



universität
wien

MASTERARBEIT

Titel der Masterarbeit

"El sol sale para todos en la ciudad de México"?
The Mazahua people in Mexico City: migration,
survival and cultural reproduction

Verfasserin

Dragana Marusic, BA

Angestrebter akademischer Grad

Master (MA)

Wien, 2013

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt: A 067 390

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt: Individuelles Masterstudium Internationale Entwicklung

Betreuerin: Univ.-Prof. Dr. Stefanie Kron, M.A.

Acknowledgements

At this point I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Dr. Stefani Kron for her helpful and valuable suggestions during the development of this master thesis. I am also thankful to my boyfriend Marco Danton for all his help and encouragement. Finally, I am particularly grateful for the financial and moral support given by my parents. Without them I would not be the person I am today.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| I Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1 Research question and hypotheses..... | 2 |
| 1.2 Methodology..... | 3 |
| 1.3 Outline of the thesis..... | 4 |
| | |
| II Mexico City | 5 |
| 2.1 Historical development..... | 6 |
| 2.2 Mexico City - a global city?..... | 11 |
| 2.3 Mexico City in the new millennium: Redefining a multiethnic and multicultural nation..... | 12 |
| | |
| III The importance of Culture | 15 |
| 3.1 The notion of culture..... | 16 |
| 3.2. Cultural reproduction..... | 18 |
| 3.3 Change and cultural persistence..... | 19 |
| | |
| IV Defining Indigenous peoples | 21 |
| 4.1 Indigenous peoples as “the other” | 24 |
| 4.2 Indigenous migrations to Mexico City..... | 26 |
| | |
| V Identity and Ethnicity | 29 |
| 5.1 <i>Mestizaje</i> and the discourse of national identity..... | 32 |
| 5.2 Plurality of cultures and multiculturalism | 35 |
| | |
| VI The Case of Mazahuas | 38 |
| 6.1 The Mazahua people..... | 38 |
| 6.2 Location..... | 42 |
| 6.3 Historical perspective..... | 43 |
| 6.4 Migration of Mazahua people to Mexico City..... | 46 |
| 6.5 Social organization..... | 50 |
| 6.6 Cargo- System..... | 52 |
| 6.7 World views and religious rituals of Mazahuas | 54 |
| 6.8 The role of a Mazahua woman..... | 58 |

| | |
|--|----|
| VII The presence of Mazahua people in Mexico City | 60 |
| 7.1 Settlement | 61 |
| 7.2 Problems of Mazahuas in the city..... | 62 |
| 7.3 Mazahuas as political subjects..... | 65 |
| 7.4 The Flor de Mazahua Cooperative..... | 66 |
| 7.5 Change and Persistence | 68 |
| | |
| VIII Conclusion | 72 |
| IX Bibliography | 75 |
| X Appendix | 85 |
| A Curriculum Vitae | 85 |
| B Abstracts | 87 |

Illustrations:

Figure 1: The State of Mexico.....41

Figure 2: Mexican dolls.....63

Figure 3: Street vending at the Merced.....63

Figure 4: Famous Mexican dolls.....67

I Introduction

“I speak of the immense city reality made up of two words: the others.” (Octavio Paz, quoted in UN-Habitat 2010: 87)

Globalization has been experienced in many different forms, affecting all people in the world. In addition, the increasing globalization and modernization processes have led to an increasing migration of rural population to urban areas. The consequences of these phenomena can be seen among the indigenous peoples of Latin America. City life is now seen as an integral component of indigenous peoples’ lives, such as is the case with a multicultural and multiethnic Mexico City. The indigenous populations have encountered many challenges due to the continuing economic, political, social and cultural changes. Nevertheless, these phenomena have also offered indigenous peoples potential opportunities for resistance and a chance to empower themselves, especially with the help of non-profit organizations.

Even though the majority of indigenous peoples worldwide still live in rural areas, they are also increasingly migrating to urban areas, on a voluntary or involuntary basis. This has been the result of an accelerating trend of global urbanization, which certainly influenced the image of the city, transforming it from rural sub-centers to the mega-city. Moreover, it contributed to a persistent image of the city as a haven of modernity, rapid change and its connection to the globalization, while indigenous peoples are continuously seen as traditional and backward part of the society (Speiser 2004: 169).

