrant-produced festival provides a space for Oaxaqueños to come out of marginalized spaces and come into an active centrality (Murillo 1997). Each event showcases an impressive list of ethnic communities, cultural dance groups, community based brass bands, hometown associations, and ties to local businesses and state politicians. Posters, radio spots, press releases, social media accounts and websites all speak to the resources, constellation of alliances and vision of the festival. The marketing of the Guelaguetza festival provides critical information about the community and the image they wish to convey about themselves.

The migrant produced Guelaguetza festivals thus speaks to the negotiations of indigenous migrants' daily experiences and the process of constructing a sense of community in new geographical locations. The intense networking throughout Oaxacalifornia has made Guelaguetza festivals an important site through which

Oaxacan migrants renew, create, and maintain connections with newly arrived *paisanos*. The Oaxacan migrant community's ability to sponsor the festival in the United States demonstrates that the migrant community has successfully established themselves within the political and cultural landscapes of California. This success is reflected in the increase of the number of productions. To date, I have recorded an average of nineteen Guelaguetza festivals produced across the state in an annual basis.²⁴ As Fox and Rivera Salgado affirm, this cultural event “is the embodiment of the imagined cultural and civic space known as “Oaxacalifornia” (2004).

Overview of Chapters

Instead of a focusing on the Guelaguetza festival of a single site, I look at how multiple indigenous ethnic groups come together to produce several festivals that celebrates Oaxacan indigenous peoples. In the second chapter titled, *Migración Mexicana y la comunidad Oaxaqueña*, offers a brief overview of Mexican migration to the United States and then focuses on the changing face of the Mexican migrant by drawing attention to the patterns of Oaxacan migration. My work complements scholarly works (Fox and Gasper, Kearney, etc) on Oaxacan migration to California with current personal testimonies of migration to Santa Cruz County.

The third chapter “Welcome to Oaxacalifornia: Making Community and the Migrant Guelaguetza from Los Ángeles. to Santa Cruz,” I lay out the complexities that transnational migration brings to the recreation of cultural performance. This section offers an organizational and social network analysis of *Los Ángeles* and *Santa*

²⁴ See end of chapter for Guelaguetza festivals chart

Cruz as case studies. I map out each site in order to illustrate the history of migration patterns and the formation of each city's migrant based organization to document how the participants are in the respective organizations as ethnicity and social status as they may vary across sites.

I explore how Oaxaca, as the place of origin, continues to be imagined and constructed within the production of the festival and in the performance of identity. I provide a brief history why these organizations began to produce the festival and by what means did they first organize the Guelaguetza festival. I focus on the structure of the festivals, how it is produced and what kinds of symbolic actions are used. I have documented Guelaguetza festivals according to location and time, recorded the various activities associated with each festival, ritual forms and verbal display to examine the expressive forms that speak the Oaxacan Migrant community in California. I draw from local newspapers, personal photographic documentation, websites, press releases, radio interviews, posters and social media networks to see how each community selects images and emblems to identify and distinguish themselves from other Latino and Mexican migrant communities. The chapter ends with what happened when the Los Angeles and Santa Cruz festivals grew too large for the original location and had to seek alternative locations.

Chapter four, *The Delicate Dance of a Transnational Festival: Politics of Participation and Performance*, focuses on the dancers, highlighting the politics of participation and performance in the Guelaguetza festivals in California. I argue that dancers' and groups' participation in the Guelaguetza festivals are socially and

politically significant because they embody the impact of transnational migration and navigate the challenges presented in a transnational context. I compare and analyze the differences among dance groups within the migrant communities, the ways people become dancers, and the negotiations that are made by organizers in order to have full representation of all ethnic communities in the Guelaguetza productions. I also highlight two levels of participation: the recruitment and involvement of individual dancers, and, on a larger scale, the invitation of dance groups to participate in the reproductions of the festival across the state. This sections that take a generational approach to address the processes of transmission of tradition, in particular, how each generation learned to dance. In this section, I draw from my field research and position as a dancer in the Los Angeles and Santa Cruz performances to examine the lived realities and negotiations that Oaxacan migrant communities contend with as idealized images of an authentic Oaxacan identity and fear of commercialization in the production of the Guelaguetza festival

In the conclusion, I review the major points of the dissertation in addition to providing a brief epilogue to the current reality of the Guelaguetza festival in California. “Two Face of the Cultural Coin: Commercialization and Clientelism in the Production of the Guelaguetza,” highlights the conflictive collaborations that each migrant organization enters in order to produce the Guelaguetza festival. In other words, what are the ways organizers enter into strategic partnerships with other community, commercial and political groups despite contrasting political and ideological orientations. I examine how connections with businesses and state

officials facilitate the making of the festival in both Los Angeles and Santa Cruz, California, albeit with drastically different implications for the cultural politics at play in the production of the event.

Chart 1 Location Guelaguetza festivals in California and others states

City in CA	Host Organizations	Ethnic groups	1 st Guelaguetza /Season	Dance troupe / Community	Est. # of Attendance	Political / Cultural basis	Venue	Media: Language usage	Key Allies	(recent) Sponsors
LA	ORO	Zapoteco,	8/1/1987 Normandie Park Aug 7-8 2010/13	Grupo Folklórico – Huaxyacac (*La Nueva Antequera)	~300	Cultural	Normandie Park, LA Sport Arena 2010/11, Lincoln Park 2012/13	Spanish Newspaper/ English website	LA City Council	City of LA Grants, Dept. of Cultural affairs LA, local businesses, Mexicana Airlines, Money Transfer, ACTA
San Diego	COCIO	?	1994 Oct 9 2009	La Nueva Antequera			CSU San Marcos	Spanish	CSU MEChA	International Community Foundation (\$1,000), City grants, CSU MEChA, (\$20,000)
Fresno	FIOB	Triqui, Mixteco,	2000 Sept 27 2009	Grupo Huaxyacac	~1,400	Political	Kearney Park & Teatro Warnors	Spanish		Fresno Arts Council, KFTV Canal 21 de Univisión, local businesses, Radio Bilingue, ACTA
LA	FOCOICA	Zapoteco, Mixteco,	Mayo 2002 May 3 rd wkend 2008 NO GTZA 2009-2013	Grupo Huaxyacac	~10,000 -12,000	Political (estado) / Cultural	LA Sports Arena	Spanish	Oaxacan State, Guelaguetza Restaurant,	Local businesses, Oaxaca Dept. Tourism (\$74-93,000), International businesses
Santa Maria	FIOB / Club Cahuayaxi de Santa Maria	Triqui, Mixteco,	6/12/2005 July 16 2009	Grupo Centéotl	~5,000	Cultural	Hagerman Sports Complex			Funds for Santa Barbara City grant (\$1,500),

Location Guelaguetza festivals in California and others states (continued)

City in CA	Host Organizations	Ethnic groups	1 st Guelaguetza /Season	Dance troupe / Community	Est. # of Attendance	Political / Cultural basis	Venue	Media : Language usage	Key Allies	(recent) Sponsors
Santa Cruz	¡Vive Oaxaca! y sus comunidades Indígenas	Zapotec,	8/1/2006 Civic Adu.	Centéotl de Sta Cruz / Grupos de comunidad/ Maestro de Oaxaca	~2,000	Cultural	SC Civic Auditorium 2009 Harbor High Sch	Span & Engl flyers; Spanish website	Santa Cruz City Council, SC School District	Personal (~\$10,000), local businesses, Radio stations Oaxaca State Governor (~\$10-20,000-)
San José	Lazo Oaxaqueños	Zapotec	23-Aug-09	Grupo Raices (SC) Grupos de Comunidad	~5,000	Cultural run by Business men	National Hispanic University	Spanish and English flyer & Media	Safeway, Allianza newspaper, Consulate	Safeway, Allianza newspaper, Consulate
Madera		Zapotec	20-Jun-05							
Oxnard	Unidad Popular Benito Juarez, Proyetco Mixteco									
Bakersfield	Unidad Popular Benito Juarez									
Santa Rosa	Tierra del Sol	Mixteco	2012	Senorio Mixtecos	~1000	Cultural	Open lot	bilingual	Oaxacan businesses	
Santa Rosa	Pochatlan	Mixteco	2013	Pochatlan	500	Business				

Location Guelaguetza festivals in California and others states (continued)

City in CA	Host Organizations	Ethnic groups	1 st Guelaguetza /Season	Dance troupe / Community	Est. # of Attendance	Political / Cultural basis	Venue	Media: Language usage	Key Allies	(recent) Sponsors
Salinas	Lazo Oaxaqueños /Soledad Bakery	Mixed	2009			Business			Grupo Huayaxac	
Tijuana	CIOCIO									
<i>Other Locations</i>										
Salem, Oregon 2010 ~1200 Statefair ground, Santa Cruz & Santa Rosa groups	Harrison, NV 2010 ~500 organized by Lazo Oaxaqueños (Felix Ortiz)	Odessa, TX 2010 Pulita de Guerro group brought by the Mexican Consulate for 200 anniversary	El Paso, TX UTEP 2010- Pulita de Guerrero Group part of Bicentennial Celebration organized by Mexican consulate	Atlantic City, NJ 2012 Hotel brought 50 Putlecos to dance-\$20/tix	Seattle, WS Blanche Lavizzo Park	Buein, WS 2012 Parking lot	Poughkeepsie, NY First event 2008 Waryas Park El Grupo Folklórico Poughkeepsie; Mid-Hudson Mexican Folkloric Group; Grupo de Danza Tusimapan; and Grupo de Mujeres del Ecuador			

Chapter 2 *Migración mexicana y la comunidad oaxaqueña*

On a chilly February night in 2007 after nine o'clock at night, I received a phone call from Felicia, "Come to the house! A group of six paisanos from Oaxaca just arrived and we want to welcome them." I respond, "I'll leave right now. Who arrived?" Felicia answers, "Sra. Tesoro, Sr. Nestor Zepeda's wife, and his two teenage children, my teenage niece and my husband's nephew, and another teen boy from Zimatlán de Álvarez."

"*Ton, Ton!*" I call out while using my knuckles to knock on the wooden door. Most people would have used the brightly illuminated door bell, but I had been instructed to announce my arrival with my voice, because only *desconocidos*, strangers, use the doorbell.²⁵ The smiling face of Sr. Patricio, Sra. Felicia's husband, opened the door and led me to the living room where several members from the Santa Cruz Oaxacan migrant community attentively listened to Sr. Nestor recount the story of how his second eldest son, 17-year-old Daniel, traveled to Tijuana to help his mother and five teenagers cross the border. Daniel was familiar with the border near Tijuana because he had crossed at the tender age of 14. He navigated the border two other times to help his father, Sr. Nestor and his older brother, Eulario cross shortly afterwards. In this specific passage came his mother Sra. Tesoro, his 13-year-old younger sister Graciela, and his youngest brother, 11-year-old.

²⁵ The reason for such measures stemmed from the heightened fear provoked by the ICE raids that swept across Santa Cruz Country in 2007-2008. Unfortunately, tragedy struck the Oaxacan migrant community in November of 2006 when Sr. Andres Romero and his wife, Sra. Alejandra, both from San Pablo Huixtepec, were taken from their home of twenty years early one morning and deported to Tijuana.

After four long years, the Zepeda family finally reunited. The other teens that crossed with Daniel included Felicia's 13-year-old niece, Karina Jimenez, from Oaxaca City. She came to reunite with her father Victor Jimenez, who had immigrated to Santa Cruz seven years earlier. Sra. Patricio's nephew, Ernesto Saldívar, 16 years old, of the Isthmus of Oaxaca, also came to join his father, who had been in the Santa Cruz area for nearly a decade. Lastly, Donato Marquez, 16 years old and a childhood friend of Daniel from Zimatlán de Álvarez, came to live with his older brother Octavio, who had been in Santa Cruz for two years. All of the teens immigrated to Santa Cruz because of the contentious political climate, often times called a modern day urban rebellion, which ignited in 2006 in Oaxaca City. Consequently, the youth had been out of school for more than 6 months due to the teachers' strike and the Popular Assembly Movement that formed against the former Governor Ulises Ruiz. This is when families made the decision for their children to join their relatives in Santa Cruz, to flee the political violence but more importantly in order to continue their education. Sra. Tesoro, the only adult, traveled from Zimatlán de Álvarez with her own children and chaperoned three others through Mexico by bus to wait for Daniel in Tijuana in order to cross United States and Mexico border the border by foot.

The arrival of this cohort of young undocumented *paisanos* in Santa Cruz highlights current trends in Mexican migration, in addition to a specific political moment in Oaxaca's history. From each teen I can trace back at least two generations of migration to the central coast beach city, their place of origin, and their networks,

as well as migratory routes for three communities. The preceding narrative adds another chapter to the extensive and complex history of Mexican migration to the United States.

Motivating factors for migration from Mexico to the United States vary from person to person, depending on the time period and circumstances. Some may seek out better opportunities due to high levels of economic inequality, others because of the lack of employment options, while some flee violence and local political repression. Before detailing Oaxacan migration patterns, first I will present a brief overview of Mexican migration in general.

General Trends in Mexican Migration

There has been continuous migration between present day Mexico and the U.S. for several centuries, yet the signing of Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, clearly marked “immigration” between the two nation states. The first significant wave of migration to the United States began in the early twentieth century because of the political turmoil in Mexico, following the 1910-1920 Revolution. Most of those who fled were peasants who came from small villages in war stricken areas of Mexico. The inability to make a decent living working as peons on haciendas, and desire to escape from the violence between the *Federales* and revolutionaries, resulted in a mass exodus of Mexicans to the United States. It is estimated that between 1910 and 1920 more than 890,000 legal Mexican immigrants came to the United States in search of refuge.²⁶ Although the revolution ended in 1920, life did

²⁶ <http://www.pbs.org/kpbs/theborder/history/index.html>

not return to normal in Mexico and thus the flow of immigrants continued. New sojourners found employment in the United States in the rail road industry (southern states to Chicago), agriculture (California and Texas), and mining (Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado).

The heightened need for *campesinos* (farmworkers) in the agricultural fields of southwestern United States during World War II marks the second wave of immigration from Mexico. While U.S. men were off fighting in World War II and internal migration from rural areas to urban centers between 1940-50 necessitated the assistance of additional labor in the agriculture and the railroads. As a temporary war measure, The Bracero Program, signed on August 4, 1942 by Mexican President Manuel Avila Camacho and Franklin D. Roosevelt, awarded 4.6 million contracts between the start of the program to 1964.²⁷ Through the Bracero Program, Mexican laborers were recruited to work for small farmers, large growers and associations in heavy agricultural areas in 28 states.²⁸

The end of the Bracero Program left thousands of unemployed former Braceros in the Mexican border cities and Mexico as a country was experiencing a high unemployment rate, thus prompting the third wave of migration. In 1965, the Mexican government implemented the Border Industrialization Program (1965) (now called the Maquiladora Program). This program was created with the intent of subsidizing foreign manufacture by setting up plants on the Mexican side of the

²⁷ <http://www.farmworkers.org/bracerop.html> accessed May 10, 2013

²⁸ Bittersweet Harvest: The Bracero Program 1942-1964 digital exhibit
http://www.sites.si.edu/exhibitions/exhibits/bracero_project/main.htm accessed May 10, 2013

border, allowing duty free, temporary importation of raw materials and machinery in to the border cities, in order to create more jobs for Mexican workers. The type of work found in the Maquiladora program also brought about a shift in the image of the Mexican migrant, as more women from rural southern areas come to the border cities to fill the rank in the factory lines. Many of the women that came to work in the Maquiladora industry later found themselves migrating across the border into the United States to find better paying jobs and escape exploitative conditions of the factories.

In the late 1980s, Mexico experience another shift in migration patterns as immigrants from new sending regions within Mexico began to participate in migration flow: in the North (Baja California and Chihuahua), the central (Puebla, the Federal District and the state of Mexico), and the southern states (Oaxaca, Chiapas and Guerrero) of the country.²⁹ No longer were the historical western states of Mexico (Jalisco, Michoacan, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosi, and Zacatecas) the predominant sending regions. Cornelius (1992) also found that Mexican migrants had become more “socially heterogeneous,” as “better educated urban workers” were leaving Mexico in response to the deteriorating economy. He also noted that migrants were staying longer periods in the United States, indicating a shift from sojourner to settler status. As out-migration from Mexico increased, social networks multiplied and matured as information regarding housing and employment opportunities circulated between migrants in the U.S. and communities of origin.

²⁹ It important to note that southern sending regions differ from ‘traditional’ Mexican sending regions as land functions on a system of *propiedad comunitaria* (communal property) and collective governing tradition (Mutersbaugh 2002). FYI, the form of land tenure is called *comunidad agraria* which are more collective though similar in many ways to ejidos (though southern states also have many ejidos).

Together these factors assisted in diversifying the profile of the previous migrant in terms of gender, ethnicity, class and sending regions. Consequently by the early 1990s, the flow of migrants began to include younger unmarried males, women, children and eventually entire families (Massey, Goldring and Durand 1994).³⁰ Other changes also consisted of rural-urban mixing, locations of destination, occupations, and duration of migratory trips.³¹

³⁰ Under the family reunification provision in the 1965 amendment of the Immigration and Nationality Act, wives, unmarried sons or daughters were able to access resident visas with more ease (Riechart and Massey 1980). If women and children are unable to travel under legal conditions, many strike out on their own as undocumented due to severe economic hardship, abandonment or loss of a parent.

³¹ Three fundamental forces that promoted Mexican migration, social capital formation refers to the cases wherein a relative resides in the U.S., thus making the possibility of migration more likely. "Human capital formation," is the experience of undocumented migration itself, the border crossing, in addition to living and working in the United States/ Market consolidation on a global level and between Mexico and the United States with the implementation of the Maquiladora Program and then with signing of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The privatization of land and the mechanization of production predictably displaced rural and manual workers (Durand and Espinosa (1997:989). Due to these globalizing effects, Mexican laborers are finding that the next recourse for them is to migrate north of the Mexican border. The immigrants were almost always males of working age, usually married and heads of households from lower-middle class families. The rationale for this observed pattern is that the rich had little incentive to migrate, whereas working class individuals lacked necessary resources to pay for the costs to make the journey. Social networks are vital in aiding a migrant's passage across the U.S. and Mexico border. These networks ease the risks involved in a trip to the United States. Another trend indicates that migrants were likely to travel to a specific location to work and seek out jobs within a particular sector of the economy (i.e. railroads, agriculture and manufacturing) (Ibid).

Oaxacan Migration



Map 1 The state of Oaxaca is located in the southern portion of Mexico. The state is divided into eight geographical regions: Canada, Costa, Papaloapan, Valles Centrales, Isthmo, Mixteca, Sierra Norte, Sierra Sur.

Given the migratory trajectory of Oaxaqueño transmigrants, the geographic scope of my research speaks to a region known as *Oaxacalifornia* (Kearney 1995). The term Oaxacalifornia represents a cross-border public space that Zapotec and Mixtec indigenous migrants have continuously traversed since the 1980s in search of employment and economic stability. It also represents how the “social, civic and cultural engagements” that Oaxaqueño migrants actively partake in “bring[s] together their lives in the U.S. with their communities of origin,” creating the deterritorialized community of Oaxacalifornia (Fox 2006, Kearney 1995, Greishop and Varese 1993). I pay particular attention to processes of collective organizing and the productions of expressive culture within this geographic context. As an expressive cultural production, the *Guelaguetza festival*, and those who participate in it have crossed the U.S. and Mexican border in a diverse number of ways.

Map 2 Image of Migration from Oaxaca to California.



The territory claimed within this socially constructed space encompasses the state of Oaxaca, the Mexican states along the Pacific coast, and the state of California.³²

Migrants from Oaxaca did not follow migration patterns like those of other Mexican migrants who followed direct routes to the U.S. either because of guest worker programs or through *enganche* systems (contracted labor) to U.S. agricultural fields. The stories told by Oaxacan migrants in several ethnographic monographs conducted over the years highlight the migration patterns of early Oaxacan migrants within Mexico and currently beyond the U.S. and Mexico border.³³ Utilizing the oral histories that I collected and referencing pivotal works on indigenous Oaxacan migration trends, I outline four phases. The first phase was **early 1930- 1940s**, Indigenous Oaxacans “from towns near major roads” (central valley-Zapotec) joined

³² The states Oaxacan cross includes Guerrero, Michoacan, Distrito Federal, Jalisco, Sinaloa, and Baja California. Where is evidence of travel through/presence of Oaxaquenos in Guerrero? It is not on the way north

³³ See Velasco, 2005; Pombo Paris, 2004; Zabin et al, 1994; Stephen, 2007; Cohen, 2000; Hirabayashi, 1993; Kearney, 1986.

the streams of workers migrated to the eastern state of Veracruz to harvest sugar cane and pineapple (Fox 2004 Richard Mines 2010). During this period migrants also made their way to the central states of Puebla and Mexico City.

The second wave of migration was marked by The Bracero Program (1942-1964) where indigenous men joined the Bracero Program as short term contracted labor to major agricultural cities. Meanwhile, migrants were also working in the states of Sonora (cotton and grapes), Sinaloa (tomato and peppers). Sr. Otomi is considered one of the “pioneros” in the formation of Oaxacan Regional Organization (ORO) and the first Guelaguetza in the United States. He recounts his father’s migration experience to the United States corresponds to this second wave of Oaxacan migration.

The exact year I was born, 1942, the Bracero Program had just initiated and my father, uncles and several other acquaintances from pueblo, a group of 10-12, left to work as temporary contract labor in the fields of Oxnard and Fresno, California and the cotton Harvest in Texas. They left on contracts that would last up to a year or two. It took some of the *Braceria* (term he used to call the Bracero workers) almost seven years to return to their families in Oaxaca. (April 2011)

The conversations with Gustavo Morales, a Zapotec poet and journalist based in Los Angeles, about the early waves of Oaxaca migrations resonate with Sr. Otomi’s recollections. He agreed that the Bracero Program was a point that opened the gates for Oaxacan migration, but was the not most significant period for migration from the indigenous communities. Interestingly, according to Sr. Otomi, Indigenous women were the first to immigrate to the United States on long term contracts as domestic service.

The women were the ones to open the road to migration. They were the first to leave to work as live-in domestic help for the rich or the celebrities in Los Angeles. In those days it was much easier to cross. The woman of the house (wife) or the *Patrona* (female boss) as she is customarily referred to, would say to her American friend 'I know someone that can work.' The Patronas would call immigration and take care of the processing of the legal papers to bring up domestic help. It was the women that left first on a more long term basis, then the men from the *Braceria* in the late 1950s. (April 2011)

This is the earliest date I have heard for female migration out of Oaxaca. Nonetheless, this is an interesting area of migration to follow upon. During the 1940s and 1950s Mexico was in their Golden Era in cinema and tourism.

Parallel with general Mexican migration, the mid-1960s- 1970s marked the third phase. Mexico sought to industrialize its northern border states in partnership with transnational companies. Local producers imported Mixtec day laborers to the northern state of Baja California to work in the export-oriented commercial agriculture in San Quintín Valley and in construction in Tijuana. The 1970s also marked a significant increase of labor migration due to the improvement of infrastructure on roads in the state of Oaxaca and labor recruitment in indigenous areas for industrial agricultural production in northern Mexico particularly in Baja California (cabbage, tomatoes and grapes). During this period migrants also moved in stages from rural areas to urban centers within Mexico, then to the border area and finally to California. Sr. Otomi arrived to Los Angeles in 1970 but his migration was not a direct path, it happened in stages.

I moved with my parents to Mexico City for educational opportunities. Nonetheless, I was only able to finish vocational school. As an indigenous person, there were not many options for me to continue with my education. My siblings and I had to work in order to help our family. The older siblings had to truncate our studies. I started by doing work as iron

work (blacksmith) type jobs, then began to work for *Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes* for the government, but the wage was too low in order to maintain a family. During this period people told us enchanting stories about the U.S. of how nice it is on the ‘other side.’ We decided for the benefit of the children in the family to emigrate in 1969 and arrived in Los Ángeles in 1970 (March 2011).

Similarly Sr. Mauricio of Los Ángeles, current president of ORO (2010-present), shares his migration story,

We first left Maculitangis, to Mexico City, and then to Los Ángeles, specifically San Gabriel. I came to San Gabriel because my older siblings were living there. But the whole family first moved to Mexico City so we could continue our education. Once we established ourselves with our education, we moved once more here to the U.S. in search of better opportunities for our lives. In 1970s and 1980s lots of people from Maculitangis moved to the major cities, Oaxaca or the Federal District, and then to Los Ángeles, it was basically due to the economic crisis. (April 2011)

Although Sr. Otomi and Sr. Mauricio may have come to the United States a few years apart, they have similar migration stories that occurred in stages, from rural to urban. During this time period, the earlier waves of Oaxacans migrated to the United States in search of better jobs, settling down and acquiring property.

The forth wave began mid 1980 – 1990s during which Mexico experienced one of the most significant economic crises in its history. This crisis spurred the second largest influx of migration even to present day that was felt throughout Mexico. In this wave, migrants represented ethnic communities from more remote areas of the state, such as the Triqui (Pombo Paris, 2004). Nancy, a Zapotec woman from a village called Santiago La Xoropa in the Sierra Juarez, told me,

I come from a *pueblo* that traditionally does not have much emigration. We are farmers and the people stay with the community. My family left the *pueblo* because my parents were teachers and we moved because of

their job. I attended university for two years in Oaxaca City, then one day - this is funny - my cousin told me he was leaving the next morning. I told him I wanted to go along, but of course I didn't have any money for the journey. He helped finance my trip and we came to Santa Cruz. That was in 1985. The following year in 1986, with the amnesty, I petitioned for my sister Felicia and her husband Patricio. That's how they came to Santa Cruz too (December 2010).

In this generation of migration, not only do we see people from remote areas of Oaxaca, but they hold an advanced level of education in comparison to other migrants. Gustavo Morales, from San Marcos Aretaga shares with me that he had no particular reason to leave but that was more part of the 'adventure' of the experience. Likewise, Gertudis, director of Grupo Folklórico Huayaxac in Los Angeles discloses that she came to the Los Angeles on cultural visa, as a dancer with the Oaxaca City folklórico troupe, invited to the East Los Angeles Community College, but she decided not to return with the group.

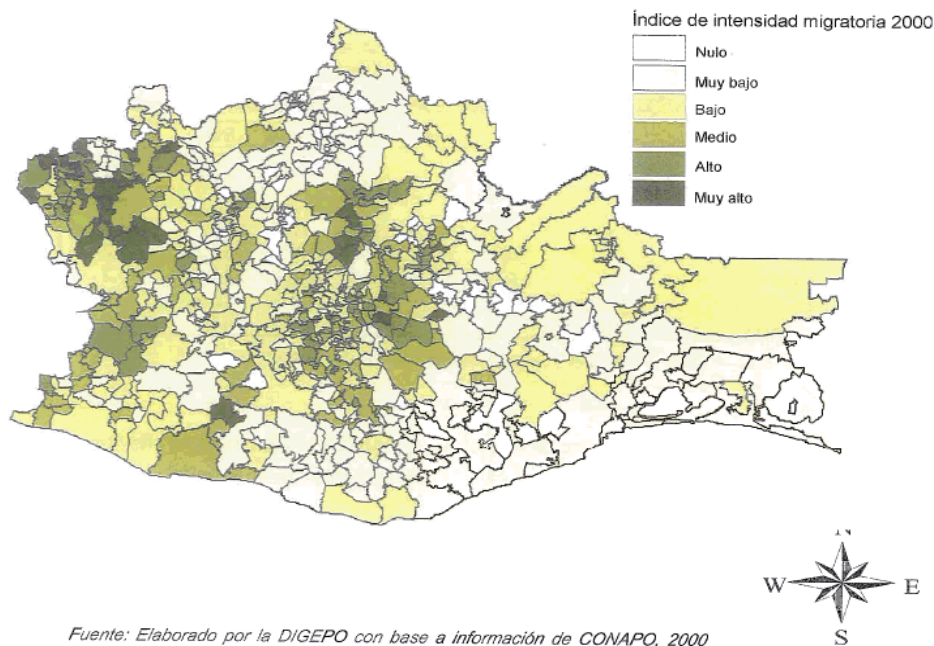
While early migration tended to concentrate near "major roads,"³⁴ namely the Pan-American Highway, as the map below indicates there was a substantial shift in sending regions to include Mixteca (Huajuapam, Juxtahuaca, Silacayoapam, Tlaxiaco), Central Valleys (Ejulta, Tlacolula, Zimlantan), and Sierra Norte (Ixtilan, Villa Alta).³⁵ In contrast to regions where migration is very infrequent due to the lack of networks and economic capital, Zapotec (Central Valley and Sierra Norte) and Mixtec (Mixteca) regions have been able to leverage the matured networks established by their predecessors and diversified economies which enabled a greater

³⁴ While Mines does not specify what towns had the highest out-migration, the early twentieth century the history of construction of roads in Mexico would suggest that these "major roads" connected with the Pan-American Highway.