In mega-cities such as Mexico City, whose population structure has a high degree of heterogeneity, economic and social polarization has become most extreme (Parnreiter 1999:74). Marginalization and increasing poverty of the indigenous populations in urban environments inevitably lead to transformations of cultural and social processes, as well as to a changing construction of identity through a confrontation with “the Other”. Moreover, indigenous peoples in urban areas encounter additional challenges, “most prominently unemployment, limited access to services and inadequate housing”. They may experience

“discrimination and have difficulties in sustaining their language, identity and culture and educating future generations which can result in a loss of indigenous heritage and values”.¹

Under these circumstances, the process of cultural reproduction in an urban area is particularly important, as it implies the experience of everyday life of indigenous peoples in that new place. That will be the main focus of this master thesis. It will be shown that culture is a system of meaning that is produced and maintained through the dynamic production and reproduction of meanings in the social activities of indigenous peoples. I would like to demonstrate that the phenomenon of cultural reproduction has a much greater relevance than just being a change under external influences.

In order to explore these issues, I will focus on contemporary Mazahua people that are residing in Mexico City. In addition, it is important to mention their migration process to the city and the factors and consequences related to it, because only in this way we can truly understand their presence and cultural reproduction in Mexico City. Being in an urban environment, they face various changes and threats but still keep trying to maintain their socio-cultural identity. Of course, it is important to think of cultural changes in a positive way as well, and not only as referring to a loss of values, traditions or identity. According to Chávez-Arellano (2008: 75), we should perceive cultural changes as “an expression of life in movement”. Furthermore, an urban environment leads to the reassignment of culture (identity), which implies “a manner of participation of other worlds or systems of life along with elements from the subjects’ own culture and experiences” (Chávez-Arellano 2008: 76).

1.1 Research question and hypotheses

On the basis of the above considerations, my leading research question will be: *What new threats and challenges face Mazahua people in a global city such as Mexico City, and how does their cultural reproduction take place in this urban environment?*

Other important questions to be explored are: How these circumstances influence Mazahua identity? What new identities emerge in the city or old ones are only re-defined?

¹ See complete Backgrounder on Urban Indigenous Peoples and Migration: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/6_session_factsheet2.pdf

From a more gender perspective, what new opportunities can provide the urban area of Mexico City for Mazahua women?

In my opinion, due to the new and urban environment, Mazahua people experience intensified racism, discrimination, and precarious economic situation which are felt every day, despite the increasing multicultural nature of Mexico City. Furthermore, while living in Mexico City, they experience transformation of social networks, cultural practices, and existing identity constructions, followed by changes in economic structures as well.

Finally, I believe that cultural reproduction of Mazahuas (implying transmission of cultural norms and values) is hindered by the new threats in Mexico City; however, these circumstances stimulated the unity of all Mazahua people in Mexico City, which has contributed to cultural resistance through the foundation of their organizations that are helping them to reaffirm and preserve their traditional culture.

1.2 Methodology

Although there are many various reports and researches about Otomi people, who are historically and culturally related to Mazahuas, until recently there has not been any detailed anthropological study about Mazahua Indians except a few articles written by Jacques Soustelle, a French anthropologist. One of the first extensive researches was carried out by Poland anthropologist Alicja Iwanska, who did a field work in one Mazahua village called El Nopal. She believed this was a prototypical Mazahua village as it has not seemed to be very different from other communities.

Nevertheless, in this case study research, my methodological approach will primarily rely on qualitative content analysis as an interpretation method. To demonstrate my arguments, especially in the theoretical part, I will use an interdisciplinary approach, analyzing major issues with the help of social science and social and cultural anthropology. In particular, special consideration was given to books and articles of regional authors, who have had direct experience with Mazahua people.

Therefore, my primary literature consists of two books (based on field studies) which will be really helpful for my practical part of the master thesis. The first one is written by Cristina Oehmichen Bazán (2005): "Identidad, género y relaciones interétnicas. Mazahuas en la ciudad de México. This book will help me for the analysis of Mazahua presence in Mexico

City, their struggles for survival, their identity, culture etc. The second one is by Alicja Iwanska (1971): “Purgatory and Utopia: A Mazahua Indian Village of Mexico”. This work presents the lively culture of the Mazahua Indians in the village of El Nopal, and it is good for the descriptive introduction of these people, their history, society, culture, world views etc.