³⁵ Source: Dirección General de Población de Oaxaca (2004). *La Migración de Oaxaca*. Oaxaca, México.

economic solvency, in turn facilitating their migration process.³⁶

Mapa 1
Oaxaca: Municipios según índice de intensidad migratoria a Estados Unidos, 2000



Map 3 Municipalities in Oaxaca with the highest migrations to the United States (CONAPO 2000).

Oaxacan migration to the United States continues to increase. In 2003, the Consejo Nacional de Población (CONAPO) of Mexico estimated the minimum population of indigenous Oaxacans in the United States at 194,785.³⁷ According to Gaspar Rivera-Salgado, there were between 350,000 and 400,000 Oaxacan migrants in California in

³⁶ These ethnolinguistic groups represent two largest indigenous migrant populations in Oaxaca. Mexico's 2000 Census documented 546,000 Zapotec speakers and 534,000 Mixtec speakers (cited in Fox 5: 2004).

³⁷ <http://www.conapo.gob.mx/>

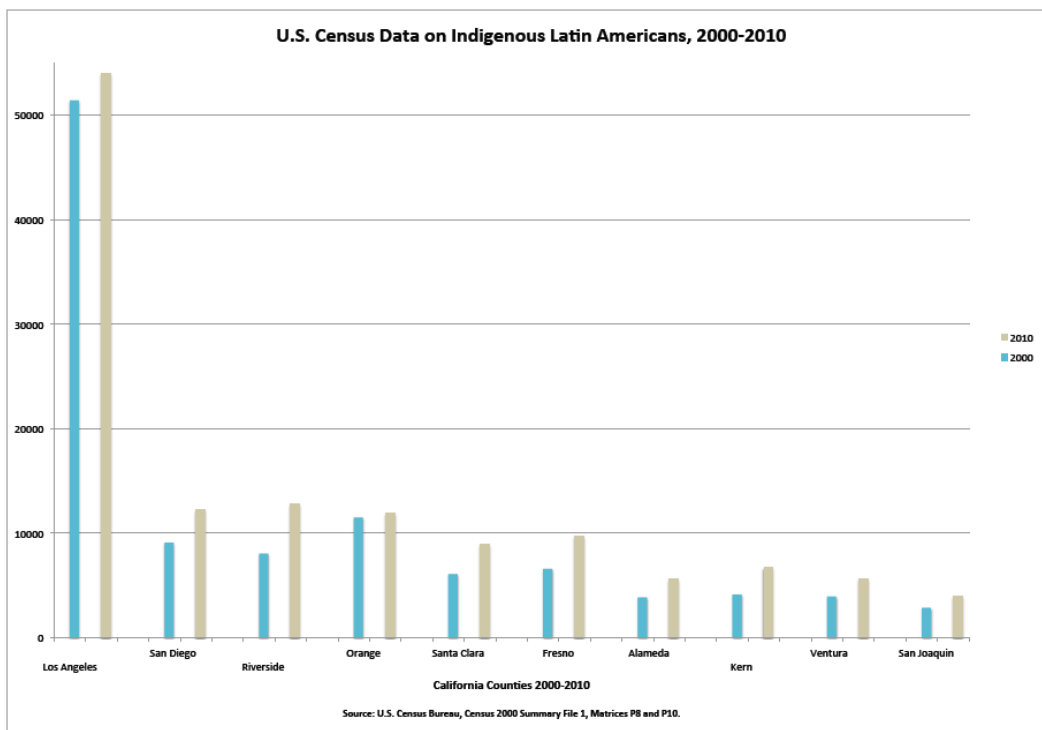
2007 (Truax, 2007 La Opinon). Although the U.S. Census does not differentiate between specific indigenous groups by ethnicity, language or nationality, the data show a clear increase of indigenous Latino in California between 2000-2010.³⁸ Accurate numbers of indigenous migrants is notoriously difficult to obtain due to a myriad of challenges beyond the scope of this chapter. However, the Indigenous Farmworkers Survey carried out by Richard Mines et al. (2010) estimates the indigenous *Mexican* migrant population in California's agricultural industry at 165,000.

California's agricultural sector, with a high concentration in the fields of the San Joaquin Valley, San Diego, Sonoma and Central Coast regions, is the primary destination for many Oaxacan migrants (i.e. Oxnard to Watsonville) (Mines 2010). Within the last twenty years migrant networks have matured and indigenous Oaxacans, have found work in the service and factories in urban areas of Los Angeles County, Orange County and Santa Clara County where they work in landscaping, construction, restaurant and housekeeping (Health Outreach Partners 2010). There is a need for more research on indigenous Oaxacan migration to urban areas in California.³⁹

³⁸ See Huizar and Cerda chapter in Fox & Rivera-Salgado 2004,

³⁹ Increasingly there has been attention on Mayan migrant communities from Yucatan and Chiapas in the San Francisco area.

Chart 2 Top 10 Counties of Indigenous settlement 2000-2010⁴⁰



In terms of sheer numbers, in 2000 and 2010 the highest concentration of indigenous Oaxacan migrants was in Los Angeles County. Koreatown has been a migration destination for Oaxaqueños. While living near other Mexicans would put them into a position where they would endure discriminatory practices on the part of their fellow compatriots, Koreatown offered respite among an ethnically diverse community consisting of Koreans and Salvadorians.⁴¹ According to one migrant interviewed, he preferred to live in Koreatown because living near non-indigenous

⁴⁰ (ECO 2013) Graph taken from page. 22 *Voices of Indigenous Oaxacan Youth in the Central Valley: Creating Our Sense of Belonging in California.* Oaxacalifornia Reporting Team/Equipo de Cronistas Oaxacalifornianos (ECO). University of California Center for Collaborative Research for an Equitable California Research Report Number 1, July 2013.

⁴¹ Sam Quinones, LA TIMES May 30, 2006 <http://articles.latimes.com/2006/may/30/local/me-juarez30>. Accessed June 1, 2012.

Mexicans elsewhere in the city, such as in East LA, he would have to deal with the same discrimination he endured in Mexico for being indigenous (ibid). Migrants to Los Angeles were mostly Zapotec, with a high percentage from Yalaltec (Cruz-Manjarrez 2013), Tlacolula (López and Runsten 2004) and Macuiliangus. As part of my interviews, I asked participants, “where do Oaxaqueño migrants reside in Los Angeles County?” In their responses an amazing constellation of satellite cities were named by every interviewee. As Don Mauricio, President of the Oaxacan Regional Organization put it eloquently, “Oaxaca is not only felt in Los Angeles, it can be seen in Venice, Mar Vista, Santa Monica, San Gabriel Valley, Covina, Monte, Santa Ana. My *paisanos* from Macuiliangis concentrate in Santa Ana and Santa Monica.” (April 2011)

By looking at the number of Oaxacan restaurants that began to flourish in the 1990s, López and Runsten indicate that Zapotecs, particularly from the Central Valley, tended to find employment in the service sector.⁴² In contrast, Mixtecs utilized their social networks to settle in California’s Central Valley and work in agriculture. Yet, in this ten year time span, agricultural counties, including Monterey (69.5), Kern (64.9), Riverside (59), Madera (55), Sonoma (51.9), and Sacramento (50), have seen greater increases in population than Los Angeles. This suggests that

⁴² Gustavo, a Zapotec poet and journalist, helped me to further understand the settlement pattern of Oaxacan migrants via the types of employment, “What I can tell you is the people from the Central Valley settled in West LA, Santa Monica, Venice and Mar Vista, everything that is near the beach. This is because many of them work in the restaurants.” He further indicated that those that came in the 1980-1990s have now established themselves and bought homes in the San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange County and near Ventura. See also Sam Quinones’ *crónicas* of Santa Monica Zapotecs.

Oaxaqueños are increasingly seeking out new areas of settlement due to over saturation in Los Ángeles which reduces the availability of jobs in this urban area.

My research reveals that in the early 1990s, a new settlement destination emerged in the Central Coast, spanning from Seaside to Santa Cruz. Like in Los Ángeles and the Central Valley, migration followed distinct patterns based on ethnicity and township. Zapotecs concentrated in Seaside and Santa Cruz, and like their Los Ángeles counterparts tend to work in the service sector, in this case specifically in landscaping, construction, grocery stores and restaurants.⁴³ Mixtec and Triqui work more in the agricultural areas of Watsonville, Salinas, and Greenfield. Numerous studies have been conducted on Mixtec and Triqui in the agriculture industry of the Central Coast, but little scholarly attention has been dedicated to those working in the service sectors of Santa Cruz county, even though Santa Cruz has a significant population of indigenous Oaxacans in the service sector who are highly mobilized. My research corrects this oversight by documenting the emergence of the Central Valley Zapotec community. By analyzing important differences in class, education and mobilization, this study expands our understanding of Oaxacan visibility in California outside of the agricultural industry.

Based on my research there are several sizeable Zapotec contingents that reside in Santa Cruz that tend to be employed within the service sector, from entry level to middle management positions. In Los Ángeles, many individuals are now

⁴³ The is the case of Santa Cruz, because of *paisanos* ties, the local organic market New Leaf's Deli and Catering department staffs are composed almost entirely of networks of men and women from Zimatlán de Alvarez.

small business owners indicating a time difference in terms of residency and ability to establish themselves in the local economy. In relation to employment, ethnicity, and organizing, I observed certain similarities between Santa Cruz and Los Angeles. Central Valley and Sierra Norte Zapotecs tend to be in higher positions within their respective workplaces, which then allow them to bring in more migrants from their specific communities, contributing to the maturation of networks. Sra. Felicia shared with me that traditionally people from her home town of Santiago de Laxopa located in the Sierra Juarez do not migrate as frequently as other town. She asserts,

You can count the number of people from Laxopa. There are very few of us here in Santa Cruz or even in Los Angeles. The people from my town are farmers, we live from the agriculture, and we are poor. I came to Santa Cruz because younger sister first immigrated directly to Santa Cruz. She came because an older cousin had invited her.” (December 2010)

In Santa Cruz, people in supervisory positions also tend to be the organizers of the Guelaguetza. The Sierra Norte people are the organizers, while the Central Valley people are dancers and provide logistical support. In Los Angeles the Guelaguetza leadership follows a reverse pattern. Los Angeles organizers are from the Central Valley while dance instructors and performers are from the Sierra Norte.

Living in California: Challenges, Organization and Connection to Oaxaca

An important area of inquiry within the study of transnational migration is the examination of how transmigrants emphasize, reinforce and create cultural differentiation and separate identities (Glick Schiller *et al* 1992: 12). Decades ago, before migrating north, indigenous collective identity was “highly localized” (Fox 2006), identified primarily by home community, then by region, and lastly by ethnic

group. Yet, “in the frontier, ethnicity has become the basis for political activism for migrants and a means of defending socially, economically and politically” (Nagengast and Kearney 1990; 62). Migration is significant because moving through multiple social fields permits migrants to define and redefine ethnicity, as well as partially escaping subject identities constructed and contained by the state, as seen in the case with the Mixtec population in Baja California (Kearney 1995, Martínez Novo 2005 (see also Laura Velasco-Ortiz 2005 and Carmen Martínez Novo 2006). As a migrant produced festival, the Guelaguetza presented the opportunity to redefine ethnicity in the face of the discrimination they encountered in California.

In response to ethno-racial discrimination in northern Mexico and California, Oaxacan migrants formed binational organizations and hometown association based on shared common identities, along the lines of region of origin, ethnicity, religion, and class location in the U.S. One objective of many hometown associations and binational organizations is to raise funds for developmental projects for communities of origin. These philanthropic projects have gained recognition from the local Mexican government as these endeavors “have grown substantially in scale and are more formalized and systematic” (Rivera Salgado 2006). Why are transmigrants willing to carry out transnational projects for the benefit of their home community? Does their involvement from abroad continue to offer (and assure them) a sense of community membership back home? According to Goldring (2002) Mexican transmigrants have been participating in transnational efforts and forming transnational communities long before state-led attempts to reach out to Mexicans

nationals in the U.S.⁴⁴ For Goldring, transmigrants participating in migrant-led organizations have the advantage of negotiating the meaning of membership on a national and subnational level. However, not all migrants have that flexibility to negotiate their claim to membership. As mentioned earlier, in order to maintain community membership, some indigenous communities in Oaxaca call upon migrants to return and fulfill a *cargo*, communal responsibility. The community of origin and the migrant can define membership. While many migrant-led groups may be concerned with what is happening back home, other organizations focus their efforts on migrant issues in the U.S., providing legal and educational assistance, among other types of services (Ayón 2006).⁴⁵

Since 1987, Oaxacan migrant organizations such as Organización Regional Oaxaqueño (ORO) have reproduced the annual Guelaguetza festival. When we look at the specific festival as a way for communities to preserve their cultural heritage and share the diversity of Oaxaca's indigenous people, we must also consider the socio-historical conditions in each city, such as Los Ángeles for example, that prompted ORO to produce the first Guelaguetza in California. Could the Guelaguetza festival be a response to the marginalization the Oaxacan community experienced in their encounters with fellow Mexican nationals and U.S. citizens in general in Los

⁴⁴ As seen with the 3 for 1 remittance matching programs.

⁴⁵ Other forms of migrant collective actions have taken shape for the purpose of creating a public space for political visibility and cultural functions. Politically, transmigrants made their presence visible in the marches of Spring 2006. However, does their involvement in this political process secure membership or, for that matter, citizenship? Culturally, migrants sustain cross-border relations as they reproduce traditional cultural performances in the U.S. Some cultural productions present a cultural legacy that claim membership as "Mexicans," others as regionally/sub nationally Zacatecano or Jalisciense, whereas others may claim an identity autonomously and ethnically Zapotec or Mixtec.

Ángeles? If so, the production of the Guelaguetza festival then becomes a “gift” with a double meaning.

In Zapotec, Guelaguetza not only means “offering,” but in Los Ángeles it also functions as a tool to challenge negative ideas about indigenous people from Oaxaca, while simultaneously serving as a site of ethnic solidarity. Maintaining connections with fellow *paisanos* is of significant importance to Oaxaqueños. The production of the Guelaguetza festival facilitates a time and location for migrants from across Los Ángeles County and beyond to convene. Collaborating in a transnational and local level reveals their strength in collaboration and maintaining the festival and general collective action for over two decades. This event allows participants to reconnect with real and imagined Oaxaca by consuming traditional foods, listening to music, and dancing. The festival setting offers migrants the opportunity to temporarily put daily struggles aside and be closer to home.

The festival is not produced solely by one group alone but through the assistance of fellow *paisanos* throughout California and in Oaxaca. By understanding who organizes the festivals on an annual basis and what the celebration means to the local migrant community in each city are imperative to this study. In the next chapter, I discuss the motivating factors for the Guelaguetza festival in Los Ángeles and Santa Cruz.

Chapter 3 Welcome to Oaxacalifornia: Making Community and the Migrant Guelaguetza

From my point of view, the fundamental reason for the Guelaguetza is to maintain the community united. When the people of Oaxaca identify a need, we organize. We gather together so not to lose our traditions. I see organizing events as a way to bring us together, to be in contact with one another and not lose contact amongst *paisanos*. The only way to maintain that connection is by organizing dances, basketball tournaments, or the Guelaguetza festivals. I think that the motivating reason for the festival is to keep the culture alive.

Mauricio, June 2010.

Introduction:

Oaxacalifornia is both the real and imagined socio-cultural landscape created by migrants from Oaxaca since the 1970s. Oaxacalifornia's new cartography of social space is the territorial reach of the oaxaqueño migrant circuit from Oaxaca to Baja California extending to California). Foods, ideas, practices, knowledge, languages, money, among other forms of social remittances, sustain Oaxacalifornia as a binational realm that enables migrants to maintain ties with their *paisanos*. This chapter charts the emergence of this deterritorialized space through the production of *Guelaguetza* festivals since the mid-1980s. I show how these festivals produce both transnational community and translocal community citizenship. In other words, I show how the *Guelaguetza* actively produces Oaxacalifornia.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first focuses on how the festival began in Los Angeles (LA) in the mid-1980s as a grassroots migrant-based event and then grew into a large, corporate-sponsored event. The second shows how the Guelaguetza festival moved north to Santa Cruz and, again, began as a relatively

small affair in 2006 to become a widely popular event by 2008. My goal is to demonstrate how the festival has evolved over the years and how it has become a site of negotiation among migrant communities. In other words, I show that this term, *Oaxacalifornia*, is a landscape of both solidarity and conflict. In telling the story of how this festival evolved, I discuss how different and contradictory notions of culture, identity, and authenticity are mobilized by organizers and performers. Far from arguing that the performance is an index of some essentialized, homogenous understanding of Oaxacan culture, this chapter shows how the performance has become a site of competing understandings of what it means to be Oaxacan in California. Informal networks, bureaucratic structures, sponsorship, and debates over authenticity shape the festival differently, depending on geographical location and generational differences. By juxtaposing the Guelaguetza festivals in Los Angeles and Santa Cruz, I also highlight how Oaxacan migrants first devised it as a creative way to claim cultural citizenship in California and Oaxaca, and then came to use it to counteract racism, discrimination and gang violence.

The Guelaguetza festival requires a tremendous amount of collective action not only within the location of settlement but within the state and across the U.S-Mexico border. I therefore assert that the production of Guelaguetza festival in California embodies examples of cultural citizenship, transnational communities, and translocal community citizenship.

According to Rosaldo, who coined the term cultural citizenship,

The term cultural citizenship is a deliberate oxymoron, a pair of words that do not go together comfortably. Cultural Citizenship refers to the right to be different and to belong in a participatory democratic sense. It claims that, in a democracy, social justice calls for equality among all citizens, even when such difference as race, religion, class, gender, or sexual orientation potentially could be used to make certain people less equal or inferior to others. The notion of belonging means full membership in a group and the ability to influence one's destiny by having a significant voice in basic decisions (1994, 402).

Flores, expands the concept of cultural citizenship by stating that is can,

describe cases where migrant collective action has transformed the public sphere in the United States. This terms 'names a range of social practices which , taken together, claim and establish a distinct social space for Latinos in this country [US]' and serves as 'a vehicle to better understand community formation...it involves the right to retain difference , while also attaining membership in society (1997).

Per Rosaldo's definition, cultural citizenship presupposes a loss or lack of citizenship rights (ostensibly in the US). Cultural citizenship is helpful in assisting us to understand community formation and collective identities of indigenous Oaxacan migrants in the United States. It also highlights how through the production of the Guelagueta, Oaxacan migrants simultaneously assert their difference from other Mexican nationals, while seeking to attain membership in mainstream California society (See Flores and Benmayor 1997). Therefore, I extend cultural citizenship and effectively call for cross-border cultural citizenship for *oaxaqueño* migrants insofar as migration from the community of origin jeopardizes their membership therein. For *Oaxaqueño* migrants, their (cultural) membership in the community of origin is contingent on their continued communal service post-migration (Mutersbaugh 2002). However, *Oaxaqueño* migrants actively look for ways to

maintain their membership (i.e. their cross-border cultural citizenship) in the community of origin even if it means completing their *tequio* via surrogate service.

Cultural citizenship is the United States requires translocal collaborations because of the way migrant communities are dispersed throughout the state of California. However, because of the context of migration cultural citizenship also requires a transnational lens. The Guelaguetza festival exemplifies a transnational community because this cultural performance specifically claims a Oaxacan cross-border collective identity while simultaneously being staged in California. In other words, the Guelaguetza reinforces cross-border connections because participants rely on members of their home communities to send materials, music, and costumes and other goods and information necessary to produce the festival in the United States.

In contrast Fox's use of translocal community citizenship, focuses on cross border membership where migrants are active members in their community of settlement (i.e migrant organizations, church, school or city council) as well as in their community of origin (seen in *tequio* or *cargos*) (Fox 2004). My use of the term translocal describes collaboration among communities dispersed within the state of California. I wish to expand on the concept of translocal to say that it's not only participation in the place of settlement and of origin, but also across the state. As Guelaguetza festivals proliferated across the state of California between 2009-2012 these productions required the support from not only the local community but other migrant communities throughout the state and fellow paisanos in Oaxaca. Those migrant communities and its members who assisted in the organizing of the event

were then allowed to exercise specific rights, such as having a vendor booth, dance in the event, make a petition to perform particular dances and organize their own festival in their respective city (as long as it did not coincide in the same city or date).⁴⁶ Since 2012, Guelaguetza festival leaders across the state have made great efforts to coordinate among themselves to avoid overlapping performance dates. The reason is that there are only certain numbers of brass bands and dance groups with the means to travel to festivals. This creates a competition for cultural resources, in addition to possibly an oversaturation of Guelaguetza festivals in one area. This is not say that there are not cross border collaborations – because the production of the festival is transnational. Below I chart the development of these cross-border cultural festivals in Los Angeles and Santa Cruz.

Los Angeles: The Founding of ORO

The Oaxacan Regional Organization (ORO) is the flagship migrant organization that produced the first Guelaguetza festival in California. ORO is a coalition of Zapotec hometown associations that strives to preserve and foment Oaxacan culture in Los Angeles. The non-profit organization's main achievements include the production of the longest running migrant produced Guelaguetza festival in California (and in the U.S.) and the completion of various public works projects in

⁴⁶ Participation in the production of the Guelaguetza is one face of cross-border cultural citizenship. The other face of cross-border cultural citizenship has to do with *oaxaqueño* migrant membership in the community of origin (e.g. tequio, cargo etc).

their communities of origin.⁴⁷ Since 1987 they staged the Guelaguetza festival at Normandie Park once a year, on the first weekend of August. In response to my questions about the history of the organization and the first Guelaguetza, the Oaxaqueños in Los Angeles told me to speak with one of the founding members of ORO, Sr. Otomi Dominguez. They noted that Sr. Otomi was a 69-year-old Zapotec man who hails from Yaxachitl El Alto in the northern Sierra Juarez region and he emigrated to Los Angeles in 1970.⁴⁸ Many of his *paisanos* call him a pioneer for his work with the Oaxacan community. Sr. Otomi, now a retired construction worker, embodies experiences of migration, marginalization, and collective organizing.

Excited about getting to meet this “living archive,” I drove to Los Angeles to interview Sr. Otomi Dominguez. Underneath a canopy of branches filled with young avocados sat Sr. Otomi, shuffling yellow folders crammed with papers and newspaper clippings on top of a worn oval wooden table. Wearing a faded blue sweatshirt with the sleeves rolled up to his elbows and wire-framed glasses balancing on the tip of his nose, Sr. Otomi’s weathered hands delicately organized the folders into neat stacks. As I walked into the backyard toward the table, a welcoming smile appeared on Sr. Otomi’s face and a nod of his head gestured me to sit down. I had collaborated with

⁴⁷ Their public work efforts, such as sending financial remittance to assist in the building of clinics and paved roads, have fostered good relationships with numerous political representatives, both in Oaxaca and California.

⁴⁸ Personal communication interview date March 9, 2011. Sr. Otomi migration history is consistent with what scholars have documented for Zapotec migration pattern more broadly going primarily from rural areas in the Central Valley and Northern Sierra region to urban areas such as Oaxaca City and to Mexico City, (Hirobayasi 1983) and then eventually settling in Los Angeles in the 1970s (Rivera-Salgado 2004).

Sr. Otomi for nearly five years, but this was the first time that he was to tell me about his experience organizing the Los Ángeles Guelaguetza.

Once I sat down and set up my recorder, I asked Sr. Otomi if he could share with me how ORO started. He began:

We came [to California] from various communities in Oaxaca; Xochixtepec, San Jeronimo Zochina, Xochila, Tavehua, Yaguil. People from these communities would meet at Normandie Park in Korea Town. Everything started there at that park. We would meet on a weekly basis to play basketball, our preferred sport, which developed into tournaments.⁴⁹ We decided that since so many of us could come together for a sport then we should start an organization to help our home communities. Between Cesar Liébana, Nezahualcóyotl Juárez, Rodrigo and me, we decided that as migrants in California, we needed to organize a group. To this date our communities in Oaxaca lack many things, such as the construction of roads, schools and several other things. In order to help our hometowns, we formed the *Oaxacan Regional Organization*. With the strength of all the participating communities, we organized dances, basketball tournaments and *quermeses*, to raise money to send to our home communities.⁵⁰ We began a rotation system where each community would raise funds by hosting an event: one Saturday Xochistepec, then the following Saturday El Alto, the next Saturday Yaguil. This way each community had a turn to send money home. It was in the early 1980s that we had started working together, but it wasn't until 1987 that we formalized the group definitively. We had always been doing things amongst ourselves for our communities, but it wasn't until 1989 that we decided to have elected leaders and become public. Eventually I became

⁴⁹ For more information on Oaxcan Basketball please see Bernardo Rios dissertation, "Culture, Migration, and Sport: A Bi-National Investigation of Southern Mexican Migrant", Ohio University, 2012. Bernardo Ramírez Rios' dissertation, Culture, Migration, and Sport: A Bi-National Investigation of Southern Mexican Migrant Communities in Oaxaca, Mexico and Los Angeles, California, traces the introduction of basketball in Oaxaca to the 1980s through the National Solidarity Program implemented by former Mexican President Salinas de Gortari. Due to the influx of emigration from Mexico's rural area a significant funding and program was directed to these rural area. Over 1,000 basketball courts were constructed as a way to give the opportunity for men to play "and develop connections with others and with the state." See Smith, B. (2008), *Inventing Tradition at Gunpoint: Culture, Caciquismo and State Formation in the Región Mixe, Oaxaca (1930–1959)*. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 27

⁵⁰ *Quermeses*, are fund raising events for the benefit of community or family in need. These events may include the sale of food and a dance.

president and during my term, I sought out nonprofit status for ORO with the help of a professor at the University of Southern California. (March 2011)

Sr. Otomi's narrative charts the migration of various Zapotec villages to Los Angeles, particularly to the neighborhood of Koreatown. Settlement in this area highlights the use of transnational migrant networks. Normandie Park is significant as the use of this public space chronicles the demographic shift from a once Korean migrant enclave in the 1970s to the emergence of a Spanish and Zapotec speaking migrant enclave. By the late 1980s, Koreatown and its surrounding neighborhoods became home to a large number of migrants from Oaxaca and El Salvador. Normandie Park became a community center for Oaxacan migrants to connect with new paisanos and collectively organize while working toward public works ventures in their towns of origin. Specifically, basketball games played an important role as the first form of cultural production that brought community together and were considered as a way of maintaining connection with their home villages.⁵¹ In Los Angeles, Oaxacan sports clubs and community groups organize tournaments that attract many spectators. The money raised from the sale of foods and drinks was directly put toward the groups' respective restoration projects in Oaxaca. The formation of ORO and the participating regional associations signify a transnational communities, where indigenous migrants are simultaneously active in their community of settlement and community of origin. In other words, this is an example of two face of translocal community citizenship, by organizing basketball

⁵¹ Gustavo Morales , Oaxacan Journalist explained to me that basketball is popular due to Oaxaca's rugged terrain there is not much room for soccer fields. He also added that basketball courts are more cost efficient (Personal Communication March 2011).

tournaments here in California for community better there in Oaxaca. Their daily lives, work and social relations extend across two nation states (Fox and Rivera Salgado 2004).

Today, ORO is known for organizing four major cultural events on an annual basis, although smaller community events may be programmed as needed by the Oaxaqueño community (see chart below). The calendar year of activities begins in March at the Mexican Consulate in Los Ángeles and Plaza Mexico in the Lynwood area of Los Ángeles with *Mes de Oaxaca*, Oaxaca Month. A commemorative celebration is held on March 21st in honor of former Mexican President Benito Juárez in Plaza Mexico, where a statue was erected through the efforts of the Oaxacan migrant community.⁵² A ceremony is held where representatives from the Los Ángeles City Council, Mexican Consulate, and representatives of the Oaxacan migrant communities affiliated with ORO place a floral wreath on the statute. Each Sunday of this month cultural presentations such as, mainly dance and musical presentations, are scheduled in the courtyard of the Plaza Mexico showcasing the diversity of Oaxacan ethnic communities and cultural traditions with dances, bands, and Oaxacan artists. The first weekend of August the Guelaguetza festival is held at Normandie Park.⁵³ October is a critical administrative month for ORO because as a

⁵² Otomi Dominguez, was on the organizing committee in the 1980's to have the statue placed at Plaza Mexico.