Furthermore, there are two extensive collections of studies and researches dedicated to the transformation of indigenous peoples in the multicultural cities, where Mexico City is also included. These collections are: *EL TRIPLE DESAFÍO: Derechos, instituciones y políticas para la ciudad pluricultural* and *URBI INDIANO La Larga Marga a la Ciudad Diversa* written by Yanes, Molina and Gonzalez. In addition, books and articles provided in the bibliography were very beneficial for further analysis and understanding of this theme.

At the end, I hope to make a significant contribution to other students and people who are interested in this topic as well.

1.3 Outline of the thesis

This first chapter is considered to be an overall introduction to the theme of the thesis, its research question and predicted hypotheses. The following next chapter called “Mexico City” guides us into the development of Mexico City towards a multicultural city and one of the main residences of indigenous peoples. The next three chapters are devoted to the theoretical part and concretization of several relevant theoretical concepts, such as: culture, ethnicity, *mestizaje*, multiculturalism etc.

The following chapter called “The Case of Mazahuas” presents the most relevant information concerning the Mazahua people of Mexico: about society, in general; the regions they occupy, their migration process, the role of women in cultural reproduction etc. Here, specific attention will be given to the Mazahua social organization, as it plays a major role in the socio-cultural processes of this population.

The last chapter is focused on the lives of urban Mazahua people in Mexico City and on the problems and challenges they face in the new environment.

II Mexico City

“Die Stadt Mexico...ist ein ideales Laboratorium, um die Wirkungen der Überbevölkerung, der irrationalen Verteilung von Ressourcen, der fehlenden oder mangelhaften Planung, der unberechenbaren Politik und der ungenügenden ökonomischen Grundlagen zu studieren”. Hector Vasconcelos²

While approaching Mexico City, we see around us an urban expansion and infinite ocean of buildings and houses. This view from the airplane gives us a thought of Mexico City as a megacity. The term *megacity* refers to cities that have a population of more than ten million citizens. In addition, “megacities are normally made up of different political bodies and generally include central and periphery areas”.³ The world’s great cities possess heterogeneous societies (of different origins) which might contribute to a broad range of tolerance and praise of diversity, but it can also lead to the social discrimination.

Mexico, a highly urbanized country, can be subject to these characteristics. According to Parnreiter (1999:65), in 1990 nearly three-quarters of the population lived in municipalities which comprised more than 2, 500 inhabitants, while one-fourth lived in one of the four million cities, Guadalajara, Monterrey, Puebla or Mexico City. Urban development of Mexico City, followed by economic, social and politic developments, is characterized by regional inequalities. Moreover, the city is struggling with additional issues, such as intensification of social inequality, high unemployment, growing crime, traffic chaos, pollution etc.

In order to better understand social and cultural reality of indigenous peoples in Mexico City today, it would be useful to provide its historical background and the development into a global city. As it will be described, the city’s history was long characterized by remarkable transformations and rapid growth

² quoted in Gormsen 1994:74

³ For more details on Megacity- Metropolis phenomenon see http://www.metropolis.org/sites/default/files/publications/2011/c4_metropolis_megacities.pdf

2.1 Historical development

Mexico City is located at about 2250 m above sea level in endorheic basins of central Mexico and close to the volcanic cordillera (Gormsen 1994: 74). The city's history is long and characterized through rapid growth and remarkable transformations. The capital of the Aztec empire, Tenochtitlan, was originally founded as the historic centre in 1345, on a place where over 500 years ago was lake Texcoco (Mancebo 2007:2).

Still in the pre-colonial time this metropolis was seen as a large city, accounting for 50,000 – 150, 000 inhabitants. Numerous temples, pyramids, palaces, and market places on the island of lake Texcoco were the expression of a progressive city structure (Hofmeister 2002: 53). In addition, due to its size, organization and splendour, this marvellous city was located in central highlands of Mexico, in an ecosystem rich in fertile land, stabile water supply and favourable temperature. This, in turn, made the city a central place of an efficient economic system and political and religious central point of one of the largest empires in the pre-colonial world (Parnreiter 1999: 65f.).