⁵³ Koreatown is a confluence of Korean, Oaxacan and Salvadorian immigrants. This repeats text above Amidst the predominant Asian business district Oaxacan and Salvadoran immigrants have begun to establish their own respective storefronts. Normandie Park holds historical significance to the Oaxacan community as it is the birthplace of the Guelaguetza festival, among many other community organized activities. In 2008-2010 a two day festival was held for the first time in the history of Guelaguetza Festivals at Normandie Park. Saturday hosted a *Guelaguetza Infantil*, Children's Guelaguetza, where

501 C3 organization they must submit a report of all activities and expenses to the Secretary of the State of California. Consequently, leaders hold a general assembly to provide a finance report on that year's Guelaguetza festival. Every two years at this meeting, a general election is held to elect the new *mesa de directiva* (board of directors) for the next term. In November, ORO celebrates Day of the Dead by inviting the general community to construct elaborate altars as a way to celebrate the life of passed loved ones.

Through these events, ORO and affiliated communities have shared their traditions with the larger Los Angeles community for a number of years. "Before we had only worked with Oaxacan communities, but now we get involved with the other ethnic communities that also reside near Normandie Park" explains Israel.⁵⁴ Under the 2009-2011 board of directors, with Mauricio Herrera, Israel Plasacio, Getrudis Maldonado and Natalia Hidalgo, the organization became an active participant in Korean and Salvadoran cultural activities. Additionally, ORO has collaborated on community events and meetings hosted by the Los Angeles Fire Department and Los Angeles Police Department. As a result of this relationship, ORO has fostered a rapport with the two vital city agencies. These networks have proven critical in navigating through the bureaucratic process in preparation for the Guelaguetza festival. This is a perfect example of the concepts of transnational and translocal citizenship—the Guelaguetza became a vehicle for community building across a

all the regional dances were performed by the youth of community and dance groups. Likewise, the brass bands that accompanied the dancers were also youth bands.

⁵⁴ Interview Oct 15, 2011.

transnational social-field, spanning “here” and “there,” the utter embodiment of Oaxacalifornia, with solidarity mostly trumping internal cleavages and divisions.

Chart 3: Calendar of Events for each organization

Los Ángeles <i>ORO</i>	Santa Cruz <i>Vive Oaxaca</i> and <i>Centéotl Grupo de Danza y Baile</i>
<p>March Oaxaca Month and Benito Juarez Day at Plaza Mexico</p> <p>August Annual Guelaguetza Festival (first weekend of the month) *every three years General Assembly elections for new board members</p> <p>October As a non-profit organization fiscal year ends and reports are due to state of California</p> <p>November Dia de los Muertos/ Day of the Dead and Altares</p>	<p>January Audience for the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival</p> <p>May Annual Guelaguetza Festival held at Harbor High School</p> <p>September Mexican Independence Celebrations in San José</p> <p>Guelaguetza Festival in Salem, Oregon</p> <p>* Centéotl Grupo de Danza y Bailes is affiliated with Santa Cruz School District therefore the dance group may have a number of performances throughout the school year.</p>

Why ORO started the Los Ángeles Guelaguetza

The previous section outlines the origin of the Oaxacan Regional Organization (ORO) and provides a description of the cultural and fundraising activities it coordinates. Here I explain the socio-historical conditions in Los Ángeles that prompted ORO to produce the first Guelaguetza in California. I show that the

Guelaguetza festival was a *response* to the marginalization the Oaxacan community experienced in their encounters with fellow Mexican nationals and United States citizens in general in Los Angeles. Through the production of the festival Oaxaqueños can challenge negative ideas about indigenous people from Oaxaca. Thus, the festival simultaneously serves a site of pan-ethnic solidarity, and a display of resistance against cultural erasure and the demeaning attitudes towards Oaxaqueños. Ultimately, the Guelaguetza captures both sides of the cross-border cultural citizenship coin.

Sr. Otomi, shares his thought on the inception of the Guelaguetza:

When we [migrants] arrived to [California] *they* [non- Oaxacans, Mexican compatriots, and U.S.] would speak about Oaxaqueños negatively saying ‘those poor Indians why can’t they be like such and such.’ But the general public doesn’t know what type of ancestors we come from. Our ancestors were geniuses in many ways, but here [U.S.] people discriminated you right away. That’s why we wanted *them* to know who we are. Those of us that founded ORO thought that it was necessary to share our customs and folklore from Oaxaca our dances, music and food. It gives us a sense of pride to finally see Americans and Europeans attending the Guelaguetza. That’s basically what we had in mind, to share our folkloric dances, music and food that comprise the Guelaguetza.

Once we gained our 501c3 status I began to look for funds for the first Guelaguetza that we organized at Normandie Park, right on the same basketball courts. I remember that day, we thought the basketball courts would be a good location to stage the dances presented by each affiliated community. The poor girls that danced that day left with blisters on their feet because of the heat from the black asphalt. The next time we hosted the festival we took it inside of the gymnasium, but the location was too small for the number of people that arrived. We then decided to use our nonprofit status and with the funds awarded from the District 5 [ORO] was able to rent the entire park. This allowed us to utilize the entire park on a Sunday. With the help of the City Council of Los Angeles, who lent us a portable stage, we had the Guelaguetza festival that took up the entire baseball field. Each year

the festival grew bigger and bigger. In 1992, we decided to form Grupo Huaxyacac.⁵⁵ (ibid)

The current president of ORO, Mauricio Herrera, shared in 2011 another revealing explanation of what the Guelaguetza festival means today:

For me the celebration of the Guelaguetza is for everyone. This is where we come to meet, where we can display our culture, our folklore, and our cuisine. It is a celebration of pride to show the general public who we are. Oaxaqueños have a lot to give and a lot to teach. I believe that the Guelaguetza is a space where other communities, other races, other cultures can see Oaxaca and its people through our dances and music. This is an event where we can show what it is like to be Oaxaqueño. We are descendants of a culture where our music, dances and art forms are alive and present. (July 2011)

These statements from the former and current presidents of ORO speak to the layered nuances and the motivating factors for the production of the festival. In the U.S. the Guelaguetza is a tool for redressing ethnic discrimination against indigenous Oaxacans. At the same time, it helps build solidarity among Oaxaqueños, Mexican immigrants and other ethnic communities such as Koreans, Salvadorans and Afro-Americans. Migrants organizers and performers are reclaiming the Guelaguetza festival by democratizing it and give a new meaning to the festival in California. This performance is organized and attended by people that were excluded (financial and distance) from the “official” Guelaguetza in Oaxaca City. Each festival serves two

⁵⁵ Grupo Huaxyacac assisted in representing the dances of the communities either not present in California or who do not have organized communal dance groups. “The group was founded in May of 1992 by a group of young people who live in the city of Los Angeles with the purpose of preserving the customs and the authentic folklore of Oaxaca through dance. The dance group supports itself with donations received from different organizations where they perform for at events. The majority of the dancers are children, youth whose parents were born in Oaxaca, Mexico, and who throughout time have immigrated to the United States.” From their Facebook website. <https://www.facebook.com/people/Grupo-Folklorico-Huaxyacac/100002346412026#!/people/Grupo-Folklorico-Huaxyacac/100002346412026?sk=info> Source retrieved May 2012

entirely different purposes. In Oaxaca City the festival is a tourist attraction. Whereas, in California is it produced by and for the migrant community to main cultural citizenship in both the United States and Mexico.

In effect, the Guelaguetza is a strategy for building community both among and between the ethnic groups that participate in the festival. Despite the ten years that separate the two men's tenure as ORO's president, the same message of challenging negative imagery of Oaxacan people still resonates. What also becomes apparent from these statements is the need to show the public that Oaxaqueños are also "cultural citizens" and this festival legitimizes them and their culture. There are four ways cultural citizenship works in this case. The festival makes visible indigenous migrants where Mexican migrants does not acknowledge their membership as *Mexicanos* (discrimination). Second, is that Oaxaqueños claim citizenship as migrants in the United States through their cultural contributions. Third, they maintain citizenship in their home communities by continuing their traditional practices *usos y costumbres*. Tequio factors into the making of the Guelaguetza festivals in California. Customs associated with tequio can be seen in the ways that organizations hold general assembly meetings to decide "who" is allowed to participate in the festival. Individuals and or groups that participate in this unspoken form of tequio in the making of the Guelaguetza are afforded the right to claim their membership into the Oaxaqueño community; in other words it re-affirms their cultural citizenship. Each year, days before the Guelaguetza I witnessed how people of all ages *echan la mano*, give a hand, to aid the coordinating committee in

preparation of the event all the way through to clean up. I assert that the Guelaguetza festivals in California are a way for migrants to maintain ties with their community of origin and to claim cultural citizenship on both sides of the United States and Mexico border. This sense of collectivity and collaboration is the basis of the Guelaguetza. Fourth, by collaborating with Mexican elected officials, Guelaguetza organizers claim belonging as Mexican citizens through the culture of the festival.

Produced by Oaxaqueños for Oaxaqueños: The making of a community festival

Maintaining connections with fellow paisanos is of great importance to Oaxaqueños. The production of the Guelaguetza festival offers a time and location for migrants from across Los Angeles County and beyond to convene. This event allows participants to reconnect with real and imagined Oaxaca by consuming traditional foods, listening to music, and dancing. The festival setting offers migrants the opportunity to temporarily put daily struggles aside and collectively create a sense of being closer to home.

Producing the festival involves many components: dance, music, the venue, permits, vendors, and so on. In creating the first Guelaguetza festival, the organizers and participating communities wanted to achieve two goals. First, that the event strives to be as authentic as possible, and second, that it be economically beneficial for its community members. What constitutes authenticity in creating the Guelaguetza festival? Authenticity is extremely important and everyone involved in the production of the festival will go to great lengths to ensure that the festival maintain a similar *ambiente* found in the *pueblos*. There are numerous factors that

are taken into consideration in order to ensure authenticity of the festival such as; a live Oaxacan brass band, if the brass band does not know a musical piece the organizers will request the musical score from fellow musicians in Oaxaca to be transposed and sent to California. Playing music from a compact disc is frowned upon greatly. In California, there is a growing number of *bandas juveniles* (youth brass bands) Los Ángeles and San José. Musical directors and organizers in California go to great lengths to ensure that musicians are equipped with all necessary pieces for the entire Guelaguetza repertoire.⁵⁶ Next, it is preferred to have *bailes* and *danzas* performed by people from the specific ethno linguistic group community. If representatives from a distinct *pueblo* are not present to perform their respective dances then other dancers (of Oaxacan heritage) are allowed to dance but they must “show respect” to the ‘absent’ community’s traditional clothing, dance form and embodiment of movements. Dances cannot be altered drastically into a “ballet” style (personal communication 7/5/13 Karina Jimenez). In other words, dances are not to be stylized in terms of choreography and traditional clothing for a staged presentation.⁵⁷ Karina also shared that only items made by Oaxacan artisan should be sold at the event such as, jewelry, art work, pottery, and textiles.⁵⁸ Promotional materials also have to be authentic as possible. In the production of the Guelaguetza festival, the place where items are made matters. Since 2006 Santa Cruz has their

⁵⁶ During a visit to Oaxaca City in 2010 I met with the musical director of Santiago La Xopa (Sierra Juarez) Brass band. Many times practitioners in Oaxaca learn music by ear, however to facilitate the teaching styles in California the musical compositions were written for each instrument. I was asked to take and deliver the musical score to the band in San Jose, CA.

⁵⁷ This point on dances will be elaborated more in the following chapter.

⁵⁸ For the last three years ORO has flown in *artesano/as* from Oaxaca to give workshops on loom weaving, making of *alibrejes*, and cravings on gourds.

posters designed in Oaxaca City by a graphic designer because he has knowledge of the color and imagery used in Oaxaca. In 2008 radio commercials are produced in Zimatlán de Álvarez, Oaxaca for the Santa Cruz festival, by a local DJ because he is able to replicate the musical and vocal sounds from the Central Valley. Traditional attires, music, items made by local artisans, advertisement, as well as particular food items reinforces transnational networks because of this desire for authenticity in the festival (see chapter 4 for further discussion on authenticity).



Image 5 ORO Guelaguetza poster from 1998.

Lastly, traditional Oaxacan food items are only to be sold at the event.

According to Sr. Otomi,

We did not allow the sale of hamburgers, hotdogs or sandwiches. The food has to be authentic Oaxacan food, tlayudas and other food items that are from the Oaxacan cuisine. We also did not allow for business owners or restaurants –the space is for communities to sell, otherwise it would be very hard for them to compete (March 2011).

To ensure economic success it was collectively decided by the coordinating committee that only Oaxacan food and items could be sold by participating

comunidades, as referred by Sr. Otomi, not established businesses.⁵⁹ In the initial years of creating the festival, organizers experienced a large learning curve.

In the early years, the Guelaguetza festival was attended mainly by Oaxaqueños and information was spread by word of mouth or black and white posters.

Sr. Otomi recalls,

As we began to use other forms of media, such as Spanish language television, radio and local newspapers, more people began to attend our festival. Fellow Mexican nationals, Peruvians and Salvadorans, even Americans began to come to attend the festival. The public began to recognize who we are and what we are doing in and for the community. (ibid)

Here Sr. Otomi points to the growth of the event via the utilization of various media forms and technology to advance their projects. These garnered a broader audience and over all interest in the Oaxaqueño community in Los Ángeles.

Sr. Otomi and fellow committee members began to foster ties with the then General Consul of Mexico in Los Ángeles, José Angel Pescador, and representatives from the Los Ángeles City Council. Consul Pescador and his wife proved to be advocates for the leadership of ORO as they guided them in various bureaucratic processes, connected them with radio and television stations, hosted press conferences at the Consulate to promote the Guelaguetza and directed them to business owners for sponsorship. Sr. Otomi shared “I am thankful for the support that

⁵⁹ According to Sr. Otomi, ORO collectively decided that migrant owned businesses such as *El Chapulin* (Crafts and bread items) owned by Arturo Aguilar and *La Guelaguetza Restaurant* owned by Fernando Lopez had the mean to outsell local vendors leaving them with only an average gross of \$200-\$300. However, things have changed in recent years now established Oaxacan restaurants compete with community booths at the Guelaguetza Festival. “Therefore the vision we once strived for in supporting the local communities has changed and become more commercialized.”

Mexican Consul General José Angel Pescador Osuna and his wife offered while guiding us through various bureaucratic processes.” In order to secure the use of the Normandie Park, located in District 5 of Los Angeles, migrant leaders sought support of former Councilman Ed Reyes. Councilman Reyes and the Oaxacan community leaders found collaboration to be mutually beneficial. He presented petitions on their behalf at city council meetings while the Oaxacan community supported Councilman Reyes at city functions for over a decade. This type of collaboration also extended to key officials in the city police department and the local fire department. Fortunately, the flexibility of Sr. Otomi’s job as construction foreman allowed him to attend to the demands placed on him by the organization’s projects. He explains,

I was fortunate that I had opportunity to do necessary running around that is required of a president. I worked in construction and I was able to leave my employees working while I ran errands for ORO. Yes, I was very privileged to have that type of work where I could be absent three to four hours. It was an advantage that others don’t have (ibid).

However, there were a few challenges that Sr. Otomi and several of the members of ORO’s leadership faced. In order to complete necessary city requirements and applications the organization needed someone with the ability to type, and to obtain access to a fax machine and a computer. Sr. Otomi enrolled in night classes in order to learn how to type and use a computer and a fax machine. He also purchased his first computer, which to this day he still uses in his “office” locked in his garage. Jokingly, he tells me the only thing he needs to do now is to get wireless Internet and create his own website.



Image 6 Sr. Otomi explaining blue print sketch created for the Guelaguetza festival at Normandie Park. (Picture taken in March 2011).

Pre-production

Since my research began in 2005, I have been able to witness firsthand the current forms of organizing involved in the Guelaguetza festivals in California. After establishing rapport with several of the ORO committee members, and with permission from Sr. Mauricio and the rest of the currently elected officials, I was granted backstage access to the pre-production phase. For three consecutive years, I traveled to Los Angeles one week before the festival in order to observe preparations from several different vantage points. I spent time with the leaders at organizing meetings, attended dance practices as well as band rehearsals, and assisted in food preparation. Although my

observations focused on the last intense organizing days, coordination began months in advance.

In order to prepare for this event board members procure venue options as early as January. The Guelaguetza festival at Normandie Park required a tremendous amount of time and energy from ORO board members. The park must be reserved six months before the event. However, reserving the park also requires a number of other city permits, plus blue prints of how the property would be utilized for the event. Sr. Mauricio and Ismael also have the task of securing a \$200,000 insurance policy for the event. The last two months committee members work intensely to secure sponsors before they are able to print a poster.

The economic crisis that hit California in 2008 made producing the Festival more financially difficult. Before 2009, the solicitation of permits was free. In 2010, the organization began paying \$6,000 for street closure, when the cost in previous years was only \$2,000. The rental of the park was now \$12,000 in comparison to \$9,000 the year before. Additional costs for the private security in the park and police to direct traffic, and applications for permits among many other items totaled around another \$12,000. This rising cost has forced organizers to find other ways to sponsor the Festival. Sr. Mauricio reported that he starts contacting sponsors nearly five months in advance, speaking in person to owners of restaurants, travel agencies, and markets. He has invited them to participate in sponsoring the festival, or host a booth, according to a four tier system.

Organizing the festival necessitates the assistance of a committed board of people willing to dedicate numerous hours of labor coordinating various aspects of the event. There are four main positions in ORO, the president, organizational secretary, secretary of culture and the treasurer. For each one of these positions a person is nominated, the individual is allowed to accept or decline, and then the person is elected by the general assembly. These positions have a clear division of labor. For example, Getrudis, appointed as the Secretary of Culture is responsible for all of the work related to confirming the brass bands and the dance groups. She ensures that the brass bands have all of the necessary musical arrangements and that each one of the community dance groups as well as folkloric groups knows their dances before the presentation. She is also in charge of developing the cultural program and acting as a stage manager on the day of the event. Natalia is the Treasurer and her main responsibility includes accounting for all of the money, as well as the distribution and sale of festival tickets.⁶⁰ Israel, who is the current organizational secretary, assists in soliciting permits from the health department, convening general assemblies with the communities, and attends all meetings with sponsors and city officials with Sr. Mauricio.

In my experience organizing the Guelagueta festival Los Angeles, we used to suffer a lot. And there is reason why I'm saying "used to" suffer because we use to deal a lot with the city. We use to constantly attend meetings. We use

⁶⁰ There are four main people in charge of coordinating all the logistical elements of the festival. ORO holds general assembly meetings on a monthly basis with all affiliated Home Town Associations (HTA) about the two days before and day of the event. From my observation, a few former ORO secretaries offer their assistance to current leadership during the intense time period of festival production. Likewise, youth volunteer the day of to help as "runners," "ticket takers," "booth staff" among many other roles.

to go to District 1 meeting under City Councilmen Ed Reyes. We needed to attend those meetings because we would be working with the people from city council. Those meetings of course are in the middle of the day—obviously that’s between nine in the morning and five in the afternoon. And [those of us that organize] have to take time off from work because it’s part of our responsibility as an ORO committee member. You want to be [part of the committee] because you like being there—not because you are not being forced or paid. Everything we do is for free. An example, if we have a city meeting that we must to attend for the street closure at 3pm, we have to get out of work at 1pm in order to be in downtown Los Ángeles by 2pm and then find parking. It is a struggle. Health department is different. The health department is always busy. Do they take fax or emails? No. You have to take the document to them directly, in addition the proof of your nonprofit organization. It’s a major ordeal, you have to know how to work with the city and know how to be part of a committee. To be part of a committee you have to have time and love what you do. You do this work because you feel that you are going to either help your community in a certain way or because you really love your community. To be in the organizing committee the person has to love the art and the culture because that is what ORO is. (May 2010)

The dilemmas that Israel summarizes here highlight the negotiations that working class Oaxacan migrants make in both Los Ángeles and Santa Cruz in order to produce the Guelaguetza.

Day of the Event: Receiving Governor Elect Gabino Cue at Los Ángeles’ Guelaguetza

The shadows of the towering steeples from the nearby historic Greek Orthodox Church gently lay across the sandbox area in Normandie Park almost touching the gymnasium. This park has been the unofficial center - a local meeting ground- for new arrivals –from Greek immigrants at the turn of the 20th century, to Korean and indigenous Oaxacan immigrants in the 1970s and most recently Central Americans from the 1980s. Normandie Park is a small oasis of green space that also

serves as a community gathering spot between the smog producing Santa Monica freeway and the bustling streets of Normandie Ave. and Venica Blvd.

Standing on the sidewalk into Normandie Park, ORO President Don Mauricio Herrera straightens up and his face begins to twinkle with a bright Cheshire cat smile as he states,

It's been confirmed. The popularly elected governor of Oaxaca, Lic.Gabino Cue, will be with us at Sunday's Guelaguetza. Governor Cue is coming to fulfill a promise he made to us migrant *paisanos* (countrymen). We helped him campaign here in California and in Oaxaca this election year. Our efforts proved to be fruitful on both sides of the border. A governor hasn't come to visit us migrants in California since Gov. Murat in the early 1990s. Governor Cue visit is important to us. It shows that he is taking us (migrants) into consideration. Xóchitl, we would like you to help us receive the newly elected governor and his delegation on Sunday, ok? (August 2010)
Excited but also slightly frightened, I smiled and hesitantly said "Of course, in

whatever you may need help with." Grateful to be taken into consideration for such a high political profile duty I was nonetheless a little unsettled because I wondered why this honor was given to me instead of to a member of the Oaxacan community. The Oaxacan communities have been exceptionally generous with me over the years in allowing me to both observe and work alongside them in not only the Guelaguetza's organization but also on how political and cultural ties are maintained between migrants and their home state.⁶¹ I asked Don Mauricio, if anyone else would escort

⁶¹ This was the first time that the Los Angeles Oaxaca community had literally "designated" me to be so close to (inside) their organizing and political affairs. I definitely thought about what I brought to the table for them in this situation. Since this was the first official gubernatorial visit of Gabino Cue to the Oaxacan migrant community in the U.S. –my research and social position as a university graduate student gave them political capital. My social position and work gave them distinction from other communities.

the governor. He replied, “Yes, a woman from the *Frente Indigena de Organizaciones Binacionales* (FIOB). Don’t worry! You’ve helped us for the past two years and this would be a perfect place for you to see the background happenings.”

Sra. Natalia, the treasurer of ORO, informs me, “What one wears to a Guelaguetza is a form of ethnic and cultural expression. It is mainly the women that dress up in traditional attire at these social gatherings to represent their community.” Sra. Natalia then said “I have the perfect *traje* (traditional dress) from my community for this occasion. My daughter had it made for me by a regional artisan woman and it just arrived in the mail. Xóchitl, you can wear it as you escort the Governor on to the stage and present him to the public before he inaugurates the Guelaguetza.” Sra. Natalia reaches down into her backpack and pulls out a grey plastic bag with international postage stamps and marking written on it, from this bag a beautiful Mazateca *huipil* (long dress like tunic) and matching skirt slide out. She gently aligns the two pieces *traje*, holding it up in a showcasing fashion for us to get a better look at the craftsmanship of the *traje* from her hometown. The base cloth of the *huipil* is made of vivid white linen, has a bold scooped neck collar and the bottom of the *huipil* extends to just above the knee. Decorating the chest area are three colorful embroidered panels of tropical birds and vivid flowers. The elbow length cuffs are adorned with matching silky carnation pink and aqua blue colored ribbons sewn one color slightly over the other, creating a waving ruffle trim at the edges complimenting the birds. The skirt is made of the same white material that reaches to the ankles with

brick colored embroidered images of a woman pulling a horse by the reins in a pattern almost like still figure animation repeating around the bottom of the dress.

Amazed at her gesture of kindness, I asked Sra. Natalia if she was sure she wanted me to wear her new, specially made dress from her home community on Sunday. She swung her hands in a waving motion and replied, “Don’t think anything of it,” and I understood that I should wear her dress in the receiving ceremony. Sra. Natalia eyed my hair, noticing I had recently cut it shorter than shoulder length and said,

Don’t worry about your hair. I also have some new dark brown hair extensions. Jennifer, my god-daughter, will braid them in so you can appear as close as possible to us Oaxacan woman with long braids at our fiestas. But you need to arrive early on Sunday morning so she can help you get dressed. There you’ll see all the other young girls getting ready with the help from older women, family, and friends. I’ll tell Jennifer to bring you a pair of traditional *gusano* earrings (hand spun ornate gold earrings with tiny white pearls) and a red seed necklace too (August 2011).

Sra. Natalia shared with me necessary accouterments; the *traje*, *trenzas*, earrings, and necklace, which I needed to, appear as close as possible to an authentic Oaxaqueña. Getting ready with the women *danzantes* (dancers) is organized chaos. Grandmothers, mothers, sisters, aunts, cousins, and friends all help braid colorful ribbons into one another’s long jet-black hair. Weathered fingers from older women’s hands hook around sectioned pieces of black hair, steadily interweaving section after section, creating two braided ropes of hair with a large bow uniting the two at the end. Mothers apply brightly colored eye shadow and use care to glue dramatic black false eyelashes onto little eyelids. Friends tug, push, tug, and push

with both hands until they perfectly fasten a red *refajo* (belt that native women wear) around their waists to secure their skirts. Sisters pin gold religious medals of Santa Juquila, Virgin de Carmen Alto, or the Santo Niño de Atocha on the right side of their blouses for spiritual protection.

Under the yellow fluorescent lights of the Normandie gymnasium, Sra. Trini calls out for gel and hair spray and with a brown fine tooth comb begins to part my hair down the middle. Quickly a young girl brings her a 24 oz container of bright neon green gel with a picture of a dark gorilla face with green boogers coming out of its nose. The label on the gel container reads, *Moco de Gorila (Gorilla mucus)*. A handful of cold, wet gorilla *mocos* saturates my head as Sra. Trini pulls at my own hair to weave in the false hair extensions. It takes an assortment of tools to secure my hair: Moco gel, Suave hair spray, Goody bobby pins, and hair ties. Jennifer rushes to her bag and lends me a personal set of *gusano* earrings and red seed necklace.⁶² Meanwhile I apply my own makeup and eyelashes. Jennifer and Sra. Trini transformed me into a Oaxacan woman in a matter of 30 minutes.

In a mirror's reflection I can see some of the other women watching Sra. Trini work wonders on my short curly hair. I can't imagine any place other than Los Angeles where these types of beauty transformations can take place. Sra. Natalia checks on me while I get ready to remind me that the Governor and his delegation will arrive shortly. Once the last ribbon is tied into a bow, Sra. Trini calls for Jennifer

⁶² Gusano earrings are a specific style of earrings worn by women of the central valley. They are ornately spooled silver metal in a perpendicular fashion with white pearls or red coral down the middle section of the earring.

and her father Don Teo to confirm visual authenticity of my look. Jennifer makes one last touch, adjusting the necklace and then places one braid in front of my shoulder and the other braid to hang toward the back. She and her father, along with other women nearby, review me for the last time, and with a nod of Don Teo's head, a voice distantly declares, "She looks like a Mazateca woman." From the gymnasium doorway Sra. Natalia's voice shouts, "He is here!" Her smile signifies approval of my appearance. She then walks me to meet with the Gov. Gabino Cue and his delegation of politicians and local intellectuals. I join another woman from the FIOB dressed in traditional attire from the Mixtec region to walk alongside the newly elected governor. The *Calenda*, grand procession, begins with sounds of the brass band leading the way followed by the honored guests and then migrant communities representing various Zapotec, Mixtec, Mixe communities through the park and on to the stage. There Governor Gabino Cue shares a few words with the audience, thanking the Oaxacan migrant community for their support in his election and stating his goal of working toward bettering conditions in the state of Oaxaca.⁶³

⁶³ Video of Governor Gabino Cue speaking at the 23rd Annual ORO Guelaguetza festival at Normandie Park. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5Qe1x7-Vg0> Retrieved May20, 2013.



Image 7 Picture taken from Governor Gabino Cué's Facebook page. August 2011. Governor Cué addressing the audience at Normadie Park, with several community leaders and myself (dressed as a Mazateca woman) standing on stage.

Post Event

Exactly 6 weeks after the Guelaguetza, a general assembly is called at Seoul Park in Koreatown. Sr. Mauricio, Israel, Sra. Natalia and Getrudis present printed copies of the final financial report to the leaders of each community. Israel speaks out loud, detailing every cost associated with organizing the festival, how many tickets each community group sold and the amount of money they will receive based on the sale (\$5 of every \$10 ticket sold by a community goes to their organization), total revenue from ticket sales. This meeting is held to show clear accountability between ORO leadership and participating communities. The latter part of the meeting is dedicated for members to discuss any observations or needs for improvement in collaboratively organizing the next Guelaguetza.

Reaching new heights: Los Ángeles Sports Arena and Lincoln Park

Between 2008 and 2010, organizers encountered numerous political and financial road blocks in preparing the Guelagueta. Their twenty three year stretch of producing the annual festival at Normandie Park came to an end in 2010. The decisions came as a result of exponential growth in attendance and the costs related to a two-day event at Normandie Park.