Since that time, the city had become the centre of the expansion, and it enjoyed this significant status further on when the Spaniards conquered the island in 1521, and in the place of the old Aztec city, the new capital of Mexico City was built. Moreover, with new masters emerged new urban forms of social organization, politics and city design. In 1548, according to Spanish urban building traditions, the city was renamed in “ La Muy Noble, Insigne y Muy Leal e Imperial Ciudad de México (Parnreiter 1999: 66). Therefore, it became a capital of the Spanish colonial empire Nueva España; its political, administrative, economic, militaristic and religious centre.

According to Hofmeister (2002: 54), the development of Mexico City in that time could be understood against the background of dependent urbanization, which was dominated through colonial power. Afterwards the established urban system in Mexico was at first more tightly bound to external than local factors. With the conquest of Tenochtitlan by Spanish conquistadors, the spatial structures of Aztec city were destroyed. This led to population

decrease, resulted from the victims of the war disputes with Spaniards and emerging diseases.⁴

In 1821, Mexico declared its independence from Spain which hegemony status eroded across whole Iberoamerica. During first forty years there were not any significant structural changes of urban society or economy. One significant feature of the development after the colonial period is *the continuity*. The central authority of Mexico City over its wide hinterland which roots were established in the colonial time was still in existence. This position was institutionalized with the creation of the new Federal Republic of Mexico in 1824. Its main difference to the Spanish colonial centre was seen in the ideological appreciation, namely: the city was seen as a symbol of new established independence and part of the national identity (Hofmeister 2002: 56).

However, this freedom of Spanish hegemony did not imply the complete collapse of the structural dependence created before, but only the change of its form. Consequently, the development of Mexican Republic, and the regions surrounding it, increasingly came under strong dependence of growing hegemony powers: Europe and USA. These foreign powers became role models concerning life-style in Mexico (Hofmeister 56). According to Hofmeister, the independence of Mexico and rest of Latin America contributed significantly to the metropolitan structure as it already existed in Asiatic and African countries. “After independence, urbanization went along with dependent capitalist development, which continued to centralize both international and national capital and public and private capital in a small number of cities”.⁵ These circumstances led to the development of primary urban systems in Mexico which represent the foundation of today’s urban systems.

The processes of economic concentration and political centralization did not come immediately into force. Actually, the first years of Mexican independence had seen the political instability and economic stagnation, which was mostly manifested in the capital city.

⁴ Number of inhabitants in 1524 was only 30 000,as Cortez estimated (1996:362, quoted in Hofmeister 2002: 54).

⁵ ANGOTTI 1996: 16, quoted in Hofmeister 2002: 56f

This situation was associated with the poor population growth and slow development of constructed areas.⁶

However, the restoration of the Mexican Republic and its development into a modern metropolis came under the rule of liberal president Benito Juarez. Moreover, it was followed by the increase of population from 1858 and Mexico City became more important national city for production and consumption.⁷ Nevertheless, the economic and political supremacy of Mexico City was increased, particularly during the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz (1870 – 1910), who enabled economic recovery, political stabilization and brought advantages in terms of social and physical infrastructure (Connolly: 2).

The focal point of economic transformation was the industrialization strategy, which was mainly financed through North-American, British and French capital. This foreign capital was mostly concentrated in Mexico City (Hofmeister 2002: 58). Furthermore, industrialization strategy contributed to the investment activities in Mexico City by the state and foreign enterprisers, which could be seen in the settlement of modern industry and infrastructure, such as construction of railroads, public transport, mining areas etc. (Parnreiter 1999: 66). In this way, Mexico City had represented the territorial-economic core of new capitalistic accumulation model which was induced through central authority (Hiernaux 1989: 411, quoted in Hofmeister 2002: 58).

According to Parnreiter (1999: 67), this was the first time that Mexico City showed a faster population increase in comparism with the rest of the country. With the begin of 20th century, this process of enormous increase was highly evident as it accounted for about 350,000 - 540,000 inhabitants. Despite growing economic crisis and political tensions, this trend continued until 1910, which led to the population increase of about one half million.

During Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) one part of population left the city, while others joined one of the competing revolutionary armies. On the other hand, peasantry and rich land owners moved from conflicting areas, which led to the migration gain of about 600, 000 inhabitants until 1921. In addition, together with the overcoming of revolution traumas,

⁶ Ibid, p.57

⁷ Ibid, p.57

stabilization of inner security and the development of a prosperous economy, the unknown growth of the capital had started. By 1930, Mexico City numbered one million inhabitants and its expansion continued after World War II. The period until 1930, which was exemplified through world economic crisis and inner political difficulties, can be seen as the first phase of metropolization, regardless of changeable economic and political development. Furthermore, the population increased three-fold due to massive rural-urban movements (Parnreiter 1999: 67). “[S]ince then it has grown exponentially to become the archetypical Latin American primate city” (Connolly: 2).

As Parnreiter adds (1999: 68), the strong concentration of political power in the capital, which had already established in the colonial period, experienced an unusual accumulation under the rule of reformist president Cárdenas (1934-1940). An enormously integratable, and strong centralized state, with its political dominance in Mexico City, developed during his reign. This dominance, followed by the accelerated industrialization, had a great impact on a rapid population and urban growth, which slowed down to some extent at the end of 80s.

Since the thirties of the 19th century and the period of “Porfiriato” when the first industrialization approaches were carried out, an essential import substituting industrialization came to emergence during the reconstruction phase after the revolution. The growth of commercial and industrial production continued until the outbreak of the global economic crisis quite modestly but it created significant conditions for accelerated industrialization program. This, in turn, had led to a quarter of a century long and impressive growth rates that some external observer calls “Milagro Mexicano” (Parnreiter 1999: 68). Therefore, the import substitution industrialization of the 70s granted Mexico City a central role in the modernization process of the country, as investment and capital were concentrated in this metropolis.

Despite the social inequality in the capital city which only intensified during industrialization success, and early emerged serious ecological problems, the decades of radical transformation following the presidency of Cárdenas were for many *golden age* of Mexico City (Parnreiter 1999: 69). Furthermore, the migrants were the ones who as cheap labor also enabled the rapid development of Mexico City (Lomnitz 1977: 15, Arizpe 1993: 380). For

example, in 1960 only 55% of its residents were actually born there, all the others belonged to the first generation immigrants (Lomnitz 1977: 17).

After this, Mexico City had lost its charm, as the government had difficulties keeping up with services. Consequently, in the last 20 years, the significant economic role of the city had changed dramatically. In contrast to 1980, in which 37.7% of the total economic output of Mexico was generated in the capital city, in 2004 there were not more than 26.4% (Parnreiter 2007: 130). In addition, the demographic growth of the Mexican capital has slowed considerably since the 1980s. For example, in 1980 lived 20% of the total Mexican population in Mexico City, but in 2000 there were only 18%. However, the growth area of the city has continued endlessly. The incorporation of an additional 15 foreign communities and settlements in suburban areas led to a doubling of the area since 1980 to 154 710 ha of the total Distrito Federal (Parnreiter 2007: 128f).

Today, “[t]here are more than 20 million people living, socializing, working and commuting in its metropolitan area day by day”⁸, which makes it one of the world’s most populous cities. Like other cities in Latin America, Mexico City is also struggling with numerous problems, such as: pollution, traffic jams, rising unemployment, crime, social disparities, lack of housing, and inadequate infrastructure, which are only some problems that can be found in this metropolis. What can be seen as a landmark of Mexico City is its cultural heterogeneity that characterizes the life of the city. Nevertheless, the city experiences a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, there is the coexistence of different ethnic groups and the melding of traditional and modern elements which give the capital an incredibly versatile driving; on the other hand, this image conceals many problems and potential for conflict.

⁸ See complete article about Mexico City as global city on http://www.ciudadglobal.df.gob.mx/work/sites/cdg/resources/LocalContent/397/5/Version_INGLES_com.pdf

2.2 Mexico City - a global city?

Today's global cities are also mosaics of different cultures, opinions and lives. Their dynamism is a direct result of this diversity, and their destinies will be defined by this condition.⁹

According to Parnreiter (1999: 104), today's globalization inevitably includes cities such as Mexico City, and this global integration significantly influence not only the city's character and function, but also inner socioeconomic and spatial developments, and its role within the nation-state.

The question concerning the role of Mexico City in the globalization process of the country and the region can be traced through different examples. For instance, as it could be seen in the previous subchapter, the globalization of Mexico has been organized, managed and controlled through the capital city. The high concentration of capital flows to the Federal District in part explains why the ZMCM¹⁰ has such a disproportionate share of employment in the upscale services (Parnreiter 1999: 105).

Even from the political perspective can be seen that the over decades accumulated political power in the Federal District and thus resulting monopoly within the country, have made this city, in times of globalization, the main stage of political debates. Parnreiter (1999: 107) concludes that the cities of the Third World can be distinguished by a remarkable discrepancy between a significant importance in the mere process of globalization and an extensive powerlessness regarding the management and control of the processes of globalization. Mexico City plays an important role for the Mexico's integration into the global economy; however, without representing a power factor in the political economy of the global urban system. Has something changed since last century?

Today, without any doubt, Francesca Ramos Morgan (2011: 125) claims that Mexico City is a Global City. She believes that there are many reasons for assigning an international status to Mexico City and perceive it as a *world-class megalopolis*:

⁹ Ramos Morgan, Francesca (2011): Mexico City: Global city-Local actions, international commitment. http://www.ciudadglobal.df.gob.mx/work/sites/cdg/resources/LocalContent/397/5/Version_INGLES_com.pdf

¹⁰ Mexico City metropolitan zone

Throughout history, Mexico City's inhabitants have benefited from exposure to other cultures, new horizons and international partnerships and cooperation. But the world is changing and so is Mexico City. Today, the international role of cities and local governments is no longer disputed. Local authorities now understand how foreign affairs directly affect local issues. They are thus convinced of the enormous potential of local action when addressing global problems.¹¹

On the other hand, José Narro Robles, Rector of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, reminds us that the recent economic crisis in Latin America has had serious effects on employment and the life conditions of citizens. Moreover, these circumstances mostly affected the poorest sectors of society, young people, women and indigenous peoples. However, economic problems are not the only ones they face in a today's globalized world. They are also threatened by other complex processes such as climate change, environmental degradation, increasing levels of insecurity, violence etc. Consequently, this reality should make Mexican society rethink the models they have used so for its development (Narro Robles 2011: 122).

Are we ready and sure to call Mexico City a city of culture, peace and security for all, and to what extent? Following chapters of the thesis will reveal.

2.3 Mexico City in the new millennium: redefining a multiethnic and multicultural nation

“La ciudad de México, como cualquier metrópoli actual, es diversa, compleja y, desafortunadamente, llena de disparidades”¹²

Since 1970 and especially from 1990 onwards, the indigenous world has experienced major transformation resulting from the processes of modernization and globalization. Mexico City is culturally diverse- with the large number of indigenous populations and with a range of languages and dialects. Its contemporary profile outline as a multicultural nation has largely to do with migration which occurred during the past five or six decades. The richness and diversity of indigenous and non-indigenous ethnicities that were involved in these movements and over time had been distributed in different urban and rural areas of the country, had followed from circumstances of poverty and marginalization in their home. For

¹¹ Ibid, p.125

¹² Diagnóstico sobre la situación de los derechos humanos de los pueblos indígenas en la ciudad de México, Comisión de Derechos Humanos del D.F., p. 7

example, now there are over 30% of Indians who are living outside their native communities, and who out of the need to get a job and improve their living conditions have had to migrate eventually (Valencia Rojas & Rubio Jiménez 2009: 1). Most importantly, these migratory movements have contributed to the inevitable composition of heterogeneous nature of Mexico City's population, which is clearly seen according to the cultural, linguistic, religious and other criteria. More about migration will be mentioned in one of the next chapter.

This ethnic diversity and multicultural nature of Mexico City is not restrained only to the presence of indigenous and ethnic groups, but it also includes the existence of many ethnic minorities who came to the country at different points of Mexican history. According to Navarrete (2004) these people should: "gozar de nuevas formas de autonomía, y mantener sus identidades particulares; deben gozar de una convivencia igualitaria que parta de la diferencia cultural y la pluralidad étnica, que a su vez favorezca un acomodo más equitativo entre los distintos grupos que conforman la sociedad mexicana" (qt. in Valencia Rojas & Rubio Jiménez 2009: 2).