The last Guelagueta festival at the historic park marked a special event, as the newly elected Oaxacan Governor Gabino Cue came to fulfill a promise to the Oaxacan migrant community in reciprocity for their assistance during his electoral campaign. ORO, among a number of other migrant organizations, provided essential transnational campaign support, organizing rallies for the candidate at Plaza Mexico in Lynnwood and registering potential migrant voters for national and state elections in Mexico. Governor Gabino Cue's visit was the second gubernatorial visit to the Los Ángeles Oaxacan migrant community since former Governor José Murat Casab appeared at a Guelagueta festival in 2001.⁶⁴

After the 2010 festival, Normandie Park personnel claimed that due to the volume of spectators various park items were damaged. Apparently, one of the trucks cracked several sprinkler heads, damaging the entire water system. ORO was billed for replacing the entire sprinkler system near the baseball field and the laying of new sod where the vehicle was parked. After paying for the damages of the sprinkler

⁶⁴ Read more about Governor Cue's visit: <http://www.gabinocue.org/ultimas-noticias/2010/08/08/gabino-cue-gobernador-electo-de-oaxaca-inaugura-la-23-edicion-de-la-guelagueta-en-l-a/>

system, Sr. Mauro inquired about the rental of the park for the following year. Park officials informed him that the rental cost would be \$12,000; however, the second weekend in August had already been rented out. Recognizing the signs of possible roadblocks with City Park officials, Sr. Mauricio and the rest of ORO leadership decided to seek other venues for the annual festival.

August 2011 was the first and only year that the Oaxacan Regional Organization held the Guelaguetza Festival in the rotunda area of the Los Ángeles sports arena. The cost for using the sports arena totaled \$40,000, which included security, ample parking and parking attendants, access to indoor restrooms, emergency first aid and janitorial services. It appears that the move to the arena proved to be more cost effective for the organization. Sr. Mauricio worked with administrative staff at the Los Ángeles Sports Arena nearly nine months in advance to reserve the outdoor rotunda area for the festival. Although the location offered more space for the festival, spectators absorbed additional cost of not only the entrance fee of \$10, but also additional \$10 for parking. The festival had a successful turnout at the new location and was graced with another visit by Governor Gabino Cue. However, a concern arose about the lack of *ambiente*, atmosphere, at the Sports Arena. Visitors expressed that the festival felt cold and was too spread out between the entrance of the rotunda to the booths and finally the stage. After the 2011 Guelaguetza festival Sr. Mauricio began to search for a new location that would be accessible to the working class Spanish speaking community. In 2012, for the

twenty-fifth anniversary of ORO Guelaguetza festival was held at Lincoln Park (a historic downtown Los Angeles park) with free admission to the public.⁶⁵

Migrating to Northern California

“Oaxaca does not only exist in Los Angeles, it extends to north, south, east, wherever the Oaxacan people live.” Felicia (April 2008)

In the early spring of 2005, Nancy Robles and Felicia Silva, along with their families and five other Santa Cruz and Seaside Oaxacan community members, traveled to Los Angeles to attend a gastronomical festival organized by the *Federación de Organizaciones y Comunidades Indígenas de California* (FOCOICA) held at the Los Angeles Sports Arena.⁶⁶ This event not only featured the diverse cuisine of Oaxaca but also included an opportunity for seven young women to compete for the title of *Diosa Centéotl* (Corn Goddess) USA, that same day. promotional event for the upcoming Los Angeles Guelaguetza Festival to be held in May. The young woman elected as *Diosa Centéotl* would inaugurate FOCIOCA’s Guelaguetza festival as well as travel to Oaxaca City to represent the Oaxaqueño

⁶⁵ 2012 was an interesting year for the migrant-produced Guelaguetza festivals throughout the state. In the chapter five I will discuss more in detail about commercial interests in producing the festival. The reason the 25th anniversary became a free event was because the Federation of Indigenous Oaxacan Communities in California (FOCIOCA) teamed up with a controversial Oaxacan entrepreneur “Hualtulco Production” claimed to revive the FOCIOCA Guelaguetza Festival on the same date as ORO’s festival and their event was going to be free of charge. FOCIOCA never did host a Guelaguetza in 2012 nor in 2013.

⁶⁶ There were two Guelaguetza festivals in the city of Los Angeles between the years of 2002-2009. *Federación de Organizaciones y Comunidades Indígenas de California* (FOCOICA) held their annual festival at the Los Angeles Sports Arena under the leadership of Fernando López and other Oaxaqueño business owners and hometown associations. I accompanied Sra. Felicia of Santa Cruz Vive Oaxaca committee to numerous FOCOICA meetings in Los Angeles during her tenure of Secretary of Culture 2007-2009. During this time I was able to observe how FOCOICA organized their production of the Guelaguetza festival and witness the close collaboration with Oaxacan State appointed officials from Instituto Oaxaqueño de Atención al Migrante (IOAM), René Ruiz Quiroz.

migrant community at the state organized Guelaguetza festival .

Oaxaqueños from across Los Angeles County and beyond convened at this

Santa Cruz residents sat underneath the shade of a tent and watched from afar as the pageant contestants introduced themselves and delivered speeches about their cultural heritage as Oaxaqueñas. This culinary festival and pageant marked an important turning point for Nancy and Felicia. They asked themselves, "If these events can be organized in southern California, then why can't these sorts of cultural activities be also held in Santa Cruz?" With this in mind, both women began to foster ties with fellow Oaxaqueños in Southern California. They introduced themselves to the main organizer Fernando López, former president of FOCOICA. They made contact with Israel Palacios of the Yalálteco community, Natalia Hidalgo of the Tlacolula de Matamoros community and Jesus Ismael of Santa Barbara. These four individuals proved to be central in establishing translocal ties that connected the Santa Cruz Oaxacan community with fellow paisanos in Southern California.

In May of that same year, the members of the Santa Cruz community again traveled to Los Angeles to view the fourth annual Guelaguetza organized by FOCOICA. The Los Angeles Sports Arena had been the home of the FOCOICA Guelaguetza since 2002. In 2004, FOCOICA claimed to have reached an attendance of nearly 12,000 people, making it the largest Guelaguetza festival outside of

Oaxaca.⁶⁷ Thereafter, the organizers strived to reach the same number each year but were never able to duplicate the success of 2004.

As the Santa Cruz caravan arrived, they noticed the main entrance of the sports arena was filled with rows of brightly colored banners publicizing traditional *antojitos*, appetizers and baked goods from various regional communities in Oaxaca. The smell of freshly grilled *cecina* enticed people to buy a freshly made *tlayuda*.⁶⁸ Hanging from metal racks an array of hand-embroidered textiles, handwoven bags, and *huaraches* floated at perfect eye level.⁶⁹ The main walkway leading into the arena was filled with families, men wearing their leather sandals, women and children dressed in their traditional ethnic attire and speaking in their native indigenous languages. The outside ambience lured guests before they entered the main arena where the Guelaguetza presentation took place. The Los Angeles Sports Arena gave an impression of grandeur to the festival. But according to Nancy and Felicia, inside the arena this sense of magnificence did not translate in providing the familial Oaxacan spirit and energy. They thought having a Guelaguetza festival in Santa Cruz would allow additional Oaxacan migrant communities residing in northern California the opportunity to participate in one of the most iconic Oaxacan celebrations. Many Oaxacan migrants were unable to make the pilgrimage to Los Angeles as legal status, a valid driver's license, reliable transportation, and other costs imposed a barrier for

⁶⁷ FOCOICA was comprised of mostly Oaxacan business owners which facilitated access to renting the Los Angeles Sports Arena. This facility has a seating capacity of 16,000 and sufficient parking.

⁶⁸ Spanish words: *Antojitos*, appetizers; *Cecina* is thinly cut marinated beef; *Tlayuda* is a large thin flour tortilla almost the size of a pizza, which has a spread of black beans on the bottom and freshly grilled meats, of beef and pork, topped with shredded cabbage, string of Oaxacan cheese called *quesillo*, and your choice of red or green salsa layered on top

⁶⁹ Huaraches are a type of traditional leather sandals

some to partake in a day of cultural celebration. For Nancy, having a Guelagueta in northern California signified the opportunity.

[The opportunity] to meet other people, to say, 'I am here' and 'I'm bringing a part of my traditions. It means to share, freedom, to see a family forget about their problems while living in the U.S., to give, receive, and smile. That they take out their [traditional Oaxacan] clothes and celebrate their identity. (December 2010)

These factors were the catalyst for the Santa Cruz Oaxacan community to begin organizing their own migrant organized Guelagueta in the Central Coast beach town.

Steps toward creating community

Creating the folkloric dance group Centéotl proved to be an important first step in organizing and bringing together the Santa Cruz Oaxacan migrant community. The motivation to form the dance group came when Janet Robles, Nancy's thirteen year old daughter arrived to live with her mother in California after a twelve year separation. In her new school in Santa Cruz, Janet witnessed the way fellow Mexican nationals humiliated and discriminated against Oaxaqueños, especially when they spoke in their native tongue. She also felt overwhelmed by the presence and pressure of gangs in the schools.

Janet spoke about her concerns with her aunt Felicia Saldívar and her mother Nancy Rodríguez. Both Nancy and Felicia work in the Santa Cruz School District. Nancy works as the bilingual coordinator at Costanoa Continuation High School, while Felicia works as the attendance secretary Branciforte Middle School. Recognizing the growing gang problem in Santa Cruz, Felicia and Nancy thought of

how other students may be experiencing the same pressure. In a meeting organized by the sisters they found that several families also wanted to find a way to help migrant children cope with their recent arrival and to stay clear of gangs.

Nancy and Felicia's affiliation and community work with the Santa Cruz school district helped them garner the support from former principal of Costanoa, Mr. Kurt Coleman, in creating the folkloric dance group. In 2001, Bailes y Danza Grupo Centéotl was created as a cultural after school program within the Santa Cruz City Schools in response to the feelings of isolation, discrimination and the pressure of street violence voiced by newly arrived Spanish speaking immigrant youth. The parents felt that a folkloric dance group would be beneficial to the students and community. This would give students a place to be physically active and learn about their culture. Both Felicia and another sister Sophia taught folkloric dances in the primary schools in Oaxaca. But according to Nancy, "Janet was the inspiration" to form a dance group. Fortunately, Janet had studied dance with Oaxaca's highly regarded dance maestro and founder of the state's "Authenticity Committee" for the Guelaguetza, Juan Roman Vilorio Castillo. Consequently Janet became the dance instructor for Grupo Centéotl. Extended family members and friends constituted the first formation of the group. They practiced at the Loudon Nelson community center in downtown Santa Cruz. Gradually, more students, parents and other Spanish-speaking immigrants joined the dance group creating a new cultural space for both Oaxacan and non-Oaxacan migrant communities in Santa Cruz. One afternoon, an adult community member heard a radio announcement that Ballet Folklórico Los

Lupeños of San José, CA was going to perform *Danza de la Pluma*, the renowned conquest dance of Mexico. The entire Grupo Centéotl traveled to San José for the dance presentation. Afterwards, Nancy, Felicia and another dance instructor, Benigno Velez, agreed to do a three-year cultural and folkloric exchange between Grupo Centéotl and Maestro Ramón Morones, the founder and then director of Los Lupeños of San José. He agreed to teach Grupo Centéotl dances from other states of Mexico and in exchange the Oaxacan community shared music and danzas from Oaxaca with him. Close to 40 migrant families, ranging from elementary school children to Cabrillo Community College students and general community members from Seaside, participated in Grupo Centéotl and workshops with Maestro Morones.

Grupo Centéotl became acquainted with Oaxaqueño organizations and communities from throughout California by attending cultural events in Los Ángeles County. In October 2005 Sebastian Barreras, a fellow Oaxaqueño of Seaside, invited the dance group to the “Hollywood Forever” event on Halloween as the Los Ángeles Sierra Juarez Oaxacan community was scheduled to perform in this event. They made two key contacts, Don Fernando López, a Zapotec entrepreneur and Israel Palacios, a young Yalálag community member and dance instructor, who would later play a role in the emergence and evolution of the Santa Cruz Guelaguetza.

Despite their difference in age, both men had a similar vision of connecting fellow Oaxaqueños, paisanos, and of collaborating with one another. The organization that these two men belonged to was FOCOICA. After attending a number of events in 2005, the Santa Cruz Oaxacan community became members of

the Los Ángeles based FOCOICA in early 2006. By spring 2006, Santa Cruz's Grupo Centéotl danza y baile performed *Chinas Oaxaqueñas* in the Los Ángeles Guelaguetza Sport Arena. This was the first of many collaborations in which Grupo Centéotl represented the central valleys and the dance of the market women. However, once Grupo Centéotl returned to Santa Cruz, Sra. Nancy explained that "performing in Los Ángeles was cold. You couldn't feel the *ambiente*. It was like, 'you came, you danced, now go home.' We wanted to do something that had *calor*, that feeling of what the Guelaguetza is."

The first year we strictly presented the dances seen at a Guelaguetza. Felicia is very careful in preserving traditions. That's why our first poster said "*Vive Oaxaca y sus comunidades indígenas*," because to write *Guelaguetza* meant to have food. The policies in Santa Cruz are strict and they are different from Los Ángeles. There was a fear among the committee members to go to the city agencies and department to ask "what do I need to do to sell food?" Additionally, we didn't have much money that first year so we decided to only present the dances, the traditional dances. The second year in 2007, with the generous support of Fernando López of Los Ángeles we had a 'Guelaguetza' in Santa Cruz. We had a Guelaguetza with everything that is supposed to be part of a Guelaguetza, with food for the audience members (Nancy 2008).

Los Pioneros: The Trailblazers

In June of 2006 ten migrants affiliated with Grupo Centéotl decided to organize the first "Guelaguetza Festival," entitled *Vive Oaxaca y sus comunidades Indígenas*, at the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium. The initial organizers were Felicia and Patricio Saldívar, Nancy Rodríguez, Rogelio Rodríguez, Sofia Rodríguez, Victor Jiménez, Jennifer Zamora, Andres and Andrea Roman, and Felipe Ortega. Here family ties (the Rodríguez, Saldívar, Jiménez families) played an important role in the organizing committee. Additionally members from neighboring towns in Oaxaca such

as Zimatlán de Álvarez and San Pablo Huixtepec also participated. The pioneers lived in Santa Cruz, Seaside and San Francisco. All traveled either by private or public transportation in order to be part of the making of this cultural venture. Interestingly, all but one of the organizing members is Oaxaqueño: Jennifer Zamora is from Guadalajara and resides with her family in the same neighborhood, the Beach Flats, which has a high Oaxacan population.

She and her three sons participate in the same folkloric dance group, Grupo Centéotl, with predominantly Oaxacan migrant families where she was elected as the treasurer. Although Grupo Centéotl primarily teaches regional dances from Oaxaca, there is representation from first- and second-generation families from other Mexican states as well as Central America migrants. Participation is relatively open to anyone willing to dance and learn about Oaxaca's traditions.

Critical to making the Guelaguetza possible are the youth and young adults that perform the dances. In 2005 and 2006, Santa Cruz County experienced an influx of youth migration from Oaxaca.⁷⁰ In particular, single young men hailing from Zimatlán de Álvarez and Zaachila, both in the Central Valley of Oaxaca, arrived in Santa Cruz. During this time, middle school children also journeyed across the U.S. and the Mexico border to join a family member or trusted friend in Santa Cruz. For three months, weekly evening meetings were held, both at Costanoa Continuation High School and at the home of Nancy Robles in order to organize this first festival in

⁷⁰ This also coincided with the time of the teachers protest in Oaxaca. Many schools were closed for several months throughout the state, prompting families to send children to stay with family members in the United States.

Santa Cruz. The first order of business was to select a location to host the event and secondly, to figure out how they were going to represent all sixteen of the indigenous communities represented in Oaxaca. In Santa Cruz, Seaside and San José were there two organized community dance groups to present the dances of the Central Valley (Chinas Oaxaqueñas and Danza de la Pluma) and Sierra Juarez. In order to represent other ethnic communities, paisanos from Los Ángeles and Ventura were invited to share their dances at the festival. Mr. Kurt Coleman, principal of Costanoa continuation school, was a pivotal advocate throughout many stages of production of the festival. He facilitated initial conversations with Santa Cruz school superintendent Mr. Alan Pagano and the migrant school parents. Mr. Coleman suggested rather than be identified as “migrant school parents” that they create their own committee with the name that represented the vision of their event, thus the creation of “Vive Oaxaca Committee.” Once the Vive Oaxaca committee formalized themselves they operated on a consensus basis following a similar structure of *usos y costumbres*, *customary law* utilized in indigenous communities.⁷¹ However, because of their collaboration with the Santa Cruz School District the community nominated individuals to hierarchical roles of president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer roles.

During their meeting with former Superintendent Pagano, he gave his full support to the idea of having a celebration that highlighted the diversity of the community and showcased the students of Santa Cruz school district. He assisted

⁷¹ Rivera-Salgado 2004, states that many of the indigenous communities continue some form of communal structure of governance such as *Tequio*, *Usos y Costumbre*, or *Cargos* in Oaxaca.

them in securing the venue and lending the Santa Cruz school district name for city permits and subsidizing the cost at the Santa Cruz civic auditorium for a total of \$3,000. In order to represent Oaxaca's indigenous people via dance, Grupo Centéotl collaborated with groups from Los Ángeles and Santa Barbara. This translocal network included Israel Palacios and the Yalálateco community dance group from Los Ángeles, who presented traditional danzas from Sierra Juarez; Natalia Hidalgo with the Tlacolula community representing a mayordomía from the central valley; the Mixe community also presenting their traditional danzas; and Jesus Ismael along with his community dance group from Santa Barbara performing the Jarabe Ejutluteco. Grupo Centéotl, under the direction of Janet Robles, would showcase the Chinas Oaxaqueñas and Danza de la Pluma because these dances are from the Central Valleys of Oaxaca, where the majority of these families originate. Collectively they would all dance remaining *regional dances* that did not have representation from their respective communities.

Logistics and Structure of Participation

This first festival presented some logistical challenges for the organizers. Many of the community leaders had never dealt with applying for city permits, met with fire, police and health departments, collaborated with the Santa Cruz civic auditorium staff to create a blueprint of festival set up, or worked in marketing and media. Tasks were divided according to members who knew English and those with connections to specific community resources. Nancy and Jennifer's fluency in English enabled them to interact with fire, police and health department officials and

manage the solicitation of city permits. Both of their jobs also allowed them to move about from their work to attend appointments with the city. Felicia took on the duty of communicating with migrant business owners, including the Guelaguetza Restaurant in Los Angeles (owned by Fernando López) and Joyeria Ideal in Santa Cruz (owned by Federico Ortiz) as they provided financial donations as well as invaluable contacts to media sources. Nonetheless, this first celebration was principally funded by utilizing traditional forms of sponsorship where a *mayordomo* (festival sponsor) covers the majority of financial costs but also depends on his networks of friends and family to assist him in the additional costs or labor. Patricio Silva, Felicia's husband, served as the inaugural mayordomo of *Vive Oaxaca y sus comunidades Indígenas* (aka Guelaguetza festival) by investing \$7,000 of his personal funds. Other financial assistance came from festival organizers requesting donations door-to-door, including items needed for the festival, money and labor. This is a different type of fundraising effort than the *quermeses* and dinner/dance events held in Los Angeles. This door to door aspect employed the practice of Guelaguetza, where organizers made their petition for assistance with family and friends. Leaders visited the homes of fellow paisanos greeted each other in a ritual like manner, and then asked for their support for the upcoming event. If people were unable to give money they offered their labor, food items, or connections to equipment which could be temporally loaned for the event. Rogelio and Victor continued the practice of Guelaguetza to acquire the donation of three goats and several chickens for the traditional feast after the celebration. These donations came

from utilizing paisanos' networks throughout Santa Cruz County. Andres utilized his networks in Seaside and Salinas to obtain baked goods and vegetable donations from fellow paisanos from San Pablo Huixtepec and Zimatlán de Álvarez. I offered my support in a publicity role by writing letters to solicit donations, utilizing social media networks to promote the event (MySpace, Facebook and Indy Media), drafting press releases, compiling lists of local media and sending out public service announcements as well as offering linguistic translations at city department meetings. Later I enlisted the help of a web designer friend to create the first Guelaguetza Festival website in California (www.viveoaxaca.com). He later taught one of the youth how to continuing developing and maintain the website. Felipe contributed by securing free promotional airtime and a live broadcast with Spanish language radio DJ Charrito Martínez of La Raza 93.3 FM.

Other participants in the festival included *Guelaguetza* volunteers, musicians, and of course, the audience. Guelaguetza volunteers are critical on the day of the festival. They are the individuals that pass out *Guelaguetza*, or the gift, that each indigenous community has brought to share with audience members. These individuals must be familiar with the traditional Oaxacan music and recognize which gift goes with each specific region. Once the final notes of a song ends, Guelaguetza volunteers then begin to pass out the respective community's offering. This is important because each community brings a particular gift that represents the best of their harvest or art craft.

Pre-production

“Pack a lunch and bottle of water. We will be starting our four-hour dance practice this week. Here is the schedule of dance practices for the next seven days” announced Janet, the dance instructor. In response, the older boys run to the back stage. Large rolls of white linoleum emerge from behind the velvety black curtains are carried out and unrolled over the tile floors in the cafeteria/auditorium at Costanoa. The linoleum covering not only shields the tile from being scratched up but also protects the dancers' legs from the long hours of repetitive footwork. As the days draw close to the date of the festival, dance practices become more intense. From Thursday to Sunday, four-hour dance practices are held from six to ten in the evening, with some double rehearsal times on the weekend. While the cafeteria pulses with rhythmical footwork, the hallway is filled with chatter from parents, cell phones ringing, children playing, teenage girls assembling baskets for their Chinas Oaxaqueñas attire and young men repairing feathers and mirrors on a Danza de la Pluma's *Penacho*.⁷²

Meanwhile the female organizers sit on a cafeteria table counting out and numbering tickets that will be sold for the Guelaguetza. The

men run up the stairs, heading directly to the women to give reports of donations they

Image 8 Carlos from Zimatlan de Alvarez adjusting his Danza de la pluma crown.



⁷² *Penacho* is a large ornate semi-circle crown placed on the head while dancing.

have acquired from fellow paisanos and friends in Santa Cruz and Salinas. At the edge of another table Felicia types vigorously using only her index fingers while simultaneously staring into her laptop screen. She is creating the festival program, which resembles a cultural map of Oaxaca via dances.

It is now 11 o'clock and everyone makes their way to Felicia's house, which is only a five minute drive from Costanoa school. Upon entering the kitchen, the stimulating aroma of a freshly brewed pot of *café con canela* simmers on the stove. Sra. Nidia, Felicia's 75-year-old mother visiting from Oaxaca, serves all of the committee members a piping hot cup of coffee. Felicia began the meeting by giving an update of which Oaxacan communities have confirmed their participation, the status of promotional radio announcements with La Raza 93.3, and the struggle of getting attention from local English language newspapers. Nancy then follows with information regarding city permits and news from the Santa Cruz civic auditorium. Due to a performance at the civic auditorium the night before, the Vive Oaxaca Committee would not be allowed in to decorate the stage and set up any needed equipment until the morning of the Guelaguetza. Andres and his wife Andrea volunteer their 18 passenger vans to pick up any of the donations and deliver them to the civic auditorium the morning of festival. Once everyone has given their reports, Felicia then asks the committee about lodging and food for the paisanos that are traveling from Los Ángeles and Santa Barbara, who will be joining them the day before the event. Committee members decide that they will ask all of the parents of the dancers if they would open up their homes and host dancers and families traveling

from out of town. Not to overly burden the volunteering families, Felicia and Patricio offer their home to provide breakfast between the hours of five and seven in the morning. They ask Rogelio and Victor to function as the honorary cooks of the festival and to prepare breakfast in the morning for all of the dancers and visiting communities. They agree.

In Santa Cruz, leadership and decision-making positions are held by women from the Saldívar and Rodríguez families, while the male kin and fellow paisanos assist in labor-intensive tasks as well as preparing festival breakfast and the post-festival dinner. The largest task for the men is preparing these two traditional meals for close to 300 people, which requires a great amount of time and resources. Rogelio and Victor begin their cooking preparation nearly one week in advance.

The night before the Guelaguetza, Felicia's house became the cultural epicenter for the Oaxacan community located in Santa Cruz. Word spread about the first Guelaguetza celebration and hordes of volunteers continuously arrived to offer their assistance in any last-minute detailing. What draws people to want to volunteer and participate so close to the day of the Guelaguetza Festival? In my observation, it appears that offering one's labor in a cultural celebration such as this one generates energy and reinforces a sense of cultural membership. One's participation in cultural events, in any capacity from organizer, performer, volunteer to even as audience, strengthens membership and or forges transnational connections. With so many people in one place, it was hard to determine who delegates responsibilities and assigns tasks to individuals. With an army of volunteers milling in different parts of

the house, everyone seems to find a place to give a helping hand. Nancy said it best: “look at my daughter and her friends, they look like they are children from the *Pueblo*, working hard and helping out for the community's festivities.” Moments like this provide an opportunity for parents to teach their children communal practices of being *acomedido/a*, being helpful, and to take pride in participating in communal activities even in a new context.⁷³

The brass band, *La Banda Oaxaqueña*, is central to the Guelaguetza Festival. They consist of a mixture of both adult and youth musicians hailing from Los Ángeles or San José, all of Oaxacan heritage. The ensemble generally consists of 30 musicians playing clarinets, trumpets, saxophones, tubas, flutes, snare and bass drums along with other percussive instruments. A Guelaguetza festival can last up to six hours which calls for the presence of two bandas so they may alternate between songs. For the number of songs that are required at a Guelaguetza, musicians must be familiar with a vast repertoire of musical arrangements that correspond to each community. The banda is critical in the festival as particular songs mark action such as the initiation of the celebration with a *calenda* march.

Audience members constitute an important component of the Guelaguetza festival. Many Oaxacan migrants residing in California may not have had the opportunity to witness the Guelaguetza in their home state due to the exorbitant cost of a ticket at the Guelaguetza auditorium (\$55.00 US, available through

⁷³ For more information on children collaboration see Angelica Lopez, Rogoff, B., Nafaji, B., Mejía Arauz, R. (2012). Collaboration and helpfulness as cultural practices. In J. Valsiner (Ed.), *Handbook of Cultural Psychology* (pp. 869-884). NY: Oxford University Press.

Ticketmaster). Migrant organizers reclaim the Guelaguetza festival and made it more accessible for working-class spectators to attend a Guelaguetza Festival in California. The cost generally runs between \$5 and \$10.

Post Event

Once everyone packed up all of their traditional clothing and cleaned out the dressing rooms, a caravan of vehicles made their way to Felicia's house. As drivers turned along the corner, a multitude of cars already parked along both sides of the street have taken two blocks of space. The reason for this was because the immediate street area in front of the home had been used to set up rows of tables and chairs in a horseshoe shape for the Banda. Traditionally in Oaxaca, Guelaguetza festivals organized in the Pueblos offer a meal before the festivity. Due to city restrictions no food was allowed to be distributed without a health permit at the Santa Cruz civic auditorium. Thus a new tradition was born-- the culminating event included a celebratory meal with all of the participating communities and musicians, held at the mayordomo's home.

When it appeared that all of the communities had arrived, Patricio, the mayordomo of the first Vive Oaxaca celebration, offered a shot of mezcal to the adults and made a toast to a successful Guelaguetza. After the toast Rogelio and Victor invited everyone to *barbacoa de chivo*, barbecue goat, a black bean purée paste, and rice they had prepared as the celebratory meal. Again, like clockwork, volunteers within the host community served plates of food to the out-of-town guests. Shortly thereafter, the banda began to play and Felicia and Patricio made their way to

the street and danced to a *Chilena*.⁷⁴ The lively medley enticed adults and young people to join the dancing couple in the street. The eating, drinking and dancing continued late into the evening. Then one by one, each community bid farewell to the Vive Oaxaca organizers and made their journey back to Southern California.

The next morning Grupo Centéotl dancers returned to Felicia's house and once again waited in line to return their traditional attires to Janet. Meanwhile the organizing committee met inside around the kitchen table to briefly debrief and began paying off remaining invoices. It takes close to three weeks before all tickets are accounted for and final budgetary reports are made available.

Reflecting on the success of their Guelagueltas, Sra. Felicia notes:

My memory takes me to the third year (2008) we did the Guelagueta in the civic auditorium. We filled the auditorium to full capacity (max 1,300). All of sudden I see a group of firefighters enter through the emergency door. I went along with Srta. Chavez to see what's happening and they tell us that we are at the maximum capacity for the event. Additionally, when we went outside to the patio it was filled with un gentillo, a mass of people, maybe 500 to 600 people that were asking to come into the event. My memory is....(tears and long pause) normally when you are left outside you ask to be allowed in, you may even yell to be let in. The people outside were crying, pleading to come in. In that moment, the president of the organizing committee (Felicia) had to make a decision. During the intermission the *artistas*, performers, would not take a break. We took the band and the all dancers outside for fifteen minutes to perform for the people that were left outside (December 2011).

People had traveled from various distances to enjoy the Guelagueta for ten or fifteen minutes. Tearfully and in a low heavy voice she continues,

Lo que es estar en su patria por un ratito, to be in their country for a little while. What I was of afraid of ... was that the event would end up in a pushing

⁷⁴ Type of musical genre in Oaxaca. Thankfully, the neighbors did not call the police due to the noise and the excessive number of cars and people blocking the street.

and shuffling, hitting situation, because they didn't let them in—but it ended in a beautiful way. Those left outside were satisfied when the dancers from the various communities came outside and spectators were able to see at least fifteen minutes of dances, hear the music of the brass band and spend time at the outdoor market. That was the most memorable event for me. It was not recorded. I don't think it was recorded. But that event was motivating for me. If you think about how many people come here [to the U.S.], *se exilian por propia voluntad*. They leave their homes out of necessity, from the poverty that exists where they are from. They do this so they can sustain their loved ones that stayed behind, I call that voluntary exile. Imagine, to be in your homeland for one day, for a moment because they cannot return, because they do not have proper documentation, they can't go back. For them the Guelaguetza is very important. It's a new connection. One day that you recharge with energy, positive energy in order to return to work again in the farms, in the factories, to return to be the manual labor of capitalism. (ibid)

Sra. Felicia's recollections speak to the how the Guelaguetza festival is a means for migrants to reconnect with home even if only temporarily, to claim a sense of belonging by being visible in a city that renders them invisible, and assert a sense of translocal community citizenship in a new location.

In 2008, *Vive Oaxaca y sus Comunidades Indígenas* reached new heights.

Not only did spectator attendance surpass capacity at the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium, but the committee was also successful in bringing the municipal president of Zimatlán de Álvarez, Felipe Florean, and his wife. This was the first time that a municipal president from Oaxaca came to support a migrant-organized Guelaguetza festival with not only his presence, but also with five large baskets filled with various *Guelaguetzas* from Zimatlán. Paisanos traveled from Salinas and Seaside to come meet and essentially hold a general assembly with their municipal president at the celebratory dinner after the Guelaguetza. Although they may be far from home, Zimatecos (residents of Zimatlán) still maintain ties with their home

community. They discussed the possibilities of forming a hometown association and how they could fundraise to support needed infrastructure back in Zimatlán. For municipal president Florean, this would be the first of many trips to Santa Cruz.

Politically, *Vive Oaxaca* caught the eye of then-Santa Cruz City Councilmember Tony Madrigal. For the second consecutive year, Tony Madrigal came to the Guelaguetza Festival to commemorate the hard work and contribution to diversity with a proclamation establishing “Vive Oaxaca Day.”⁷⁵ This newfound relationship with the City Council also opened up doors of interest from other city departments, such as Santa Cruz County cultural grants, and youth and migrant advocacy groups. *Vive Oaxaca* began a working relationship with the nonprofit Barrios Unidos Institute for Peace and Community development, specifically collaborating with the rehabilitation programs for ex-gang members.⁷⁶ The community leaders also began working with Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), which helps underserved middle school and high school students access preparatory curricula which will prepare them for eligibility to four-year colleges and universities.

Due to the success of the Guelaguetza Festival, the children and parents have become recognized within the Santa Cruz school district. This resulted in garnering support from school supervisors who then assisted in helping *Vive Oaxaca* gain

⁷⁵ Every year since 2007 *Vive Oaxaca* has received a proclamation from Santa Cruz City Council commemorating the date that the Guelaguetza Festival is held as Vive Oaxaca date. Please see appendix for a copy of proclamation awarded to *Vive Oaxaca*.

⁷⁶ The young men affiliated with this rehabilitation program would help the male organizers in constructing a portable wooden stage used at Harbor high school in 2009-2010.

attention from English speaking media groups.⁷⁷ The Santa Cruz Sentinel newspaper neglected to provide any pre-event publicity in the first three years—only offering coverage after-the-fact. Unfortunately, the Oaxacan community in central coast area has always been depicted in a negative light.⁷⁸ For years, news reports on the influx of undocumented immigrants and gang violence in the Beach Flats neighborhood has plagued this hard-working community's reputation.

It was a goal among *Vive Oaxaca* organizers to break this stereotypical depiction of their community. Organizers believed that the reason they were being ignored was due to the fact the press releases were coming from Spanish surnamed individuals. They concluded a possible way to get attention from the Santa Cruz

⁷⁷ Nancy and Felicia have been long time employees of Santa Cruz School District. That Felicia works as the Bilingual Community Liaison for Branciforte and Nancy as a counselor at Costanoa Continuation further garnered support of District Administration. Owing to their work in these capacities and the success of the event former Principal Kurt Coleman was pivotal in helping them earn the support Santa Cruz School District Superintendent Alan Pagano.

⁷⁸ Several newspapers articles depict the Oaxaqueño communities as selling their daughters or in conflict with other older migrant communities for housing and work. Police: Man sold teen daughter into marriage for cash, beer, meat <http://www.cnn.com/2009/CRIME/01/13/daughter.for.sale/> , “Latino-indigenous Mexican divide stirs Calif. Town” <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2011/08/14/latino-indigenous-mexican-divide-stirs-calif-town/>, “In Greenfield, Oaxacans see hostility grow. Indigenous groups' request for support from city leaders largely ignored”, <http://www.thecalifornian.com/article/99999999/NEWS01/101080321/In-Greenfield-Oaxacans-see-hostility-grow> Retrieved June 20, 2013.

Sentinel was to utilize their networks within the Santa Cruz school district. With the assistance of Mr. Kurt Coleman and former superintendent Alan Pagano they contacted all of the English media groups with a press release bearing their names on it, but was written by the *Vive Oaxaca* committee members.⁷⁹ This strategy was successful in gaining interest from English media journalists. Since then the Guelaguetza Festival is featured every year one week in advance in the cultural events section and included in the lifestyle section the day after.

Moving to Harbor High School

The overwhelming success of the 2008 Guelaguetza Festival at the Civic Auditorium signaled that the auditorium could no longer support the number of spectators that the celebration had earned. It was quickly decided that the Guelaguetza Festival had to find a location with ample space and where all activities could be centralized in one location. Again



Image 9 Santa Cruz Sentinel newspaper Sunday, June 24, 2007. Article shows a picture of the Guelaguetza festival held that Saturday, June 23rd, in front of the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium as an entry point to feature the growing presence of Oaxacan migrants in Santa Cruz County. Four youth were featured to address the influx of Oaxacan youth into the local school system due to the political turmoil in Oaxaca in 2006 and 2007.

⁷⁹ This is where I offered my assistance by teaching the community how to write a press release and translating all documents into English.

Felicia and Nancy consulted with the Santa Cruz school district about the possibility of hosting the 2009 Guelaguetza at Harbor High School football field. Harbor High School was chosen because many of the Grupo Centéotl dancers attended the high school. Again, the Vive Oaxaca committee met with Superintendent Alan Pagano who ultimately authorized permission for the Guelaguetza festival to be held on the football field. In a short period of time, the festival quadrupled in size -- requiring even more volunteer assistance.⁸⁰

The Vive Oaxaca committee dealt with a new dilemma as the majority of parents and migrant volunteers were already dedicated to roles with critical functions. There was now a need to staff the school parking lot, supervise the multiple entrances around the football field, and to oversee ticket sales and collections. Felicia presented this concern at one of the Vive Oaxaca meetings, where committee members brainstormed how they were going to get additional volunteers if they continued to have the festival in the month of June. Because the event would now be taking place on school property, they considered the possibility of changing the date to the final weekend of May. That way they could utilize campus staff and ask teacher colleagues to volunteer. Again Felicia and Nancy returned to meet with Superintendent Alan Pagano to present the new idea of having the Guelaguetza Festival in May and offering overtime hours to campus staff and teacher volunteers. In a meeting with the superintendent, he did approve the overtime before additional personnel. However there was a new stipulation to the use of the football field— Santa Cruz school

⁸⁰ Refer to end of chapter to see 2012 Festival budget and blue print plan. These two documents illustrate how much the festival grew in cost from its initial \$7,000 budget \$40,000 endeavor.

district implemented a “green” and “reduction of bio footprint” policy to maintaining their campuses.

Since the football field had not been used the entire spring, the grass on the field was several inches long and needed to be cut without the use of motorized lawnmowers. Someone within the school district had the ingenious idea of using goats to trim the grass as the most bio friendly alternative to motorized lawnmowers. Vive Oaxaca would then assume responsibility and pay for the transportation of the goats to the field. The goats grazed on the football field for one week. Yet nobody thought about who was going to clean up after the goats.

Each year the Vive Oaxaca committee works closely with Santa Cruz School District to guarantee that all regulations are being met. Additionally, the committee has invited school teachers and administrators (all non-Oaxacan and non-Latino) to join the Vive Oaxaca and serve as consultants. With their assistance these educators oversee finances, as well as seeking out and writing grants on behalf of Vive Oaxaca leadership. This relationship helps the event to get broader coverage in the media and in-kind donations (labor and city permits) since the Guelaguetza festival is billed as part of the Santa Cruz School District.

Conclusion

In this chapter I presented how the Guelaguetza festival came to fruition in California through two case studies in Los Angeles and Santa Cruz. In doing so, I demonstrated that the festival is an example of cultural citizenship by the claiming of

space and attaining recognition of the Oaxaqueño migrant community in each city. I utilized the concept of transnational community to draw attention to the continuous connections migrant have with Oaxaca in their daily lives, work or social networks. I expanded the term translocal community citizenship to highlight how Oaxaqueño migrants are active member not only in their location of settlement and place of origin, but how their participation can reach also across the state to help other paisanos in the production of other Guelaguetza festivals or cultural events.

An underlying theme in this chapter is the enormous amount of time, energy, resources and collective work involved in producing the Guelaguetza. In the next chapter, I provide a more nuanced discussion on the politics of participation.

Chapter 4 The Delicate Dance of a Transnational Festival: Politics of Participation and Performance

There are numerous ways to participate in the Guelaguetza Festival: as an organizer, cook, dancer, musician, vendor, dignitary, volunteer, and spectator. Due to the complexity of the festival, a person may oscillate between a number of roles. To illustrate the politics of participation and performance in the Guelaguetza festivals in California, I focus this chapter on the dancers because dance is one of the most visible and important forms of participation in the Guelaguetza. Dance is the principal way of representing sixteen ethno-linguistic groups of Oaxaca. In fact, it is through dance that ethnicities can be expressed in the display of traditional attire, musical arrangements, and performative re-enactments of historical and religious events. Dance is important because it tells a story about the Oaxacan community--it is about the recounting of social relations, a conversation between the performer and the audience. I argue that the dancers' and groups' participation in the migrant- produced Guelaguetza festivals are socially and politically significant because it is in this annual performance where Oaxaca's ethnic communities convene in one space.

Although the larger ethnic communities, like the Zapotec, are highlighted in the festival, there are many ethnic groups that are left out, thus a full analysis of the Guelaguetza must focus not only on who is included, but also on who is left out. In an attempt to represent the sixteen ethno linguistic groups from Oaxaca, festival organizers encourage the formation of folkloric dance groups and ballets folklóricos in order to present those missing ethnic groups communities. In this chapter, I compare and analyze the differences among dance groups within the Oaxacan

migrant communities, and the ways people learn to become dancers. I also highlight two levels of participation: the recruitment and involvement of individual dancers, and on a larger scale the invitation of dance groups to participate in the reproductions of the festival across the state.

For the Oaxacan community, dance is a vital part of everyday life. Dance is used to celebrate, mourn, tell stories, and mark important life cycles. Social dances are also used for courtship, to imitate animals and nature, to parody political figures or “outsiders.”⁸¹ Other dances are ritualistic, such as to honor a particular saint or deity, or to mark a historical moment. One of the most notable examples of this is the *Danza de la Pluma*, the conquest dance, of the Central Valley.⁸² This dance has double significance, as the dancer also makes a spiritual promise and a collective commitment with fellow *danzantes* of his community to help maintain traditional dances. In the following section, I provide examples of how participants learned to dance in Oaxaca.

Como Aprendí: First Generation

My first memory dancing Oaxacan dances was when my father took me to our town’s festival processions. My mom dressed me as a Oaxacan China, the market woman of the Central Valley, and that’s how I learned really what is my culture and my traditions Genoveva Zepeda (May 2011).

My first memories of folk dance, were when I was six years old and in grade school. It was the dance of the Zandunga, from the Isthmus region. In Oaxaca and I imagine throughout Mexico, when we are in primary

⁸¹ Dances have been made to mock “foreigners” or the return of migrants who have been influenced by living abroad (Cruz Manjarrez 2008).

⁸² *Danza de la Pluma*, the Conquest dance, is a ritual dance and is one of the most recognized dances from Oaxaca. In the Central Valley of Oaxaca several towns hold three-day ritual reenactment of the battle between Montezuma and Spanish conquistador Fernando Cortes (Cohen 1993).

school (first through sixth grade), teachers always organized dances to celebrate holidays, like Mother's Day, Independence Day, the day of the revolution, in short, various holidays as well as also the end of the school year. The teachers would make all students participate and I think since then I liked to dance. (Getrudis Maldonado March 2011)

As the quotes above illustrate, many first-generation migrants recall being held in their parents' arms while dressed in their respective traditional clothing for their pueblo's festivities. For those that grew up in Oaxaca, *fiesta patronales* (Patron Saint Day), and other community events were a chief form of cultural inculcation of their local traditions and forms of dance. Getrudis's quote points to how the public school system of Mexico also plays a role in teaching youth the cultural dance forms of the state (as well as other Mexican states). Rael Sepulveda of Pulta de Guerro (Mixteca Baja region) shares a sentiment similar to Genoveva's:

As infants our parents dressed us in costumes for the carnival. As young boys we would go with all the fathers of the neighborhood in a group to participate in the parade. There was no carnival that I didn't get dressed up for! To see your dad and your friends' dads dancing, jumping and taking drinks of *tepache*...those are good memories. (Rael Sepulveda, June 2012)
Rael's account denotes how culture is transmitted from parents to children

through continued participation over a span of years. In other words, community festivities and dancing are part of the yearly cycle in towns across Oaxaca. Eulario Zepeda, who dances the *Danza de la Pluma* from Zimatlán de Álvarez, explains that as children grow in places where dance is part of daily life, they learn by seeing what is around them. Watching people dance was something normal that happened in the street, at school and in the home. In his rural town, he aspired to be a *Danzante de la Pluma*, where young men trained to be as good if not better dancers than their fellow

dancers. He points out how learning one's communal dances and traditions happen on an everyday, spontaneous level.

If parents are not the primary instructors of communal dances, the next step in learning the dances takes place in public schools. Teaching regional dances as part of physical education in schools across Mexico has been a practice since 1930's as part of the nation building efforts of former President Lazaro Cardenas (Nájera-Ramírez 2009).⁸³

One memory I have is when I started going to school. Mexican /Oaxaca folklore was part of art education from kindergarten to the university level, it is part of a daily interaction. Teachers taught you to dance, the history, and make you feel proud to be Oaxacan and to know that we have a rich culture.

(Janet Rodríguez 2011)

The quotation above, as well as the opening quotation, by Gertrudis illustrate how institutionalized programs in Mexican public education, like the folkloric dance, reinforce a cultural identity at the state level.⁸⁴

Outside of the classroom setting, many high schools and universities have strong folkloric dance clubs. These school clubs provide the opportunity for Oaxaqueños that do not come from or live in a pueblo a chance to represent Oaxacan regional dances. For Angelica Cervantes, a Oaxaqueña who works as a journalist in Los Ángeles, her experience with dances began as a “dream” to dance in the state-

⁸³ For history of the dance program were implemented in the Mexican school curriculum as part of the nation-building project in the 1930s SEP. For further discussion please refer to Olga Nájera- Ramírez (2009).

⁸⁴ Dance is also institutionalized as part of Mexican schools' physical educational curriculum. Therefore, a person may learn to dance in a number of places, but some individuals continue to study dance at the university level. Between my two research sites, the organizers of Grupo Huayaxac and Grupo Centéotl have instructors that studied dance beyond the communal and familial level.

organized Guelaguetza, but the only way she could do so was by joining her high school groups:

Our dream was to one day be in a Guelaguetza and present in front of all *that public* ... Some make it past the audition, most do not. This audition exists because most of the groups that present [at the festival] are from the communities, not from the city. They are not dance groups, they are people that come from rural areas and present their dances (June 2010).

Angelica points out several important issues in this interview. People from this city who aspire to dance in the Guelaguetza must audition for a spot in the Oaxacan state ballet folkloric dance troupe. Being selected to dance in the Guelaguetza is highly prized because preference is given to community groups that travel long distances to represent their communal dances. Angelica was quite pleased therefore that she did get to perform in the Guelaguetza Festival in Oaxaca City.

Natalia Hidalgo, born and raised in the Central Valley town of Tlacolula de Matamoros, directly speaks to how preference is given to community dance groups.

She explains:

At the age of thirteen I joined a folk dance troupe led by maestro Jesús Sánchez. With this group I had the opportunity to dance at various locations in the City of Oaxaca, but one of the places I remember most is the presentation that our Tlacolula (community) delegation had at the Guelaguetza held in Mexico City

Angelica and Natalia's experiences clearly demonstrate the difference between *dance troupes* from the city and *communal dance groups*. Additionally, Natalia's mention of Mexico City highlights a common rural-to-urban migration pattern, given that Mexico City is home to the second largest concentration of Oaxaqueños residing outside of the state.

A principal goal of the Guelaguetza is to showcase eight regions and 16 ethno-linguistic groups from Oaxaca in the festival. The eight regions of Oaxaca are as follows: Valles Centrales, Sierra Norte, Sierra Sur, Cañada, Papaloapan, Mixteca, Costa, and Istmo de Tehuantepec. Several significant problems exist in this standardized structure.⁸⁵ First, an ethno-linguistic community may exist in several geographical regions. For example, Zapotecs live in Valle Central, the Istmo of Tehuantepec, and the Sierra Norte. Every state-sponsored Guelaguetza festival features Zapotec dances from each of these three regions. A further complication is that, given the popularity of certain Zapotec dances such as Danza de la Pluma and Chinas, which are from the Valle Central, always get selected and have now become standards in the state-sponsored festival. As a result, dances from Zapotec ethnic groups over-represent while other groups are completely left out. Finally, due to time constraints, only 13 to 14 ethno-linguistic communities are actually showcased in a festival. Hence, several ethnic groups are left out of festival every year. To correct this problem, in 2006 festival organizers began to present two dance presentations to help ensure that all ethnic groups would be featured.

Though there are staple dances in the festival, such as Chinas Oaxaqueñas, Danza de La Pluma from the Central Valley, Flor de Piña from Papaloapan region, Sonos Mazatecos from the Cañada, not every production of the Guelaguetza festival is the same due the fact that different communities are chosen each year. For instance, this year's 2013 Guelaguetza festival in Oaxaca City announced the return

⁸⁵ For a more nuanced discussion regarding the complexity of regional and ethnicity in Oaxaca see Stephen 1996: 17-18.

of the communities of Santa María Huatulco and San Agustín Loxicha of Coastal region after an eleven-year absence.⁸⁶ In addition, for the first time in the 81-year history of the Guelaguetza festival the community of Loma Bonita of the Papaloapan region will perform.

The Hierarchies of Dance: Comunidades, Grupos and Ballets Folklóricos

In California the migrant-produced Guelaguetza festival follows the same structure as the state-sponsored Guelaguetza, presenting the dances by region. However, this regional structure presents a dilemma since not all sixteen ethnic communities are present in California. Furthermore, among those communities that are present in California, not all have an organized communal dance group. What then are the steps that migrant organizers take to reproduce the Guelaguetza festival in California?

First, Oaxacan migrant communities make use of the dances that do exist in California. For example since the 1980s Oaxacan migrants in Los Ángeles have organized *bailes*, social dances, as a way to gather and continue to celebrate their main religious and social festivities.⁸⁷ These *bailes* are spaces where migrant communities are able to represent their respective social dances when traditional songs are played, like in the Jarabe del Valle, Sones y Jarabes de la Sierra Juárez. When the band (or DJ) plays a jarabe or son it is similar to “giving a shout out” to the

⁸⁶ The Coastal region has a strong presence of Afro-Oaxaqueños. This brings up an interesting point about representation of race and recognition of Black diaspora in state’s history.

⁸⁷ Cruz Manjarrez defines *bailes* as the communal dances gatherings create a context for social, religious and interethnic relations are practiced, “re-actualized and performed within the context of Los Angeles (2009, 116).

region where people are from as well as allows migrants to (re)present themselves in front of the larger migrant community by dancing. From these events came the formation of community-based dance groups and the emergence of the first generation of dance instructors.

Based on my observations and personal interviews in both Los Angeles and Santa Cruz, most of the dance instructors and principal coordinators of the dance groups immigrated to California in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In casual conversations, community members shared that several of the current instructors first came in the early 1980s as performers with the University of Oaxaca dance troupe, on cultural visas. As Don Juan Ismael recounts, “much like the baseball players from Cuba after the game, some players never returned to the bus afterwards.” In other words, they came to the United States on a cultural visa but decided to stay. He asserts that that story is a gentler way of explaining many of his *paisano*’s undocumented status. Whatever the case may be as to how one immigrated to California, it reveals that many of the current instructors in California had previous dance experience in Oaxaca, either in their home communities or as former performers within the public school dance troupes.

These first generation dance instructors work with three different types of dance groups present in the Oaxacan migrant community; *grupo de comunidad*, *grupo folklórico*, and *ballet folklórico*. *Grupo de comunidad* or village-based dance groups, consist of individuals that are from the same town or are first generation descendants of that particular community. Examples of grupos de comunidad in Los

Ángeles include Union Yalalteca who present their traditional dances “Danza de Los Negritos” and “Jarabe de la Sierra” at communal Yalalteco festivities and the annual Guelaguetza festivals.⁸⁸ Other village-based community dance groups are *Comunidad Tlacolulense de Los Ángeles (COTLA)* perform *Mayordomía de Tlacolula y la Calenda de Marmotas* and *Organización Para la Ayuda Macuiltianguense (OPAM)* presents *Torito Serrano*, both which have over a twenty year history.⁸⁹

Not having full representation of the sixteen ethnic communities to present their communal dances at the festival presents a serious challenge for the festival organizers in California. Who and how will those dances be presented if the community is not physically in the area? To address this challenge of representation festival organizers of ORO created a Oaxacan *grupo folklórico* for the specific purpose of presenting the communal dances that otherwise did not have representation. In other words, the grupo folklórico has become the proxy for missing communities. Equally important is the fact that grupos folklóricos incorporate new generations as well as non-Oaxacan youth and adults into the group to learn traditional dances.

⁸⁸ For further discussion on the history of the Yalálag migrant community’s celebration in Los Angeles please refer Adriana Cruz Manjarrez recent book *Zapotecs on the Move: Cultural, Social, and Political Processes in Transnational Perspective* (2013).

⁸⁹ The Mayodromía is a form of the traditional cargo system. The *Calenda de Marmota* is where men construct a large wooden framed dome joined to a long wooden post. A large tailored sheet covers the circular shape and has the name of the community is printed or embroidered on the cloth for everyone to see. Due the weight of the marmota, which can be close to 50 to 60 lbs, the wooden post is held in place by a leather holster tied around the person’s waist; meanwhile their hands steady the post while dancing the Marmota in the grand procession. Men of all ages vie to *bailar*, dance and twirl, the marmot as a symbol of male virility. There have been a few occasions where I have witnessed women *bailando la marmota*. Traditionally, dancing the marmota is a male role, some women have shown that they are just as capable of twirling the marmota.

The grupo folklórico consists of predominantly 1.5 generation and second generation participants. Instructors strive to incorporate dances from the entire state of Oaxaca and may include a variety of Mexican regional dances in their repertoire. These groups attempt to keep the communal dances as close as possible to the original form by acquiring the traditional attire (*atuendo*) from the respective communities and if possible ask migrants from that community to teach the dance as well as demonstrate the body movements for men and women.⁹⁰

The third type of dance group found in the Oaxacan migrant community is the *ballet folklórico* (semi-professional), a stylized and choreographed dance form based on folk or traditional dances popularized in the 1950's by Amalia Hernández, former director of *Ballet Folklórico de Mexico*. A prime example of this type of group is the Ballet Folklórico Nueva Antequera, founded and directed by Raul Cortez and Miriam López Ambrosio. Ballet Folklórico Nueva Antequera is a registered non-profit organization dedicated to the diffusion and the preservation of traditional music and dance related to various ethnic celebrations within Oaxaca. The majority of B.F. Nueva Antequera's dancers are second generation, most of whom have not had the opportunity to travel to or live in Oaxaca. Miriam and Raul have decided to incorporate some of the elements commonly used by other ballets such as stage make-up, some modifications to the color scheme of traditional attires, and

⁹⁰ Acquiring traditional attires from each community deserves much more attention than I can offer in this chapter. In brief, this is where family, friends and transnational networks come into play. The issue of authenticity is latent in the attire process. The buyer (which many times are a teacher or a dancer) goes to the particular community to inquire who makes the traditional garment and then negotiates a price for the number of needed pieces. Then send the package through Oaxacan migrant owned carrier services.

choreography. In addition, Miriam utilizes theatrical techniques to teach the bodily movements and “character” of each ethnic community (Petate Production Video 2006). Ballet Folklórico Nueva Antequera has implemented a selection process that is not customarily used with the other two groups, and that is, they audition dancers for specific dances. According to the directors, auditioning of dancers allows them to select who can best represent an ethnic community on stage through the embodiment of their physical movements. In general this idea of who can best represent an ethnic community through dance has been a deciding factor used on many occasions in selecting dance groups for the annual festival across the state.

How are dance groups invited to participate in a Guelaguetza?

“It’s not only about being invited to dance in the Guelaguetza, but there is also politics in “who” is going to represent certain *danza or bailes* (Miranda González, July 2012).”

In what follows, I compare the processes through which dance groups and individuals are selected to participate in the Guelaguetza in Los Ángeles and Santa Cruz. In both cases, festival organizers strive to emulate the process established by the state-sponsored Guelaguetza in Oaxaca. There is a common agreement across the state within the Oaxacan migrant community as to who will perform particular dances. First priority always goes to the *grupos de comunidades*, village-based groups. When a community is able to represent their traditional dance(s), they are given preference over a *grupo folklórico* and or a *ballet folklórico*. Now, if there are two *grupos de comunidades* representing the same region, a dance contract

arrangement is made between the two groups and festival organizers. For instance, in 2010 Vive Oaxaca committee of Santa Cruz was confronted with a dilemma where two grupos from Sonoma County representing the same area within the Mixtec region wished to present *sones y jarabes* from Putla de Guerrero. After holding a general assembly meeting with the leadership of the two Mixteco communities, Vive Oaxaca committee drafted a contract where one grupo would perform the popular dance that year and then the following year the other grupo would have the opportunity to dance in 2011.⁹¹ When a community is not available to represent their communal dances then a *grupo folklórico* or *ballet folklórico* may perform that specific piece. If there is a grupo and ballet vying for the same dance, then a verbal vote is held among the organizers and present community representatives. They will discuss among themselves who they feel best can represent that particular dance. There are moments of conflictive collaboration where the general assembly decides that it would be best for a collective of dance group represent a dance. This has been the case with the highly regarded dance, Flor de Piña, since it requires a minimum of sixteen female dancers.

In Los Ángeles, only groups active in ORO receive the *derecho* (right) to represent their communal dances. By March, the *mesa directiva* (board), begins to hold *asambleas generales* (general assemblies), on a monthly basis to plan the annual event. At the general assemblies, leaders from each community announce their

⁹¹ In 2010 Comité de Pochatlan y su Grupo Folklórico del condado de Sonoma danced, *Sones y jarabes de Pinotepa Nacional*; Señorío mixteco de Putla de Guerra, presented *Comparas de Copala del Carnaval de Putla*. 2011 Comité Pochatlan *sones y chilenas de Putla* Villa de Guerrero, but Señorío de not participate that year.

interest in participating in that year's Guelaguetza festival. The organization's secretary of culture is in charge of documenting which dances each community wishes to present. She/he is in charge of coordinating all of the communities and their dances according to a *regional* breakdown (see charts 5-8 at end of chapter). When a migrant community is not present to represent a region or particular ethnic community then the grupo or ballet folklóricos will be entered into a raffle system. In order to be part of the raffle system, the dance group must be affiliated with the organization or be in good standing with the organizers. The raffle system is used to cover "missing" ethnic and regional communities.