The Mexican Academy of Human Rights¹³ had confirmed as well that the presence of indigenous peoples in Mexico City is memorable and undeniable. In addition, in the city, the indigenous peoples are confronted with discrimination in their daily lives, whereas the general population of the Federal District considers that: "los pueblos originarios del país y sus integrantes no son originarios de esta ciudad; se considera que no tienen derecho a reproducir en este territorio su identidad ni mucho menos sus instituciones sociopolíticas".¹⁴

The denial of individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples is a practice which is rooted in Mexican culture (Oehmichen 2005:197). However, their constant presence in the city has not meant the transformation of the system of social distinctions and classifications which tend to place indigenous peoples below the mestizos. The reason is that the competition for space and social positions may appear more diffuse in the city than in the traditional "cultural regions of refuge" (Aguirre Beltrán, 1967, quoted in Oehmichen 2005:199). As Cristina Oehmichen explains, this happens because in the metropolis these physical boundaries that are separating Indians from mestizos are not as clearly defined as it

¹³ See complete report on http://www.amdh.com.mx/ocpi/rvc/doc/INFORME_df_021208.pdf

¹⁴ (*Ibid.*, p.7)

occurs in rural places. Nevertheless, this does not mean that there are no boundaries but that daily contact between members of both categories make interethnic confrontations more acute, more diffusible (p.199).

Most importantly, it should be remembered that indigenous populations are essential part of the city and its history since the ancient times and they require the defence and protection of their rights, as:

La presencia indígena dentro de la ciudad de México es inmemorial, a pesar de que la literatura sobre indígenas sostiene que esto comenzó a suceder a mediados del siglo XX, producto de la crisis del campo, a la par del crecimiento industrial en la capital del país. En la década de los cuarenta y cincuenta del siglo pasado, una oleada de trabajadores llegó a la ciudad de México, para incursionar en un mercado laboral muy diverso. Desde entonces, la presencia indígena en la vía pública del Centro de la ciudad, dedicada a actividades de subsistencia (en especial la venta de frituras y artesanías) llamó la atención de la población y las autoridades y provocó una incisiva respuesta: se trató de reubicarlos en mercados y de prohibir sus actividades con el fin de darle una imagen de modernidad a la ciudad. En estos operativos, la constante fueron los insultos y las humillaciones a su condición étnica, se aplicaban medidas como el corte de trenza, el rocío de petróleo a sus productos y aunque parezca increíble, la remisión a hospitales psiquiátricos.¹⁵

There had been also indigenous peoples who came to the city looking to merchandise their products. For instance, at the public hearing held by the Human Rights Commission of the Federal District, Alberto Juan Castillo, the member of the Peace Movement, recalled that Mazahua people are having a long-time tradition in Mexico City and how they have always been devoted to trade. Furthermore, “también están convencidos de que ese comercio se ha dirigido a la gran urbe del valle de México (desde mucho tiempo antes de 1950), alimentándola y abasteciéndola con los productos y aportaciones de los pueblos aledaños.”¹⁶

Alberto Juan also emphasized the historical interdependence between the indigenous peoples of the country and the capital of the republic. In addition, he clarified that although the goods brought by globalization have displaced food arriving from the field, now, the city depends on water supply and labour that comes from Mazahuas' area:

El pueblo mazahua es el que tiene una tradición de mucho más años en la ciudad de México. Ellos se acuerdan que cuando venían a la ciudad, al Centro de la ciudad de México, traían productos de sus comunidades de lo que ellos producían allá en su tierra y lo traían aquí y lo comercializaban [Esa] región es la [...] que más agua tiene en el país, es una región muy rica

¹⁵ *Diagnóstico sobre la situación de los derechos humanos de los pueblos indígenas en la ciudad de México*, Comisión de Derechos Humanos del D.F., p.22

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p.23

en bosques, y [...] es donde se capta la mayor parte del agua que viene a la ciudad de México y consumimos.¹⁷

Another element that gives the certainty of the presence of the indigenous peoples in the city is Mexico City's coat of arms, represented by “un torreón y dos leones al centro indican que los españoles ocuparon la centralidad política de la ciudad. Varias pencas de nopal a su alrededor significan la persistencia de los pueblos confinados en los barrios y pueblos de la periferia dedicados al abastecimiento de la urbe”.¹⁸

Obviously, diversity is a daily reality of Mexico City. However, it is not fully recognized or acknowledged by all its inhabitants, thus it presents a significant challenge for its society, which requires from people to be more open to the difference and learn to live with it. There are many cases and attempts of denying or rejecting the indigenous presence as a fundamental part of the diversity of Mexico City. Some of them will be illustrated in the second part of the thesis when the focus will be on Mazahua people.