This process is also employed for highly coveted dances such as Flor de Piña representing the region de San Juan Bautista Tuxtepec. This dance is characterized by twenty *young mestizas* wearing ornate huipiles representing the seven districts within the region and pays homage to the main crop, the pineapple, which they carry on their shoulder.⁹² Although a group is selected through the raffle process the group may be asked by festival organizers, community leaders and dance instructors to prove their ability to represent the dance "properly." Dancers must demonstrate their ability to execute footwork and body movement in time with the music. They must also adhere to the choreography utilized in the state-sponsored festival. Particularly

⁹²Flor de Piña is a dance that was created in 1958 to represent the people of Tuxtepec at the Guelaguetza festival. In 1958 Municipal President Angel Vidal Brocado commissioned musical composer Samuel Mondragón to create the music entitled and Maestra Paulina Solís Ocampo to choreograph the dance specifically for the Guelaguetza (Lizama 2003). To represent the various districts within the region they chose specific items such as tobacco leaves, pineapples, and huipiles as offering for the Guelaguetza (Solís Ocampo 1988). It is unclear why young mestiza women were specifically chosen to dance in a celebration of "indigenous" ethnic groups but it certainly is a question worth further investigation.

striking is the preference for women to be tall and light-skinned and how migrant dance instructors follow Oaxaca state's idealized racialized and class characteristics for the region.

The process of participating in the Guelaguetza festival in Santa Cruz is slightly different. In the Bay Area of northern California there are not as many Oaxacan community dance groups as in southern California. As detailed in chapter two, after attending various Oaxacan cultural festivities in Los Angeles, the leadership of Vive Oaxaca became acquainted with *grupos de comunidades* in Santa Barbara and Los Angeles. In 2006, when the *comité de Vive Oaxaca* decided to organize their first production they were not yet affiliated with any Oaxacan organization in the state. During a late Sunday evening *juntas de comité*, committee meetings, Sra. Felicia called a community representative in Los Angeles, placed them on speaker phone, and then in a ceremonial manner asked in front of the entire committee if their group would like to participate in the Guelaguetza. Utilizing the newly formed translocal networks Unión Yalalateco, Comunidad de Ejutla de Crespo, and Comunidad de Tlacolula en Los Angeles accepted the invitation to participate in the first Guelaguetza in northern California.

In fall of 2007, Vive Oaxaca joined the Federación Oaxaqueña de Comunidades y Organizaciones Indígenas en California (FOCOICA) and Sra. Felicia accepted the position of Secretary of Culture. This affiliation allowed the Santa Cruz community permission to participate in the Guelaguetza festival organized by

FOCIOCA at the Los Ángeles Sports Arena for the next three consecutive years.⁹³

Between 2006 through 2008, the Guelaguetza in Santa Cruz gained tremendous attention and grew beyond the capacity of the local civic auditorium. Oaxacan migrants from the surrounding vicinity of Seaside (south), Davenport (northwest), San José (northeast) and eventually Sonoma County (north) began to express interest in dancing with their respective communities in the upcoming festival in Santa Cruz.

⁹⁴ Additionally, for many Oaxacan young adults at the local university, the Guelaguetza festival spurred interest to reconnect with their community and even participate in the dances.⁹⁵

Representando lo auténtico de Oaxaca (Representing the Authentic)

Presenting the most *authentic* Guelaguetza festival at times dominates conversations among organizers and spectators. The issue of authenticity has been a prominent theme throughout this study on numerous levels. In the previous chapter, I noted that all cultural materials used in the Guelaguetza festival must be created by Oaxaqueños, in Oaxaca, in order to be considered authentic. The desire to represent and seek out the most authentic is an implicit yet dominant thread throughout all the

⁹³ In 2009 was the last year that FOCIOCA held a Guelaguetza. The organization has been in hiatus since. However, in 2012 there was interest in reviving the Federation under new leadership.

⁹⁴ I am aware there are large Oaxacan migrant communities in the Central Valley (Fresno) and Pajaro valley (Watsonville). These two areas have large Mixtec and Triqui speaking communities from Oaxaca. Political ideologies and language deterred the possibility of Vive Oaxaca establishing ties with these neighboring communities. There are substantial Triqui communities in Greenfield and Hollister, not so much in Fresno.

⁹⁵ During my seven years of research, four UCSC Oaxacan students become active in the dance group. Another ten Mexican heritage university student also participated as dancers in the Guelaguetza. The presence of university students also bolstered the group's visibility by offering their respective skills in bookkeeping, translation of documents & presentations, design of the first webpage, public relations, and peer mentoring and fostering connections to the UCSC in general.

productions of the festival. On a number of occasions I have overheard spectators comment about how ‘real’ and or ‘authentic’ the festival feels because of particular articles that represent Oaxaca and how the participation of people were incorporated. People go to great lengths to acquire cultural symbols, even people, in order to bring ‘Oaxaca’ to California.

Authenticity is also important in deciding “who” gets to represent Oaxaca in the Californian Guelaguetza. One way of determining the authenticity of the migrant-produced cultural performance is by inquiring as to the origins of the performers. Interestingly, in some organizations in Los Ángeles, youth are asked to bring birth certificates to verify that a parent and or a grandparent is from Oaxaca in order to participate in an Oaxacan social and cultural event.⁹⁶ In the mid 2000’s, several grupos folklóricos from southern California and Santa Cruz had been scrutinized by “community elders” based on the ethnicity of the dancers. While this verification of lineage is not a standardized rule, it is used at times by certain groups/leaders who feel threatened by newer or upcoming folkloric groups.

Interestingly, it is only in Los Ángeles where this questioning of authenticity of the dancers has arisen. What is troubling is how this imagined standardizing of a *cien porciento Oaxaqueño* ideal is implemented when migrant communities do not live nor do 100% Oaxaqueño districts exist. For example, Grupo Huaxayac has

⁹⁶ In a conversation with Don Otomi, he reminded me that in Oaxaca, in order to dance, to be part of the band, or to play in the basketball tournaments you have to be originally from that village. However, *here* in California to have people be 100% from that pueblo is not always possible. He shares “here the folkloric groups are mixed, a person from one place and another from a different town and that’s how they make the dance group. There are young kinds that are born here and have joined the folklórico group, but they are of Oaxacan descent.”

recruited excellent young dancers that are not only Oaxacan but also fellow neighborhood youth of Korean descent and African American. Grupo Huaxyacac holds its practices in Koreatown in Seoul Park gymnasium, therefore the demographics of the folkloric group corresponds to the diverse neighborhood. Likewise, in northern California, Grupo Centéotl in Santa Cruz practices in a continuation school's cafeteria. Although the philosophy of the dance group is towards the preserving of Oaxacan cultural dances, the majority of participants are first generation families from the central and northern region of Mexico, in addition to Salvadoran migrant youth and adults. Santa Cruz has an additional interesting aspect to them—during the time of the Guelaguetza they send out a general open call to recruit local folkloric dancers from the surrounding area. Each year this call yields a new set of university students from University of California, Santa Cruz, most of whom are 1.5 and second generation Mexicans, including a few Oaxaqueño students. These (Grupo Huaxyacac and Grupo de Danza y Baile Centéotl) two folkloric groups use a public space, consequently anyone interested in the activity may participate (because of city policies and usage of the space leaders cannot discriminate based on ethnicity, gender, class and physical ability).

There are three situations that I am familiar with where grupo folklóricos were either not allowed to dance or an audition was held to judge the group's validity. The first such incident was in the early 2000s, when Grupo Folklórico Monte Alban of Anaheim was not allowed to dance because there were allegedly non-Oaxacan dancers, though they were Mexican born and second generation. Rather than require

all of the dancers to bring “documentation” to verify heritage, the group withdrew from that year’s festival. Between 2007 and 2009, children from Korean and African American families participated in the Guelaguetza festival held at Normandie Park. By this time, the leadership of ORO had changed hands to Don Mauricio, who allowed the youth to continue to participate. The third case involved me.

In 2007, a double audition was held for the Santa Cruz community in order to determine whether or not I should be allowed to participate. Sr. José Ismael representing the Ejulta de Crespo (Santa Barbara) community, along with the elders of the Los Ángeles Yalálag community were in Isaac’s backyard dress rehearsal the night before an annual Guelaguetza festival. My non-Oaxaqueña identity had placed into question the authenticity of the Grupo de Baile y Danza Centéotl of Santa Cruz. The elders called Sra. Felicia and Sra. Nancy to their circle to inform them, “We’ve all come to like and respect Xóchitl over the past year, but she cannot dance in the Guelaguetza. She is not Oaxaqueña- the other communities will talk if she cannot move and dance like us.” Sra. Felicia understood the dilemma and responded, “...[W]ell then, let her audition. The community leaders can be the judges if she is capable of properly representing the women in Flor de Piña. Let her dance right now – this will be her audition.” At stake was the reputation of the Santa Cruz community claim to be an authentic Oaxaqueño dance group. Since Flor de Piña showcases the physical ‘attributes’ of tall and light skinned mestiza women, my northern Mexico/Native Colorado heritage allowed me to “pass”. Fortunately, I made the audition and was placed as one of the lead dancers for the Flor de Piña. Not only

did I have to prove my dance abilities but also my ethnic heritage was opens the discussion to what about other bi-ethnic or non-Oaxacan dancers.

The reality is that Oaxacan migrant communities live in neighborhoods with other non-Oaxacan migrants (Korean, Salvadoran and African Americans). Gertudis has shared with me that this is the reason why they cannot turn anyone away and are pleased that others wish to learn about their dances and culture. Her concluding thought that “dance instructors and coordinators are willing to teach “non-Oaxacan” how to embody “Oaxacan movements” for staged performances particularly “when we do not have enough of people from that community” (March 2011) reflects the compromises/negotiations made in representing authentic Oaxacanness.

Next, I want to scale down to how migrants and proceeding generations that reside in areas that are less densely populated by Oaxacan migrants, like northern California, become part of folkloric dance groups. I illustrate how migrants and their children use dance to find or create a Oaxacan presence in the central coast and south bay area of California.

Becoming part of the group

From my observation starting in 2005, dance groups proved to be a cultural space where newly arrived first generation youth and adults migrants may integrate themselves into the social networks of the each city. Second and third generation children that participate in the dance groups are there because they grew up in or around the dance groups due to the fact that their parents or other family members are active in religious and or village based organizations (hometown associations). Third

generation participants constitute an emergent group within the Oaxaqueño migrant community. Parents and organizations have begun to organize youth dance and musical groups as a way to maintain their cultural practices in the United States.

Miranda's story gives us a glimpse into how she sought out the Oaxacan community in Santa Cruz, joined their dance troupe *Danza y Bailes Grupo Centéotl*, and became a part of the *Vive Oaxaca* Committee. It also offers an example of how spectators judge authenticity:

The first time I heard about the *Guelaguetza* in Santa Cruz was in 2008. I can't remember how I heard about it, but I still have the poster from that year, the one with Janet as *Diosa Centéotl*. I was shocked! It was my fourth year at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) and never imagined that there would be a *Guelaguetza* in white majority town such as Santa Cruz. I told my mom about it -who at first didn't believe me- but we decided to check it out. I didn't get tickets ahead of time because I was skeptical about it and figured it was a small event. The day of the *Guelaguetza* we showed up downtown around 1 p.m. and couldn't believe our eyes. The street in front of the auditorium was busy with people buying food and vendors hustling their grills. I went to the ticket booth to buy tickets and to my surprise they were sold out. My mom said, "Pendeja, que te dije? Que compraras los boletos con tiempo! ¿Y ya no vamos a entrar?" I felt like a failure for disappointing my mom and brother. At that moment I saw one of my friends step out with her parents. I told her that they sold out and she gave me 3 ticket stubs. We got lucky and barely snuck in. Once again I was floored. The Civic Auditorium was packed, the dances were beautiful, and they had a real band. My brother Jacinto said, "Tienen una banda de verdad, como en Oaxaca."

In 2009 I kept an eye out for the publicity for the next *Guelaguetza*. As soon as I found out that *Joyería Ideal* was selling tickets I jetted there and bought six tickets. It would be the first time that either of my grandparents would go to a *Guelaguetza* Festival, they had not gone to the one in Oaxaca City. This *Guelaguetza* was even more special because it was the first time it took place out in the open air at Harbor High School. After *Flor de Piña* dance, I saw a woman walking up the stairs with a pineapple. This woman, who a year later I would find out was *Salome Rodríguez*, had come all the way up to the top of the bleachers to give my

grandmother her piña. This act prompted me to approach her and asking her about how I could get involved. She gave me her sister Felicia Rodríguez's phone number. However, it would be months, almost a year before I contacted Felicia. I graduated from UCSC in June 2009, and after 8 months of inactivity I decided to make the call to Felicia. I wanted to get involved with the Guelaguetza group because I wanted to learn Oaxacan dances and help out with organizing the event. I remember that after a few weeks after I started I told Felicia, "Maestra, usted no se sienta obligada a meterme a los bailes de Guelaguetza. Yo no bailo, yo organizo." She said, "Como de que no? Usted va a bailar y organizer." And so I did. The first year I danced in Chinas and Mixes, and although I didn't have an assignment I showed up early on the day of Guelaguetza and helped out with what I could. I wanted to get involved to get to know the migrant, Latino community of Santa Cruz. Being involved with the group gave me the inspiration to stay in Santa Cruz, offer math tutoring, and the best part was connecting with the community. (Miranda González July 2012)

Miranda González is second generation, from a Oaxaqueña mother and Duranguense father. Born in San José, California, Miranda is now a graduate student in Texas. Her story offers insight into how Oaxacan migrants and their children find out about the Guelaguetza festival and are pleasantly surprised to find fellow paisanos in Northern California. The González's skepticism about the presence of a "Oaxacan" community in a predominantly "white" city underscores that today "Oaxaca" exists wherever Oaxacan people live. The resonating melodic sound of traditional music sparks people's memories of Oaxaca. Jacinto's comment about the "real brass band like in Oaxaca" points to how each person interprets the participation of certain groups and elements as vital to the making an authentic festival. Miranda states "[y]ou can dance with music being played by a CD or from YouTube, but it's not the same, unless a real band is there to play. For me what made it real was

because I feel the music. She also emphasizes that holding the event in an open-air venue made it feel more authentic.

Miranda's involvement with the Santa Cruz migrant community demonstrates how an individual assumes multiple roles in the Guelaguetza festival. Miranda participated as a dancer and as treasurer in the festival coordinating committee. Her positionality as a second generation Oaxaqueña helped her gain quicker acceptance into the Oaxacan migrant community.

Poco a poco: Teaching the Next Generation

The following vignettes reveal how dance instructors transmit traditions in this translocal, transnational, and multi-generational context.

“Straight V shaped lines ladies! Flor de Piña is one of the most revered dances in the Guelaguetza,” shouts Israel, who has committed himself to helping the Santa Cruz group, across his cement backyard patio.

I need to see those beautiful smiles. Remember that your steps are supposed to be nimble; the footwork should glide as smoothly as two motor parts working together. Fluid steps, raise onto your tip toes, and then effortlessly come down onto a flat foot. Everyone again! Step, up, step, down, repeat, step, up, step down. Count, but also use your ears to listen to the music, be patient, and wait for the music. Learn to listen to the tempo and feel the music. (May 2008)

Israel is an energetic instructor but it became clear his patience was waning.

Janet, from Santa Cruz, stands next to Israel also with an uneasy expression on her face. Without a word Janet holds up her right hand to call our attention, and then silently demonstrates the step as Israel whistles the accompanying tune. We are then

signaled again by Janet's hand gesture to follow suit and mimic her movement. Israel then verbally calls for us to check our posture.

Straight backs ladies, turn your whole torso and head. Your pineapple should sit firmly on your shoulder and your elbow pointing out. Heads up! Make eye contact with the audience. This is an homage to the harvest of the pineapple.

While Israel and Janet work with us on our footwork, a side conversation takes place among the adults watching the dance practice. Sr. José Isaac from Santa Barbara, who represents the Etjulta de Crespo community dance group, as well as the elders of the Yalalteco community, express concern to Sra. Felicia of Santa Cruz about the young women of Centéotl's capability of mastering the complicated choreography and the character of the Flor de Piña dance. In the conversation the elders decided that Israel's backyard dress rehearsal would become an audition of sorts for the Santa Cruz community. If the young women of Santa Cruz were unsuccessful, then the young women from the Ejulta community would perform Flor de Piña in the Los Ángeles Guelaguetza.

This historical moment marked the first time Santa Cruz's *Centéotl Grupo de Danza y Baile* was to perform in the Los Ángeles Guelaguetza in 2008. This delegation consisted of nearly 50 people, the majority of which were of Oaxacan descent, but also included non-Oaxacan and non-Mexican youth. The dance rehearsal convened at the home of Israel Palacio in Los Ángeles, with the Ejulta de Crespo migrant community from Santa Barbara and Israel's community dance group of Yalálag. This moment addresses how first generation migrants teach the traditional dances to second generation and non-Oaxacan migrants. In this dance rehearsal Israel

strains to point out how to listen and feel the music in conjunction with how to embody the movement, while explaining bits of history. While Israel and Janet are instructing, a collective assessment is underway among the adults from the three previously mentioned communities. Collectively, the first generation migrants assess the second-generation representation of the Flor de Piña dance.

Janet shared with me that in her experience, working with second-generation (children of migrants) youth has been a little difficult due to the lack of daily cultural exposure that one obtains “when one lives in Mexico.” Although they may be descendants of Oaxacan parents, these children have a hard time “feeling” the music. Janet believes that it’s not the youths’ fault -- if only they had the opportunity to be able to experience all of the festivities that are celebrated in Oaxaca then the difference in *sentimiento* would be noticed. Janet compares this cultural understanding (knowledge/feeling) with the Mexican national anthem. She asserts, if a person is not exposed to the national anthem then he or she doesn’t *feel* that same patriotism and cannot *feel* how powerful the hymn is for a Mexican citizen. For Janet, culture is “felt” in the same way. To have pride in your culture is powerful.

Eulario, a 25-year-old danzante de la Pluma of Santa Cruz, echoes a similar sentiment but notes how age can be a factor in cultural pride. He points out that once youth reach a certain stage while growing up in the United States they become *embarrassed* by their cultural heritage. He advises that when this happens additional work has to be done to make a child feel comfortable and respectful in order for them to feel a part of the group and have the desire to dance.

Getrudis expands our understanding of working with second-generation youth by sharing how she begins with the basic technique that each step requires in every dance. “Little by little, they begin to learn as they watch you,” she explains. Rael, from the Putleco community in Santa Rosa, believes in another form of transmission of tradition. He spends time talking to his nephew and believes that his nephew notices the emotion that his uncle and parents display when they talk about carnival and how much they enjoy themselves while dancing *chilenas*. He also brings up an excellent point about “how compact discs and videos that are sent from their home community help children see their roots.”

Media plays an immense role in the diffusion of cultural practices in California. Youtube, Facebook, videos (state produced and homemade), and musical recordings are vital pedagogical tools in teaching dance and maintaining cultural practices. The internet has facilitated a continuous flow of material for migrants and their children to access. With paisano-owned carrier services, family members in Oaxaca send copied DVDs and printed material. Often videos are used as education tools for parents to show their children what the fiestas of their pueblo are like. Likewise, dance instructors review and examine videos of dances that they may not be familiar with in order to teach the youth about other communities and traditional dance forms. In addition, Oaxaca has sixteen ethnic communities and each town has its own communal dance(s). The number of dances that can be represented equal easily close to 18 per presentation. Therefore, after *convivios* (social gatherings), media forms of dance are vital in the transmission of cultural practices. In the last

seven years, media has been vital in the transmission of tradition. Many times videos clips are recorded by migrants and posted on the web to show their active cultural participation to other migrants in California and in Oaxaca. This is a way to assert their identity in their new location and continue claim membership with their communities in Oaxaca.

In Santa Cruz, videos of dances are regularly played at the home of Sra. Felicia. Janet and her cousins spend hours watching the videos noting choreography, the manner in which dancers move their bodies, and the fashion in which traditional attires are used in regional dances from fellow paisanos. They then attempt to teach what they have learned from the videos to youth in Centéotl. When possible performances are videotaped and then reviewed at dance practice with fellow paisano instructors that have greater knowledge of the specific dance. In these sessions dancers are able to review their own performance with the instructors, who identify errors and help to train dancers to replicate specific cultural traditions associated with the particular ethnic group dancers are trying to representing.

Horizontal learning, where all member of the dance group are engaged in teaching one another, is a continuous process. Instruction involves teaching basic steps, how to listen to music, how to properly wear the costume, and how to braid the hair. During my observations at dance rehearsal in Santa Cruz, on numerous occasions dancers were instructed to watch their peers, "...watch Genoveva, see how she moves her body and sways her hips with each step. She is from the Central Valley of Oaxaca, see how the market women hold their basket and move their skirts...." In

other situations dancers openly criticize their fellow dancers for not emulating the style correctly. For instance, in 2010 with only a few days left before the Santa Cruz Guelaguetza at a dance rehearsal, Cresta, whose father hails from the Isthmus of Oaxaca and is only 16 years old, in English yells in an extremely upset tone: "...this dance is not for you to mess around. You are embarrassing me. I am *Istmeña*, and I take this style of dance seriously. This is a polka from the Isthmus and it is supposed to be elegant. You all need to get the footwork and turns right (May 2011)." Whether in a heated corrective moment or in calm fashion, young dancers take pride in educating one another about their regional movements, tones and character. In these teaching moments we see the various levels of how authenticity is created by disciplining the body to move in certain ways, but also through the cultural transmission of knowledge across generation and time.

What can the festival programs tell us?

Over the years, I have collected festival programs from several Guelaguetza festivals across the state of California. In total, I have eleven festival programs spanning from the years of 2007-2012 from four different cities. My content analysis of the eleven programs reveals several constellations of translocal and transnational networks, the number of dance groups in the state, the cities where the dance groups originate, locations where the festivals are produced, and what ethnic communities are represent. What we also see is which groups collaborate with one another other the years, which groups travel to other Guelaguetzas, which groups may not travel and which groups may not work together. Comparing the list of **communal, grupos**

and ballet dance groups you see the emergence and when groups and ties dissolve. All of these factors give us an inside look to the complexities and lived realities of each production.

Looking at the Santa Cruz set of programs from 2007 and 2010-2012, the most noticeable aspect is the number of communal and grupo folklóricos that Vive Oaxaca committee collaborated with in the four-year span. In their second production of the festival in 2007, they collaborated with six groups - all representing Zapotec communities, representing the cities of Los Ángeles and two different Zapotec communities, Ventura, San José and Santa Cruz area. By 2010, Vive Oaxaca continued to work with communities from Los Ángeles and Ventura, while two new groups joined the festival, two Mixtec communities from Sonoma County and the Dance Institute from the State of Oaxaca.⁹⁷ However, they were no longer collaborating with the community group from San José. In 2011 and 2012, Vive Oaxaca committee only had representatives from the Mixtec migrant communities from Sonoma County and their local grupo de danza Centéotl perform the dance of several Zapotec communities. Their collaboration with the Dance Institute of Oaxaca allowed the migrant group to cover popular dances, while the Dance Institute performed dances not normally seen in the Guelaguetza festivals in Oaxaca City and in the migrant produced festivals. Juan Roman Villoria is the director of the Dance

⁹⁷ The Dance Institute of the State of Oaxaca consists of primary and secondary public school teachers. They are a collective of active and retired teachers who perform the regional dances of Oaxaca. The contact with the Institute came through Sra. Felicia's sister, who is still a teacher in Oaxaca City. In 2010 Vive Oaxaca committee collaborated with the *Instituto Oaxaqueño Atención al Migrante* (IOAM) with then-director Rene Ruiz and the Mexican Consulate in San Jose to arrange cultural visas for 16 teachers to travel to Santa Cruz for the Guelaguetza festival.

Institute and was one of the founding members of the comité de autenticidad in Oaxaca City. Vive Oaxaca programs are bilingual and cater to an English and Spanish speaking audience. Regions are not emphasized whereas the emphasis is place between what communities are present and representing the standardized dances. (For detailed information of the chart please refer to Program 1-5 at the end of chapter.)

A review of the 2009 and 2011-2012 programs of the longest-running migrant Guelaguetza, the festival produced by ORO, reveals their strength in collaboration and maintaining the festival for over two decades. In 2009 ORO worked with a variety of communal dance groups, grupos folklóricos and ballet folklóricos, all from the Los Ángeles County area. ORO collaborated that year with eight groups, four of which are Zapotec community based dance groups and three grupos folklóricos and one ballet to represent the remaining ethnic communities of Oaxaca.

In 2009, when Miriam and Raul served as presidents of ORO they establish a Guelaguetza *Infantil*, a performance that enabled children under 12 years of age to participate in the Guelaguetza. During 2009 and 2010 there was a consecutive two-day Guelaguetza festival (in the U.S.). On Saturday the entire Guelaguetza festival was performed by children from the age of 4 to middle school. On Sunday “adults,” ranging from high school students to adults in their 60s, performed the event (For detailed information of the chart please refer to Program 6-9).

Interestingly, in Fresno 2009 the Guelaguetza dance program was performed by only two dance groups. Ballet Folklórico Nueva Antequera and Grupo Folklórico

Pochtlan of Los Ángeles, along with the Oaxaqueño brass band, traveled by chartered bus to Fresno. The Fresno festival reveals the strong ties and political alliances that FIOB has with Los Ángeles migrant home-town associations and dance groups. The fact that FIOB has established an office in Los Ángeles facilitates direct contact with a larger pool of organized dancers, which is particularly important since the Fresno area no longer has an organized dance group.⁹⁸

Since 2009, the organization *Lazos Oaxaqueños* in San José has organized a Guelaguetza festival during the month of June. From the program in 2010, a Guelaguetza was held at National Hispanic University back field where seven community groups participated and represented the cities of San José, Los Ángeles, Santa Cruz (a new dance group), and Sonoma County. In 2012 another festival was held at the same location, where six migrant communities participated with the new addition of a communal based dance group from Gilroy.

The programs clearly demonstrate that *Lazos Oaxaqueños* of San José and *Vive Oaxaca* of Santa Cruz did not collaborate in San José. They did briefly collaborate in 2007-2008 for the Santa Cruz festival, but due to internal turmoil the two communities no longer work together. They do not even attend each other's events. If a person from the other community shows up to another's function, it is assumed they are there to steal ideas or contacts.

In summary, the first set of graphs track the shifts of collaborating migrant communities and dance groups that participate in the production of the Guelaguetza

⁹⁸ Cultural Group Se'esavi from Madera was the closest to Fresno (ECO 2013).

festival in the cities of Santa Cruz, Los Ángeles, San José and Fresno. First, you will notice the networks that exist at each site and which communities may not collaborate with one another. For example, by comparing the production across the span of years in Santa Cruz, you will notice how vast the network was in the initial years. Following that line of observation you can see either who has remained constant or how ties have dissolved. On a positive note, by examining the programs in a consecutive manner we see what new groups begin to participate year after year. This then allows us to note the ethnic group representing each community, their city of origin and location of settlement, thus creating a map via participation based cultural productions.

In the charts, I have attempted to identify the ethnicity of each collaborating community and dance group in hopes of ascertaining which ethnicities are represented in the participation of the Guelaguetza festival. The vast majority are Zapotec (Sierra Norte, Valles Centrales, then followed by Mixtec communities). Knowing the ethnicity of the groups tells us who is present (active in forms of collective action and cultural productions) versus who is missing. The groups that are missing then direct our attention to *who* represents these communities in the production of the Guelaguetza. For example, during 2006-2008, the Afro-Oaxaqueños from the Costa Chica and the Mixes participated in the Guelaguetza festival in Los Ángeles. By 2009, due to the economic crisis, we see a decline in the number of community groups participating in the Guelaguetza festival in California. However, there is a rise in the number of grupos and ballets folklóricos traveling to

the northern cities to represent the dances of their paisanos. Grupo Huayaxaca and Ballet Folklórico Nueva Antequera are the most traveled dance groups because they have the largest repertoire of dances, and communities value their ability to present more communities that they are willing to pay for charter buses to bring them to festivals.

Organizing as well as participating in the Guelaguetza festival is costly. As stated earlier, many Oaxaqueño migrants are drawn to the festival because they may not have had the opportunity to partake in the event in Oaxaca. Rael, danzante from Sonoma, often discussed the economics of participating in Guelaguetza festival with me:

I love to dance. I enjoy participating in the Guelaguetza with my paisanos, but I have never received a cent for performing. Festival organizers say they will try to offer traveling groups money for gas. But you never know if it will be enough to cover the travel costs for all vehicles used to transport everyone. Lodging and food is always covered because fellow paisanos offer you a place to stay. Participating [as a dancer] in a Guelaguetza means spending money. There is a misconception that organizing committees make a lot of money from a Guelaguetza, but you don't. I dance because I enjoy it—I never have been paid (June 2012).

My observations of the various Guelaguetza festivals in Los Ángeles and Santa Cruz (as well as in Sonoma, San José, Ventura and Salem, Oregon), echo Rael. Participating grupos and ballet folklóricos are offered money for gas, at the most but are never paid for performing. While traveling with the Santa Cruz community to Los Ángeles and Ventura lodging was provided at the homes festival organizers. In addition to traveling with one's *vestuario*, costumes, you also packed a sleep bag. In 2008, while at a FOCIOCA general assembly one Los Ángeles based ballet

folklórico group was called and asked over speaker phone if they would like to participate in that year's Guelaguetza festival. The director of the dance group asked, "how much would you be going to pay us?" Shocked by the question, a community elder quickly stepped in and said, "...no other dance group has charged us to representing their traditional dances in the Guelaguetza. This is voluntary. Since when do you think you can sell our Oaxacan culture? The Guelaguetza is made by the community. Thank you, but we have other communities that wish to participate this year."

In the case of the Santa Cruz Guelaguetza festival only transportation is offered, specifically airfare for the maestro from Oaxaca. Returning to the programs, I compiled a **List of Dances** graph to record every dance that has been performed in all four cities from 2007-2012. Each dance was then noted for every year and location it was presented giving us the total of its popularity or limited appearance. Why are some dances more popular than others? This data shows that the most popular dances are those that Oaxacan State Secretary of Tourism style has standardized for the Oaxaca City festival. However, the migrant-produced Guelaguetza festivals in California also offers a space for communities who traditionally were not given the opportunity to showcase their communal dance(s) at the Guelaguetza in Oaxaca City. With the diversity of Oaxacan hometown associations and the incorporation of dance as a mean of cultural preservation- this component then brings the possibility of more dances to each festival. In other words, the migrant Guelaguetza facilitates the opportunity for the inclusion of dances underrepresented communities that traditionally *not* seen in the state-sponsored Guelaguetza.

The most popular dances are; 1) Chinas Oaxaqueñas from the Central Valley, 2) Danza de La Pluma from the Central Valley, 3) Flor de Pina San Juan Bautista Tuxtepec from the Region of Alto del Papaloapan, 4) Sones de Istmo de Tehuantepec from the Isthmus Region, 5) Sones y Chilenas de Pinotepa Nacional from the Coastal Region, 6) Sones Mazatecos, Huautla de Jimenez from the Cañada Region. The next set of popular dances are: 1) Jarabe Ejuteco, Ejutla de Crespo Central Valley Region, 2) Jarabe de Torito Serrano Macuiltianguis from the Distrito de Ixtlan, 3) Sones y Jarabes San Melchor Betaza from the Sierra Norte Region, 4) Sones de Putla de Guerrero from the Mixteca Baja region. What do we learn from this list of dances? Comparing the list of migrant performed dances with the Guelaguetza Festival produced in Oaxaca City, the first set of dances correspond to the same lineup of dances typically seen in the Oaxacan State-organized show. Yes, in California there is a large Zapotec migrant community from the central valley region to represent their communal dances of Chinas Oaxaqueñas and Danza de la Pluma. However, there is not a significant presence of people from the Coastal area or the Papaloapan community for the dances from Pinotepa Nacional and Flor de Piña. This is where grupos and ballet folklóricos step in, either as individuals groups or will perform collectively to re-enforce the number of dancers for each dance number.

What about the dances that are less seen? What do those tell us? I argue that the inclusion of the lesser known dances shows that the migrant community is asserting their agency as cultural producers and organizers by redefining “what the actual traditional dances should be for a Guelaguetza”. The dances least seen are:

Los Negritos, Villa Hidalgo Yalálag from the Sierra Norte Region, Sones y Jarabes de Lachirioag from the Sierra Norte Region, Danza de los Diablos by the Afro-Oaxaqueño community from Costa Chica area, Comparasa de Copal de Carnaval Putla de Guerrero from the Mixteca Region, Sones y Jarabes de Tlaxiaco from the Mixtec Region, and Sones y Jarabes de Santa Maria Tlahuitoltepec, Mixe from the Sierra Norte región.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude by referring to a question posed by Olga Nájera-Ramírez's in her essay on "Staging Authenticity." She asks, "Can folklórico dance be used to present contemporary issues and realities (2009, pg 285)?" As I have illustrated throughout this chapter, in the case of the migrant produced Guelagueta and the dances presented the answer is yes!

The way the Guelagueta festival is produced illustrates the contemporary issues and realities of the Oaxacan migrant community. Due to migration patterns to California, migrant dance instructors and festival organizers created three groups; Grupos de Comunidad, Grupos Folklóricos and Ballet Fokloricos in order to represent the missing ethno-linguistic communities in California. Those first generation migrants that were able to learn to dance in their pueblo at communal festivities or by participating in local dance groups, now teach other Oaxacan migrants, in particular 1.5 and second generation, learn their communal dances for the first time in California. Additionally, creative teaching strategies, such as with the use of home-made videos or reviewing YouTube clips are used as educational tools for dance. By

analyzing festival programs, we see what alliances and networks festival organizers create with other Oaxaqueño communities across the state of California. Participating in the Guelaguetza festival is a way for one to claim cultural citizenship.

Chart 4 List of Guelaguetza Programs: Analysis of participating groups and dances performed.

**Program 1 Vive Oaxaca 2007 Santa Cruz
Civic Auditorium**

Name	Type of Group	Ethnicity	Dances	City	Totals & Analysis
Com. de Valles Centrales	Vive Oaxaca comité	Zapotec of Central Valley	Chinas, Danza de la Pluma	Santa Cruz County	6 collaborating communities 4 cities
Com. Villa Hidalgo Yalálag	Communal based dance group	Zapotec de la Sierra	Sones y jarabes de Yalálag, Los Negritos	Los Ángeles	All Zapotec
G. danza y Bailes Centéotl	Grupo Folklórico	Zapotec,	Sones Mazatecos, Son y Jarabes Melchor Betaza, Jarabe Mixteco, Boda Juchinteca, Sones & Chilenas de San Pedro Pochutla, Sones y Chilenas de Pinotepa Nacional, Flor de Pina	Santa Cruz	
Com. Lachirioag	HTA	Zapotec Sierra Norte	Sones y Jarabes de Lachirioag	San José	
Com. Ejutla de Crespo	Communal based dance group	Zapotec	Jarabe Ejulteco	Ventura	
Com. Tlacolula de Matamoros	Communal based dance group	Zapotec	Mayadormia Tlacolula	Los Ángeles	

**Program 2 Vive Oaxaca 2008
Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium**

Name	Type of Group	Ethnicity	Dances	City	Totals & Analysis
Com. de Valles Centrales	Vive Oaxaca comité	Zapotec of Central Valley	Chinas, Danza de la Pluma	Santa Cruz County	6 collaborating communities 4 cities
Com. Villa Hidalgo Yalálag	Communal based dance group	Zapotec de la Sierra	Sones y jarabes de Yalálag, Los Negritos	Los Ángeles	All Zapotec
G. danza y Bailes Centéotl & LA	Grupo Folklórico	Zapotec,	Sones Mazatecos, S&J Melchor Betaza, Jarabe Mixteco, Boda Juchinteca, Sones & Chilenas de San Pedro Pochutla, Sones y Chilenas de Pinotepa Nacional, Flor de Pina	Santa Cruz /LA	
Com. Lachirioag	HTA	Zapotec Sierra Norte	Sones y Jarabes de Lachirioag	San José	
Com. Ejutla de Crespo	Communal based dance group	Zapotec	Jarabe Ejulteco	Ventura	
Com. Tlacolula de Matamoros	Communal based dance group	Zapotec	Mayadormia Tlacolula	Los Ángeles	

**Program 3 Vive Oaxaca 2010
Harbor High School Football Field**

Name	Type of Group	Ethnicity	Dances	City	Total & Analysis
Com. de Valles Centrales	Vive Oaxaca committee	Zapotec	Chinas	Santa Cruz County	7 Collaborating communities/groups
Com. Tlacolula de Matamoros	Communal based dance group	Zapotec		Los Angeles	4 California cities 1 Oaxaca City
Com. Ejutla de Crespo	Communal based dance group	Zapotec		Ventura	2 new Mixtec groups in Red Dance institute of Oaxaca
G. danza y Bailes Centéotl	Grupo Folklórico	Zapotec, more mixed		Santa Cruz	*Lost San José and Salinas/seaside communities
Dance Institute from the State of Oaxaca	Teachers from Oaxaca	Mixed	Various	Oaxaca City	*still work with LA
Comite de Pochtlan	Grupo Folklórico	Mixtec		Sonoma County	
Senorio Mixteco	Communal based group	Mixtec		Sonoma County	

**Program 4 Vive Oaxaca 2011
Santa Cruz Harbor High School**

Name	Type of group	Ethnicity	Dance	City	Total & Analysis
Com. Valles Centrales	Vive Oaxaca committee	Zapotec	Chinas	Santa Cruz county	3 collaborating groups 3 Cities (2 CA Cities, 1 Oaxaca City)
Dance Institute from the State of Oaxaca	Teachers from Oaxaca	Mixed		Oaxaca City	Lost LA, Ventura
G. danza y Bailes Centéotl	Grupo Folklórico			Santa Cruz	Dances are mainly between Centéotl & Dance institute
Comite de Pochtlan	Grupo Folklórico	Mixtec		Sonoma County	

**Program 5 VIVE OAXACA 2012
Santa Cruz Harbor High School**

Name	Type of group	Ethnicity	Dances	City	Totals & Analysis
Com. Valles Centrales	Vive Oaxaca committee	Zapotec	Chinas	Santa Cruz county	3 collaborating groups 3 Cities (2 CA Cities, 1 Oaxaca City)
Dance Institute from the State of Oaxaca	Teachers from Oaxaca	Mixed		Oaxaca City	Dances are mainly between Centéotl & Dance institute
G. danza y Bailes Centéotl	Grupo Folklórico			Santa Cruz	
Senorio Mixteco	Communal based group	Mixtec		Sonoma	

**Program 6 ORO 2011
Los Angeles Sports Arena**

Name	Type of group	Ethnicity	Dances	City	Totals & Analysis
Ballet Folk. Nueva Antequera	Ballet Folklórico			Los Ángeles	10 collaborating communities/groups
Gr.Folk Huaxyacac	Grupo Folklórico			Los Ángeles	All Los Ángeles County
Com. San Melcor de Betaza	Communal based dance group			Los Ángeles	3 new groups in Red
Union Yalálag	Communal based dance group	Zapotec Sierra		Los Ángeles	
Com. Macuiltiangus OPAM	Communal based dance group	Zapotec		Los Ángeles	
Com. de Lachiroag de LA	Communal based dance group	Zapotec Sierra		Los Ángeles	
Com. Tlacolula de Matamoros COTLA	Communal based dance group	Zapotec		Los Ángeles	
Gr.Folk San Bartolome Quilana	Grupo Folklórico			Los Ángeles	
Ballet Folk Pochatlan	Ballet Folklórico	Mixtec		Los Ángeles	

**Program 7 ORO 2012
Los Angeles Lincoln Park**

Name	Type of group	Ethnicity	Dances	City	Totals & Analysis
Ballet Folk. Nueva Antequera	Ballet Folklórico			Los Angeles	9 collaborating communities/grupo
Gr. Folk Huaxyacac	Grupo Folklórico			Los Angeles	3 cities: LA, Anaheim, Santa Rosa
Gr. Folk Princesa Donaji	Grupo Folklórico			Los Angeles	Incorporating northern CA communities for the 1 st time.
Com. San Melchor de Betaza	Communal based dance group			Los Angeles	*New G.F. Princesa Donaji
Union Yalálag	Communal based dance group	Zapotec		Los Angeles	*Return of G.F. Monte Alban had been over 5 years since participated w/ORO
Com. Macuiltiangus OPAM	Communal based dance group	Zapotec		Los Angeles	
Gr. Folk Monte Alban	Grupo Folklórico			Anaheim	
Senorio Mixteco	Communal based dance group	Mixtec		Sonoma County	
Com. Tlacolula de Matamoros COTLA	Communal based dance group	Zapotec		Los Angeles	

**Program 8 FIOB
2009 Fresno
Roosevelt High
School**

Name	Type of group	Ethnicity	Dances	City	Totals & Analysis
Ballet Folk. Nueva Antequera	Ballet Folklórico			Los Ángeles	2 Los Ángeles cities that travel to Fresno
Ballet Folk Pochatlan	Ballet Folklórico			Los Ángeles	No local community groups present their dances.

**Program 9 Lazos Oaxaqueños San José 2010
National Hispanic Univeristy**

Name	Type of group	Ethnicity	Dances	City	Totals & Analysis
Com. Valles Centrales	Comité			San José	7 collaborating community/groups
Gr. Folk Huaxyacac	Grupo Folklórico			Los Ángeles	4 cities: LA, San José, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa
Com. San Pedro Apostol	Communal based dance group			San José	
Gr. Folk Raices				Santa Cruz	
Seniorio Mixteco	Communal based dance group	Mixteco		Sonoma county	
Com. Tlacolula de Matamoros COTLA	Communal based dance group	Zapotec		Los Ángeles	
Ballet Folk Pochatlan	Ballet Folklórico	Mixteco		Sonoma county	

**Program 10 Lazo Oaxaqueños 2012 San José,
National Hispanic University**

Name	Type of group	Ethnicity	Dances	City	Totals & Analysis
Com. San Pedro Apostol	Communal based dance group			San José	6 collaborating communities/groups
Gr. Folk Huaxyacac	Grupo Folklórico			Los Ángeles	5 cities: San José, LA, Sta Cruz, Sta Rosa, Gilroy
Gr. Folk Raices				Santa Cruz	*Gilroy is the newest edition of group
Com. Tlacolula de Matamoros COTLA	Communal based dance group	Zapotec		Los Ángeles	
Seniorio Mixteco	Communal based dance group	Mixteco		Sonoma County	
G. Natividad de la Ciudad	Communal based dance group			Gilroy	

Chart 7 List of Dances performed at Guelaguetza festivals in Santa Cruz, Los Angeles, San José and Fresno

Dances	Santa Cruz				Los Angeles			San José		Fresno
	2007	2010	2011	2012	2009	2011	2012	2010	2012	2009
Chinas- Region Valles Centrales	1	1	1	1	1 2	1	1	1	1	1
Sones y Jarabes de Yalálag Region Sierra Norte	1				1 2	1	1	1		
Sones Mazatecos, Huautla de Jimenez, Region Canada	1	1	1	1	1 2	1	1	1	1	1
Sones y Jarabes de San Melcho Betaza Region Sierra Norte	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1
Jarabe Mixteco, Huajuapán de León Region de la Mixteca	1	1	1		1 2	1	1	1		1
Jarabe Ejuteco, Ejulta de Crespo Valles Centrales	1	1	1		1 2	1	1	1	1	1
Istmo de Tehuantepec, Boda_Sones Region Istmo	1	1	1	1	1 2	1	1	1	1	1
Putla de Guerrero (Sonoma) Region Mixteca Baja	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	
Sones y Chilenas de San Pedro Pochultá Region Costa	1	1			1 2	1	1		1 Gilroy	
Sones y Jarabes de Lachirioag Region Sierra Norte	1					1				
Sones y Chilenas Chilenas de Pinotepa Nacional Region Costa	1	1	1	1	1 2	1	1	1	1	1
Mayordomía de Tlacolula Region Valles Centrales	1				1	1	1	1		
Flor de Pina San Juan Bautista Tuxtepec Region Alto Ddel Papaloapam	1	1	1	1	1 2	1	1	1	1	1
Los Negritos -Villa Hidalgo Yalálag Region Sierra Norte	1		1							
Danza de pluma, Region Valles Centrales	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Jarabe de Torito Serrano, Macuiltianguis Region Mixteca Alta		1	1	1	1	1	1		1	

Sones y Jarabes Tavehua (D.Ins.Oax)		1								
Miahuatlan de Porfirio Diaz (DIO)		1	1	1						
Sones y Jarabes Mixes Region Sierra Norte		1		1	12	1			1	1
Comparasa de los Copalal de Carnaval Putla Region Mixteca		1						1		
Sones y Jarabes de Santa Catarina Juquila Region Sierra Sur		1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Danza de Roayaga DIO			1	1						
Sones y Jarabes de Tlaxiaco DIO Region Mixteca			1	1			1 Senorio		1 Senorio	
Sola de Vega DIO Region Sierra Sur			1	1					1	
Sones y Chilenas de la Villa de Tututepec. Fandango de Varitas				1						
San Antonio Castillo Velasco Jarabe del Valle DIO				1						
Fandango Tde Tlacolula GF Gish Bac Region de Valles Centrales					1					
Jarabe del Valle					2					
Boda Zapoteca de San Bartolome Quialana Region Valles Centrales						1				
Sones y Jarabes de Sta Ma Tlahuitoltepec, Mixe Region Sierra Norte							1			
Total Dances per year	14	21	19	19	16/13	18	17	17	15	11
MUST HAVE DANCES: Chinas, Sones Mazatecos, Istmo, Pinotepa Nacional, Flor de Pina, Danza de la Pluma										
Next Most Popular: Ejulta, Jaraba de Torito Serrano, Sones y Jarabes San Melchor Betaza, Putla de Guerrero										

List of Participating Delegations in the 2013 Oaxaca City Guelaguetza.

Lista de Delegaciones participantes en la Guelaguetza 2013

Se dieron a conocer las listas oficiales de las 4 presentaciones de la Guelaguetza 2013 este lunes 24 de junio en la conferencia de prensa oficial por la Secretaría de Turismo y el Comité de Autenticidad de las Fiestas de la Guelaguetza 2013.

También se mencionaron algunas delegaciones que este año no asistirán a la máxima, tales como, Villa Sola de Vega, Zaachila, Miahuatlán de Porfirio Díaz, Ejutla de Crespo, Salina Cruz, San Pablo Huixtepec, Trinidad Zaachila, San Juan Bautista la Raya, Santiago Jamiltepec.

Entre las cuatro listas de pueblos y delegaciones participantes se admira el regreso de Santa Catarina Juquila y la asistencia por primera vez de Loma Bonita después de 11 años tratando de asistir, Santa María Huatulco y San Agustín Loxhicha.

LUNES 22 DE JULIO, 10:00am

- Chinas Oaxaqueñas
- Santa María Tlahuitolpec (Mixe –Sierra Norte)
- San Jerónimo Tecoátl (canada región)
- San Pablo Villa de Mitla (tlacolula- central valley Zapotec/mixtec)
- Sto. Domingo Tehuantepec (Istmo Zapotec)
- Villa de Tututepec de Melchor Ocampo (costa)
- H. Ciudad de Tlaxiaco (Mixteca región)
- San Bartolo Coyotepec (central valley)
- Unión Hidalgo (istmos valley)
- Santos Reyes Nopala (costa)
- San Sebastian Tutla (valles central)
- San Juan Bautista Tuxtepec (Papaloapan)
- Putla Villa de Guerrero. (Mixteca)

LUNES 22 DE JULIO, 05:00pm

- Chinas Oaxaqueñas
- San Pedro y San Pablo Ayutla (Sierra Norte)
- San Jerónimo Tecoátl (canada región)
- Asunción Ixtaltepec (Istmo)
- San Andrés Solaga (Sierra Norte)
- Sto Tomas Ocotepec (Mixteca)
- Sto Tomas Mazaltepec (Valles Centrales)
- H. Ciudad de Tlaxiaco (Mixteca región)
- Santiago Jocotepec (Papaloapan)
- San Jerónimo Tlacoahuaya (Valles Centrales)
- Juchitán de Zaragoza (Istmo)
- Sta Catarina Juquila (Costa)
- San Juan Bautista Tuxtepec (Papaloapan)
- San Pedro Pochutla. (Costa)

List of Participating Delegations in the 2013 Oaxaca City Guelaguetza
(Continued)

LUNES 29 DE JULIO, 10.00am

- Chinas Oaxaqueñas
- Huatla de Jimenez
- San Melchor Betaza
- Ciudad Ixtepec
- Ocotlan de Morelos
- Santiago Juxtlahuaca
- Teococuilco de Marcos Pérez
- San Antonino Castillo Velasco
- Huajuapán de León
- San Antonio Huitepec
- San Juan Bautista Tuxtepec
- Cuilapan de Guerrero
- Sn Andres Huaxpaltepec
- Loma Bonita
- Villa de San JuanCacahuatpec

LUNES 29 DE JULIO, 05:00pm

- Chinas Oaxaqueñas
- Huatla de Jimenez
- Villa Hidalgo Yalálag
- San Vicente Coatlán
- El Espinal
- Tlacolula de Matamoros
- San Pablo Macuilianguis
- San Martín Tilcajete
- San Agustín Loxicha
- San Juan Colorado
- Huajuapán de León
- San Juan Bautista Tuxtepec
- Santa María Huatulco
- Loma Bonita
- Pinotepa Nacional.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

“Oaxaca is everywhere Oaxaqueños live.” (Felicia Saldívar 2006)

“The Guelaguetza festival provides an opportunity for Oaxaqueños to share their culture with others, and to educate the audience about the richness of Oaxacan culture.” (Janet Rodríguez 2010)

In this final chapter, I summarize the central issues explored in this dissertation and offer a few closing comments. As I have demonstrated in the preceding chapters, the Guelaguetza festival is a communal endeavor regardless of where the festival is produced. Producing this elaborate festival requires a tremendous amount of labor, time and resources. Therefore, one of my principal concerns in this dissertation was to explore why and how Oaxacan migrants produce their own Guelaguetzas in California and to understand what the festival means to the people and community.

In my research both in Oaxaca and in California, I quickly discovered that many Oaxaqueños expressed criticism of the state-sponsored Guelaguetza festival in Oaxaca City. Most viewed it as a highly commercialized event designed to attract tourism. In fact, interviewees revealed that they were often excluded as participants and that they were unable to personally experience the Guelaguetza festival in Oaxaca City as spectators due to the exorbitant admission fees. Given these criticisms, it is truly amazing that working-class, largely undocumented migrants are willing to spend their limited resources on this cultural production.

Deeply intrigued, I had to know more. What did Oaxacan migrants seek to accomplish through this celebration? Did the festival retain the same meaning as before migration or did it acquire a new meaning for the migrant communities? What might the practice of Guelaguetza reveal about other areas of Oaxacan social, political, and cultural life in Oaxacalifornia?

My research questions took to me study the first and longest running Guelaguetza festival in the United States, organized in Los Angeles by the ORO, and then to witness from the ground up the Guelaguetza festival organized by Vive Oaxaca in Santa Cruz. The argument advanced in this dissertation is that the migrant-produced Guelaguetza festivals offer insight on the negotiations of indigenous migrants' daily experiences and the process in constructing a sense of community in new geographical locations. In both Oaxaca and California, the Guelaguetza festival symbolically displays the ethnic diversity of indigenous communities from the state of Oaxaca. Yet, relocating to the United States and navigating through multiple social fields, ethnicity has become a basis for political activism that has also allowed migrants to redefine the meaning of ethnicity on their own terms. California Oaxaqueño migrants organize the festival as a way to express and maintain their Oaxacan identity.

Examining the Guelaguetza festival reveals the nuances of how the Oaxaqueño migrant community established strategies to adapt to their needs, contexts and circumstance. Three key differences mark the Guelaguetza festivals in California. In contrast to the official Oaxacan version: 1) the festival is sponsored by working-

class, largely undocumented migrants from Oaxaca (who live as construction workers, food industry workers, agricultural workers, students, public school personnel, retired workers, and home care takers) whereas in Oaxaca City, state officials, national businesses and intellectuals produce the state festival, 2) migrant organizers have shortened festivals to Sundays to accommodate workers' schedules, 3) admission is reduced to encourage maximum participation and is thus much more inclusive and 4) audiences are drawn to the migrant produced festivals because of the communities represented on stage are from the same or nearby pueblos.

In addition, in California, festivals organize work with city officials incorporate different businesses, and include non-Oaxaqueño folklórico dancers in the performance. Oaxaqueño migrant communities have created vast translocal networks in order to bring this festival to fruition in each of its locations. The production of the Guelaguetza festival is based heavily on relationships that span regions and international political borders. Participation in the production of the Guelaguetza festival is a way to speak back to the various forms of marginalization the communities have endured and gives them the opportunity to claim cultural citizenship in two locations. Oaxacan migrants first produced the Guelaguetza as a creative way to claim cultural citizenship in California and Oaxaca, and then came to use it to counteract racism, discrimination, and gang violence.

Ironically, despite the migrants' criticisms of the state-sponsored festival noted throughout, in many ways it has become the "standard" that migrant organizers use as a measure of what they need to reproduce in their own festivals. Thus we see

migrant organizers struggling to figure out how to “reconstitute” the festival on their own terms while trapped by their concerns of maintaining “legitimacy” as determined by members of the authenticity committee in Oaxaca City. Thus like most cultural productions, the migrant-based Guelaguetza is not free of politics or conflict. That is, Oaxacan migrant organizations in California have managed to recreate the Guelaguetza festival, but are now challenged with preserving the communal spirit of the event while navigating through commercial and political relationships. What cultural concessions and compromises are at stake? In the following section I close my study with some final thoughts on this point.

Two Sides of the Cultural Coin: Commercialization and Clientelism in the Production of the Guelaguetza”

The term *conflictive collaborations* addresses how each migrant organization has engaged with other migrant communities and businesses to produce the Guelaguetza festival. This refers to the ways that organizers enter into strategic partnerships with other communities, commercial, and political groups despite contrasting political ideological orientations. Connections with businesses, school administrators and state officials facilitate the making of the festival in both Los Angeles and Santa Cruz, California, albeit with drastically different implications for the *cultural politics* at play in the production of the event. Examples of this can be acknowledgement, recognition, monetary and non-monetary support.

Before 2008 each organization funded the festival through a combination of city cultural grants, sponsorship from local migrant owned businesses, and the

traditional “practice” of Guelaguetza in which communities members provide support to the principal host by offering donations and/or labor. Oaxacan migrant leaders in both research sites also collaborated with various city officials such as their local councilmembers who assisted in navigating city bureaucracies and numerous permit procedures.

Of course, the Great Recession of 2008 changed everything. Grants are increasingly scarce, local business sponsorship is harder to come by, and community members are struggling with the loss of jobs. Organizers have developed savvy survival strategies by partnering with corporations to produce the annual festivals. Los Ángeles and Santa Cruz organizers have entered into a business partnership with major grocery stores such as Northgate González and Safeway, as both have a strong marketing interest in the Latino community. The organizations succeed in securing funding for the operational costs, while the grocery stores benefit from the publicity.

Organizations are also offering vendor packages to fund the festival. For example a **Gold sponsor** \$500-1,000 includes placement of logo on all propaganda, preferred location, opportunity to distribute informational material, and verbal recognition made during the event. A \$400 contribution earned **Silver (Padrino) sponsor** securing the vendor a booth, the ability to distribute information, sale of an *Oaxacan product* and recognition during the event. To maintain the *integrity* as an Oaxacan cultural festival, produced by and for the people, preference for vendors is first given to Oaxacan community organizations, then Oaxacan local businesses,

followed by “non-Oaxacan” business/community groups. A strict mandate for “outside” vendors requires that all products sold must be considered Oaxacan or at minimum Mexican products. This is a delicate dance where organizers negotiate with corporate sponsors without fully selling off the Guelaguetza.

Interestingly, the desire to maintain “*integridad*” or integrity is seen at nearly every migrant-produced Guelaguetza in California. “Integrity” may manifest through the presence of “cultural authorities”-- where Mexican state representatives are invited to march along with organizers, dancers and musicians during the grand opening and to sit at the table of honor placed in a prime viewing location. The former director of the Oaxacan Institute for Migrant Services, Rene Ruiz Quiroz, made numerous visits to California as his duties stipulated procuring proper documentation and assistance for those who may have fallen ill, and the repatriation of bodies for Oaxacans abroad. During Ruiz’s tenure the Institute financially supported the production of the Guelaguetza festival in several cities. Specifically, in 2009 and 2010 Santa Cruz received financial contributions of US \$30,000, which allowed the committee to move the event from the civic auditorium to a high school football field to accommodate the growing attendance that peaked to nearly 7,000 people. Ruiz’s visits to California allowed him to *carry out* his obligations of checking on migrant communities during Guelaguetza festivals is consistent with the post-revolution political ideology that encouraged the incorporation of *Mexico de Afuera* into “social relations with the interests of the ruling upper classes of Mexico”

(Gilbert González 1999). That is, Mexican state representatives maintain contact with Mexicans outside of Mexico for political interests.

Another example of encounters with diasporic dignitaries can be seen in ORO's hosting of the recently elected Oaxacan state governor Gabino Cue since 2010. Participating communities within ORO were very active during Cue's gubernatorial campaign by garnering votes for state elections for the coalition candidate from *paisanos del otro lado*. In keeping with his campaign promise, Cue returned to open the Guelaguetza in Los Ángeles as the governor-elect and as governor. As an autonomous cultural association, ORO maintains a firm stance in keeping Mexican representatives at arm's length. However, this strategic partnership provides them a channel to place demands on behalf of migrants in California directly through the state government.

Why do Oaxacan migrants continue to collaborate with Mexican state representatives? What is at stake in these partnerships? For politicians the migrant community clearly represents a constituency that can influence elections and the economy of the state. For the migrant community, it is a reflection of networks and political relationships with elected officials in Oaxaca.



Image 10 Posters denouncing the privatization of the Guelaguetza in California.

“La cultura no se vende, se defiende!” Recently, a Oaxacan migrant entrepreneur attempted to create a for-profit Guelaguetza by offering a traveling tour of the festival across California. Huatulco Entertainment based in Oceanside, CA in conjunction with two additional business partners challenged the cultural values of “collective effort and community” by privatizing the Guelaguetza festival into an eight city tour starting in San Diego in June. Once promotional propaganda began to circulate in early February, numerous community-based organizations called for a “Regional Guelaguetza” meeting in Los Ángeles. The coalition found Huatulco Entertainment’s Guelaguetza tour to be an egregious violation of the guiding cultural values and morals behind the Guelaguetza for several reasons. First, this venture was not working in collaboration with the communities and the production was clearly for

personal profit. Second, the Guelaguetza Tour threatened access for existing organizing communities to venues and funding resources. Moreover, Huatulco Entertainment was co-opting the networks that communities have already made. Additionally, the coalition expressed concern that the Guelaguetza tour would create an over saturation of Guelaguetza festivals in an area, and who can afford to go to two Guelaguetzas a year? Last, the coalition feared that this tour will open the gates to a Cinco de Mayo type celebration where the Guelaguetza festival becomes a one-day expression of symbolic ethnicity.

In April 2012, all Guelaguetza organizing communities in California came together and drafted a “cultural treatise” denouncing the *privatization* of their communal event. Eleven organizations spanning from San Diego to Santa Rosa drafted an eight point *Acta de acuerdo de la Coalición de Organizaciones de Migrantes Oaxaqueños*. In general the accord declared the Guelaguetza festival shall never be organized by any business entity for personal profit. The Guelaguetza festival should only be produced to promote the culture of Oaxacan communities. Dance or musical groups are encouraged to continue participating in “communal events” rather than private ventures/enterprises. Those that do participate in the tour will literally be ex-communicated from the Oaxacan migrant network.

In producing the Guelaguetza festival in California each organizing committee enters into a conflictive collaboration with commercial and/or political entities. The economic crisis pushed communities to develop savvy survival strategies to fund the

production of the event. To maintain integrity of the event, working with corporate businesses required finely choreographed agreements as owners attempted to request preference on the visibility of their brand, on how the festival is produced and on how money is utilized.

Northern California organizations have made clear alliances with particular Oaxacan political figures, Mexican agencies, and affiliations with local state institutions. They recognize the cultural compromise at stake here- the more *acercamiento (collaboration)* the organization have with diasporic dignitaries, the greater the risk of control, co-optation and cultural governance. While organizers in Los Angeles firmly maintain an autonomous position, they support certain political figures, such as Oaxacan governor Gabino Cue. The partnerships with Northgate Market and smaller local businesses alleviates the financial burden on migrant communities in organizing the event without fully privatizing this cultural production.

At the moment, Hautulco Entertainment has struck a nerve across Oaxacalifornia evoking the stance that “*la cultura no se vende, no se negocia sino que se defiende.*” Culture is not to be sold, it is not a business, but should be defended. It is important to reflect critically on the use of commercial sponsorships and to think about the types of cultural negotiations that are at play across the state to produce a ‘*digna*’ Guelaguetza festival. To what extent are these organizations risking cultural commodification and co-optation (to go back to the two sides of the cultural coin) with the political-commercial alliances that they are entering in the making of the Guelaguetza festival? In order to produce the festival in California migrant

organizations collaborate with political and commercial entities, but have installed safeguards that to protect against the commercialization and privatization. Therefore, while the community was able to easily spot a far-reaching disconnection from the tradition it needs to remain vigilant that the interest of politicians and corporations do not nudge the lines of acceptable collaboration for the sake of the production.

I would like to end by gesturing to other actors who are engaged in the practice of mutual assistance even through their contribution were not analyzed in the dissertation. What festival would be complete without food? Traditional food is a required element in at the Guelaguetza festival. Those individuals the make the food are just as a part of the event as the dancers and the organizers. Likewise, I must acknowledge the laborers that are often not given due recognition for their contribution in building stages, arranging seating area, vendor booths and much more. Finally, there would no dance without music. *Bandas Oaxaqueñas* (brass bands) highlight the tremendous social and economic efforts Oaxacan migrants dedicate to organizing young musicians, and point to future areas of research.

The research questions that drove my dissertation compel me to pursue how new cultural contexts impact and shape the experience of second generation migrant musicians, the role of female musicians in traditionally male dominant bands, and the strategies developed by the larger Oaxacan community to secure venues that will financially and culturally sustain this transnational practice.

Based on the analysis of this study, the Guelaguetza festival, is not only a performance of dance and music; it also has many complex nuanced layers depending on

where and who organizes the event. What is clear is that the Guelaguetza festival in California is a gift to migrants themselves as it has consistently played a role in crafting forms of belonging. The production of the festival allows working class Oaxaqueños to be part of a festival that once excluded them. In whatever fashion one participates as an organizer, dancer, musician, cook, labor, vendor, or as an audience member the Guelaguetza is a site where Oaxaqueño migrants can assert and negotiate ethnic identity and cultural citizenship in two nations.

Appendix

Santa Cruz City Council Proclamation to Vive Oaxaca Guelaguetza 2007

Santa Cruz City Council

Proclamation

Honoring the Oaxacan Communities at VIVE Oaxaca 2007 event in Santa Cruz

WHEREAS, the largest Indigenous celebration from the state of Oaxaca, Mexico is known as the Guelaguetza and is being celebrated at their community celebration filled with music, dance, art and color entitled “VIVE Oaxaca” and its Indigenous Communities, in Civic Auditorium in the City of Santa Cruz on June 23, 2007; and

WHEREAS, this event will be an opportunity to share with the people of Santa Cruz and California the pre-Columbian traditions that Oaxaca has to offer; and

WHEREAS, indigenous peoples from the Santiago Laxopa Ixtlan de Juarez, San Miguel Sola de Vega, Zimatlán de Álvarez, Zaachila, Magdalena Tequisistlan, Tlacolula de Matamoros, Villa Hidalgo Yalálag, Ejutla de Crespo, San Pablo Huixtepec, San Pedro Totolapan, Cuilapan de Guerrero, San Luis del Rio, Centro Oaxaca, Santa Lucia del Camino, San Martin Tilcajete, San Cristobal Lachirioag, San Pedro Ixtlahuaca, Salina Cruz, Tataltepec de Valdez Juquila, San Pedro y San Pablo Teposcolula, Guelatao de Juarez, Santa Maria Xochixtepec, Santa Gertrudis Zimatlán, La Raya and several other communities will be participating in this cultural celebration; and

WHEREAS, the traditional "banda de viento" (band of the wind), Xochixtepec, will be playing traditional Oaxacan music throughout the celebration for the community to experience the richness of Oaxaca's indigenous cultures; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Emily Reilly, Chair of the Santa Cruz City Council, acting on behalf of all members of the Council, hereby honor the Oaxacan communities in Santa Cruz for their cultures and contributions to the people of the Santa Cruz Community, and dedicate this day, June 23, 2007, as “VIVE Oaxaca & its Indigenous Communities Day” in the City of Santa Cruz.

***Consejo Municipal de Santa Cruz
Proclamación***

Honrando a las Comunidades Oaxaqueñas en el evento VIVE Oaxaca 2007 en Santa Cruz

MIENTRAS QUE, la celebración indígena mas grande del estado de Oaxaca, México es conocida como la Guelaguetza esta siendo celebrada en una fiesta comunitaria llena de Música, danza, arte, y color llamada "VIVE Oaxaca" y sus comunidades indígenas, en el Auditorio Cívico en la Ciudad de Santa Cruz el 23 de junio del 2007; y

MIENTRAS QUE, este evento será una oportunidad para compartir con la gente de Santa Cruz y California las tradiciones pre-Columbianas que Oaxaca ofrece; y

MIENTRAS QUE, gentes indígenas de las comunidades originarias de Santiago Laxopa Ixtlan de Juárez, San Miguel Sola de Vega, Zimatlán de Álvarez, Zaachila, Magdalena Tequisistlán, Tlacolula de Matamoros, Villa Hidalgo Yalálag, Ejutla de Crespo, San Pablo Huixtepec, San Pedro Totolapan, Cuilapan de Guerrero, San Luis del Rió, Centro Oaxaca, Santa Lucia del Camino, San Martín Tilcajete, San Pedro Ixtlahuaca, San Cristóbal Lachirioag, Santa Maria Xochixtepec, Tataltepec de Valdez Juquila, San Pedro y San Pablo Teposcolula, Guelatao de Juárez, Salina Cruz, Santa Gertrudis Zimatlán, La Raya, y otras comunidades varias estarán participando en esta celebración cultural; y

MIENTRAS QUE, la banda de viento, Xochixtepec, estará tocando música tradicional Oaxaqueña durante la celebración para la comunidad para conocer la riqueza de las culturas indígenas Oaxaqueñas; y

AHORA, POR LO TANTO, YO, Emily Reilley, Dirigente del Concilio de la Ciudad de Santa Cruz, actuando por parte de todos los miembros del Concilio, por este medio doy el honor a las comunidades Oaxaqueñas en Santa Cruz por sus culturas y contribuciones a la gente de la Comunidad de Santa Cruz, y dedico este día el 23 de junio del 2007, como día de "VIVE Oaxaca y sus Comunidades Indígenas" en la Ciudad de Santa Cruz.

Bibliography

Interviews

Cervantes, Angelica June 2010 Los Ángeles, CA.

Dominguez, Otomi 2010 & 2001 Los Ángeles, CA.

Gonzalez. Miranda July 2012 San José, CA.

Herrera. Mauricio June 2010, August 2010, March, 2011 Los Ángeles, CA.

Hidalgo, Natalia August 2010 Los Ángeles, CA.

Jimenez, Karina July 5, 2013 Santa Cruz, CA.

Rodriguez, Cresta May 2011 Santa Cruz, CA.

Rodriguez, Janet May 2010 & June 2011, Santa Cruz, CA.

Rodriguez. Nancy 2008, Decmebr 2010 Santa Cruz, CA.

Saldívar, Felicia Oaxaca City, Mexico and Santa Cruz, CA 2005-2012.

Sepulveda, Rael June 2012 San José, CA.

Maldonado, Getrudis March 2011 Los Ángeles, CA.

Morales. Gustavo April 2011 Santa Monica, CA.

Viloria, Juan Ramon April 2011 Santa Cruz, CA.

Zepeda, Eulario April 2011 Santa Cruz, CA.

Zepeda, Genoveva May 2011 Santa Cruz, CA.

Work Cited

Acevedo Conde, Maria Luisa. 1997. "Historia De La Fiesta De Los Lunes Del Cerro". *Historia del Arte de Oaxaca: Arte Contemporaneo*, Eds. Margarita Dalton Palomo y Verónica Loera y Chávez C. Pp. 357-378. Oaxaca, Mexico: Instituto Oaxaqueño de las Culturas.

- Álvarez, José Rogelio. 1998. "Guelaguetza." in *Enciclopedia de México*. Ciudad de México. Pg. 3637-3639.
- Avila Jaquez Carmen. 2009. Empowerment of Women through Political Participation: Oportunidades' performance in an indigenous community of Oaxaca. *Revista Perspectivas Sociales / Social Perspectives primavera-otoño/spring-fall 2009*. Vol.11, Num. 1 y 2 / Pág. 101-132
- Bauman, Richard. 1986. "Performance and Honor in 13th-Century Iceland." *Journal of American Folklore* 99(392): 131-150.
- Brandes, Stanely
1988 Power and Persuasion: Fiestas and Social Control in Rural Mexico. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Brenneis, Donald. 1986. "Performing Passions: Aesthetics and Politics in an Occasionally Egalitarian Community." In *American Ethnologist* 14(2): 236-250.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture" in The Interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic Books.
- Cadaval, Olivia. 1998. Creating a Latino Identity in the Nation's Capital. New York. Garland Publishing, INC.
- Cancian, F. 1965. *Economics and prestige in a Maya community: The religious cargo system in Zinacantán*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Carlsen, Laura. 1999. Revista CHIAPAS, "Autonomía indígena y usos y costumbres: la innovación de la tradición", México.
<http://www.prodiversitas.bioetica.org/nota26.htm> accessed aug 23, 2013.
- Chance, J. K. 1978. *Race and class in colonial Oaxaca*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Clarke, C. 2000. *Class, Ethnicity, and Community in Southern Mexico, Oaxaca's Peasantries*. New York. Oxford University Press.
- Cruz, Manjarrez, Guadalupe Adriana. 2006. Transnational identities and the performance of Zapotec culture. Dissertation. Culture and Performance. University of California Los Angeles.
- , 2008 Winter Danzas Chuscas: Performing Migration in a Zapotec Community. *Dance Research Journal*. Volume 40. Issue 02. pp 3-22

- 2013 *Zapotecs on the Move: Cultural, Social, and Political Processes in Transnational Perspective*. Rutgers University Press, ..
- Cohen, J. H. 1999. *Cooperation and community: Economy and society in Oaxaca*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- 2001. "Transnational Migration in Rural Oaxaca, Mexico: Dependency, Development, and the Household." *American Anthropologist* 103(4):954-967.
- 2004. The culture of migration in Southern Mexico. University of Texas Press. Pg. 13
- Cornelius, Wayne. 1992. "From sojourners to settlers: the changing profile of Mexican immigration to the United States", in Jorge Bustamante, Clark Reynolds, and Raúl Hinojosa (eds), US-Mexico Relations: Labor Market Interdependence, Stanford, CA; CA Stanford University Press.
- Falassi, Alessandro. 1987. Time out of time. Albuquerque. University of New Mexico Press.
- Flores, William and Rina Benmayor, eds. 1997. Latino Cultural Citizenship, Claiming Identity, Space and Rights. Beacon Press.
- Fox, Jonathan and Gaspar Rivera-Salgado, eds. 2004. Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States. Center for U.S. Mexican Studies/Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, UCSD.
- 2005. "Unpacking 'Transnational Citizenship'". Annual Review of Political Science. Vol. 8 , pp. 171-201.
- 2006. "Reframing Mexican Migration as Multi-Ethnic Process". *Latino Studies*, (39-61) Palgrave Macmillan Ltd.
- 2013 in "Voices of Indigenous Oaxacan Youth in the Central Valley: Creating Our Sense of Belonging in California." Oaxacalifornia Reporting Team/Equipo de Cronistas Oaxacalifornianos (ECO). University of California Center for Collaborative Research for an Equitable California Research Report Number 1, July 2013.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." *Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Book: 412-454.
- 1975 "On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding." *American Scientist*, 63:1, 47-53.

- Glick-Schiller, Nina, Linda Basch and Cristina Blanc-Szanton. 1992. Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity and Nationalism Reconsidered. N.Y., The New York Academy of Science Annuals, vol. 645.
- Glick-Schiller, Nina. Peggy Levitt. January 2006. "Haven't we heard this somewhere before? A Substantive View of Transnational Migration Studies by way of reply to Waldinger and Fitzgerald." The Center for Migration and Development. Working Papers Series. Princeton University. CMD Working Paper #06-01.
- Gonzalez Santiago, Moises
1990. *La fiesta del lunes del cerro y la Guelagueta*. Mexico. Ediciones del autor.
- Goertzen, Chris. 2009. "Dancing politics and Cultural Tourism in Oaxaca's Guelagueta" in Dancing Across Borders: Danza y Bailables Mexicanas. Norma Cantu, Olga Najera-Ramirez and Brenda Romero. Eds. Chicago. University of Illinois Press.
- Goldring, Luin. 2002. "The Mexican State and Transmigrant Organizations: Negotiating the Boundaries of Membership and participation". Latin American Research Review. Vol. 37. No. 3.
- Guarnizo, Luis E. and Michael P. Smith. 1998. "The locations of Transnationalism", in M.P Smith and Luis Guarnizo (eds), Transnationalism from Below, Comparative Urban and Community Research, Vol. 6. Transaction Publishers, U.S.A.
- Guss, David M. 2000. The Festive State: Race, Ethnicity and Nationalism as Cultural Performance. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Greenberg, James B. 1981. *Santiago's Sword: Chatino Peasant Religion and Economics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Griehop J. and Varese S. 1993. *Invisible Indians: Mixtec Farmworkers in California*. Appl. Behavior Science. University of California, Davis. Film.
- Guarnizo, Luis E. and Michael P. Smith. 1998. "The locations of Transnationalism", in M.P Smith and Luis Guarnizo (eds), Transnationalism from Below, Comparative Urban and Community Research, Vol. 6. Transaction Publishers, U.S.A.

- Harris, Max. 1996. "Moctezuma's Daughter: The Role of La Malinche in Mesoamerica Dance." *Journal of American Folklore* 109(432): 149-177.
- 2003. Carnival and other Christian festivals: folk theology and folk performance. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Hansen, B. (2002). The Oaxaca connection; Immigrants from southern Mexico have brought real moles, *clayudas* and avocado leaf *barbacoa* to L.A. *Los Angeles Times*, May, 1,2002. Retrieved on Sept 2, 2011.
- Hirabayashi, Lane Ryo. 1993. Cultural Captial: Mountain Zapotec Migrant Associations in Mexico City. Tuscon.: University of Arizona Press.
- Hobsbawm, Eric.1981. Introduction: Inventing Traditions. In The Invention of Traditions, ed. Eric Hobsawm and Terrence Ranger, pp. 1-14. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kearny, M. 1971. *Los vientos de Ixtepeji*. Mexico, D. F.: Instituto Indigenista Interamericano.
- 1995. 'The effects of transnational culture, economy and migration on Mixtec identity in Oaxacalifornia', in Peter Smith et al. eds. The Bubbling Cauldon, Race Ethnicity and the Urban Crisis. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 226-243.
- 1995. "The Local and the Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism." in Annual Review of Anthropology. Vol. 24 (1995), 547-565.
- Kearney, Michael and Nagengast, Carole. 1989. "Anthropological perspectives on transnational communities in rural California", Davis, California: California Institute for Rural Studies, Working group on Farm Labor and Rural poverty, Working Paper no. 3.
- 1990. "Mixtec Ethnicity: Social Identity, Political Consciousness, and Political Activism". In Latin American Research Review, Vol. 25, No. 2 61-91.
- Kresge, Lisa. 2007. Indigenous Oaxacan Communities in California: An Overview. California Institute for Rural Studies.
- Lizama Quijano. Jesús José. 2003. La Guelaguetza en Oaxaca: fiesta, identidad, y construccion simbolica en una ciudad mexicana. Dissertation. Anthropology. Universitat Rovira I Virgili.

- Lopez, Angelica. Rogoff, B., Nafaji, B., Mejía Arauz, R. 2012. Collaboration and helpfulness as cultural practices. In J. Valsiner (Ed.), *Handbook of Cultural Psychology* (pp. 869-884). NY: Oxford University Press.
- Lopez, F., & Runsten, D. 2004. Mixtecs and Zapotecs working in California: Rural and urban experiences. *Indigenous Mexican migrants in the United States. La Jolla (California): Center for US-Mexican Studies, University of California San Diego.*
- Paredes, Américo. 1977 "Ethnographic Work Among Minorities: A Folklorist Perspective." *New Scholar* 6:1-32.
- Massey, Douglas S., Luin Goldring, and Jorge Durand. May 1994. "Continuities in Transnational Migration: An Analysis of Nineteen Mexican Communities." *AJS* Vol. 99, No. 6. pp. 1492-1533.
- Manning, Frank E., ed. 1983. The Celebration of Society: Perspectives on Contemporary Cultural Performance. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press.
- Martinez Novo, Carmen. 2006. Who Defines Indigenous?: Identities, Development, Intellectuals, and the State in Northern Mexico. Rutgers Univeristy Press. New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London.
- Mendoza, Zoila S. 1994 "Contesting identities through dance: Mestizo performance in the southern Andes of Peru." *Repercussions* 2.3 (1994): 50-80.
- , 1998. "Defining folklore: mestizo and indigenous identities on the move." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 17.2 (1998): 165-183.
- 2000 *Shaping Society Through Dance: Mestizo Ritual Performance in the Peruvian Andes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mines, R., Nichols, S., & Runsten, D. (2010). California's Indigenous farmworkers. *Los Angeles: The California Endowment*.
- Murillo, E. G. (1997). Pedagogy of a Latin American Festival. *The Urban Review*, 29(4), 263-281.
- Mutersbaugh T, 2002, 'Migration, Common Property, and Communal Labor: Cultural Politics and Agency in a Mexican Village' *Political Geography* 21:473-494.
- Nájera-Ramírez, Olga. 2002. "Haciendo Patria: La Charreada and the Formation of a Mexican Transnationality Identity." In Velez-Ibanez, Carlos Anna Sampaio,

- eds. 2002. *Transnational Latino/a Communities . Politics, Processes and Cultures*. Rowman and littlefield Publishers, Inc. USA
- , 2009. Staging Authenticity: Theorizing the Development of Mexican Folklorico Dance." In *Dancing Across Borders: Danzes y Bailes Mexicanos*.
- [Pasternak, Noelle](#). 1997. The transformation of the Lunes del Cerro Festival in Oaxaca, Mexico : a field observation study. M.A. Thesis. University of California, San Diego.
- Peréz, R. 1997. *Molding our lives from clay: Redefining gender and community in Santa María Atzompa, Oaxaca, Mexico*. (Doctoral dissertation). University of California, Riverside.
- Peréz Jiménez, Gustavo Jesús. 2003. *Lunes del Cerro, Guelaguetza*. Gobierno Constitucional del Estado de Oaxaca, Secretaría de Desarrollo Turística,
- Pombo, M. D. P. 2006. La historia de Marta. *Elecciones presidenciales del 2006*, 267.
- Poole, Deborah, 2004 An image of "Our Indian": Type Photographs and Racial Sentiments in Oaxaca, 1920-1940.
- , 2008. Affective Distinctions. *Contested Histories in Public Space: Memory, Race, and Nation*, 197.
- Rios, B. R. 2012. *Culture, Migration, and Sport: A Bi-National Investigation of Southern Mexican Migrant Communities in Oaxaca, Mexico and Los Angeles, California* (Doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University).
- Rosaldo, R. 1994. Cultural citizenship and educational democracy. *Cultural anthropology*, 9(3), 402-411.
- Rouse, Roger. 1992. "Making sense of settlement: class transnationalism, cultural struggle and transformation among Mexican migrants in the United States", in Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch and Cristina Blanc-Szanton, (eds), Toward a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered. *Annals of the New York Academy of Science*, vol. 645, pp. 25-52.
- Runsten, David and Michael Kearney. 2004, "Encuesta sobre las redes de los pueblos oaxaqueños en la agricultura de California," in Silvia Escárcega and Stefano Varese, coords., *La ruta mixteca*, México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

- Sánchez Gómez, Martha Judith, and Raquel Barceló Quintal. 2011. "Transnacionalismo, multilocalidad y migración: estudio de caso con oaxaqueños de San Jerónimo Tlacoahuaya y Santa Ana del Valle."
- Schechner, Richard. 1990. "Magnitudes of performance" in By means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual. ed. Richard Schechner and Willa Appel. ambridge University Press.
- Singer, Milton. 1972. When a Great Tradition Modernizes. New York. Praeger.
- Smith, B. 2008. Inventing Tradition at Gunpoint: Culture, Caciquismo and State Formation in the Región Mixe, Oaxaca (1930–1959). *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 27
- Stephen, Lynn. 1996. The creation and re-creation of ethnicity: lessons from the Zapotec and Mixtec of Oaxaca. *Latin American Perspectives*, 23(2), 17-37.
- , 2007. Transborder Lives: Indigenous Oaxacans in Mexico, California, and Oregon. Durham, N.C. Duke University Press.
- Stoeltje, Beverly. 1981. "Festival in America". In Handbook of American Folklore. Richard M. Dorson. ed. Indiana University Press. Bloomington.
- , 1992. "Festival." In Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments: A Communications-Centered Handbook, ed. Richard Bauman, 266-269. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Straffon, Beatriz, Paola López, and Anaily Castellanos. "El Programa 3× Migración indígena, prácticas comunitarias y costumbres de participación." accessed Aug 23, 2013
- Varese, Stefano 1988 "Multi-ethnicity and hegemonic construction: Indian projects and the global future," pp. 57-77 in Remo Guidieri, Francesco Pellizzi, and Stanley J. Tambiah (eds.), *Ethnicities and Nations: Processes of Interethnic Relations in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Vargas, Alberto. 1935. *Guelaguetza; costumbre racial oaxaqueña*. Oaxaca, Imprenta del Gobierno del Estado Velasco Ortiz, Laura.
- Velasco Ortiz, Laura. 2005. Vol. 40, No. 1 Mixtec Transnational Identity. University of Arizona Press.
- Vogt, Evon. 1965 "Ceremonial Organization in Zinacantan". *Ethnology* 4:39-52.

Waldinger, Roger and David Fitzgerald. "Transnationalism in Question". *AJS*. Vol. 109 Number 5 (March 2004); 1177-95.

Weitlaner-Johnson, Irmgard. 1967. "La fiesta de la Guelaguetza". Museo Nacional de Antropología, Sección de Difusión Cultural. Mexico.

Wasserstrom, R. (1983). *Class and society in Central Chiapas*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Zabin, Carol and Micheal Kearney, Anna Garcia, Dave Runsten, and Carole Nagengast. 1993 *Mixtec Migrants in California Agriculture: A New Cycle of Poverty*. Davis: California Institute for Rural Studies.

Zavella, Patricia. 2011. "I'm Neither Here nor There." *Duke University Press*. VITA.

Newspapers:

Broughton, Ashely. January 13, 2009. "Police: Man sold teen daughter into marriage for cash, beer, meat" Date retrieved July 25, 2013.
<http://www.cnn.com/2009/CRIME/01/13/daughter.for.sale/>

Hansen, B. *May, 1*, 2002. "The Oaxaca connection; Immigrants from southern Mexico have brought real moles, *clayudas* and avocado leaf *barbacoa* to L.A." In *Los Angeles Times*. Date retrieved May 2011.

Lee, Kelly; Michael GW, and James Kautz, "Programa Oficial del IV Centenario de la Ciudad de Oaxaca," *El Mercurio*, 21 Apr. 1932, p.2. '*In Oaxaca, Because There's Culture, There's Resistance*,' *ElEnemigo.comun.com*. Date retrieved 7/20/2007

Solana, Kimber. June 10, 2011. "In Greenfield, Oaxacans see hostility grow. Indigenous groups' request for support from city leaders largely ignored", <http://www.thecalifornian.com/article/99999999/NEWS01/101080321/In-Greenfield-Oaxacans-see-hostility-grow> Date retrieved July 25, 2013.

Quinones. Sam. May 30,2006. "Group Seeks to Name Park After a Mexican President." In LA TIMES
<http://articles.latimes.com/2006/may/30/local/me-juarez30> Date retrieved June 1, 2012.

Wozniacka, Gosia. August 14, 2011. "Latino-indigenous Mexican divide stirs Calif. Town"
<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2011/08/14/latino-indigenous-mexican-divide-stirs-calif-town/> Date retrieved July 25, 2013.

Website:

"Gabino Cué, gobernador electo de Oaxaca inaugura la 23 edición de la Guelaguetza en L.A." [Date retrieved August 8, 2010](#)

FOLLETO DE ANIVERSARIO "Región de Tuxtepec FLOR DE PIÑA
30 AÑOS (1958 – 1988)" AUTORA: PROFRA. PAULINA SOLIS OCAMPO
Flor de piña. Nuestra danza ante el mundo. Publicado por Marsel Toledo el junio 11,
2012 <http://historiadetuxtepec.ning.com/forum/topics/flor-de-pi-a-tradici-n-o-imposici-n> Date Retrieved June 2013.

Video:

Petate Production Video of ORO Guelaguetza 2006

Video of Governor Gabino Cue speaking at the 23rd Annual ORO Guelaguetza festival at Normandie Park. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5Qe1x7-Vg0> Retrieved May20, 2013.