III The Importance of Culture

Since the primary focus in this thesis is the cultural preservation and its reproduction, the best way to start the discussion is through approaching the overarching concept of culture. Culture will play a central role in the following analyses concerning the Mazahua people in general and their experiences in Mexico City, so it is important to address this concept before further inquiry.

Although the concept of culture seems easy to define, it is not a simple task. The term has proved to be very ambiguous, including various notions that have been explained by different people who have aimed to understand its significance. Even though the practical part of the thesis will emphasize the dynamic nature of culture which implies the notion of diversity and change, it is also essential to mention different aspects of this concept; for instance, the relationship between cultural difference and the notion of “otherness”. According to Yuval-Davis (1997: 39), “racism, assimilation, multiculturalism and hybridization are some of the

¹⁷ Ibid, p.23

¹⁸ Ibid, p.23

constructs with which notions of cultural difference have been incorporated into contestations and struggles of power relations”.

3.1 The Notion of Culture

Culture, as process, is emergent, it is forthcoming, it is continuous in the way or reproducing, and as all social processes it provides the grounds and the parallel context of social action itself (Jenks 1993: 3).

As already mentioned, the definition and meaning of the concept “culture” has been highly debatable. By analyzing definitions and concepts of culture, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) had reported over one hundred and sixty distinct delimitations of this term.¹⁹ Actually, a cultural theorist Raymond Williams described culture as “one of the most complex words in the English language” (Sturken & Cartwright 2001: 3). It represents one complex concept whose meaning has changed over the course of time.

Raymond Williams has introduced three different meanings of this term, namely: 1. Culture as “civilization”- used to refer to “a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development”; a second use of this concept is used to suggest “the works and practices of intellectual and artistic activity” that is considered as “high culture”; finally, he demonstrates that culture could be seen as “a particular way of life, whether of people, a period or a group” (quoted in Yuval- Davis 1997: 40). According to Anthony Giddens, sociologists tend to use the third meaning of culture. As he explains, this way of life is made of “the values the members of a given group hold, the norms they follow and the material good they create” (1989: 31).

The development of the concept of culture in anthropology was described by Jonathan Friedman as having “a long and confusing history”. This was especially evident in the 19th century when the concept was “simply what was distinctive about others”, that is, as people’s defining characteristics (Friedman 1994: 67). There has been also “an implicit understanding of culture as a unitary phenomenon”, which distinguishes between the distinctive peoples according to their rank or the degree to which their culture developed (1994: 67).

¹⁹ (Quoted in Herskovits, 1955: 305).

However, with the turn of the century, and the work of Franz Boaz, culture experienced a radical change and started to be seen as “an autonomous abstraction, a phenomenon in its own right” (Yuval- Davis 1997: 40). Certainly one has to remember that until recently, the analyzed cultures used to be those of the “others” (1997: 40). In addition, the nature of contemporary popular racism is created through essentialized constructions of cultural difference.²⁰ Interestingly, Geertz suggests that there are only specific cultures, so we cannot speak about culture in general (quoted in Friedman 1994: 73).

He describes culture as the repertoire of patterns of meanings. This concept of patterns implies that interpretations do not occur freely or arbitrarily, but that communication is characterized by the implicit set of rules and standards (quoted in Oehmichen Bazán 2005: 56). Overall, the 19th century was characterized by the concept of culture from an essentialist perspective, as having specific and fixed essence.

Nonetheless, another and more useful way of observing culture has been established recently, with the help of discourse analysis, stimulated by Foucault and Gramsci. From this point, cultures stopped being seen as a static, homogenous experience shared by all members of ethnic collectivities. Instead, they have been transformed into “dynamic social processes operating in contested terrains in which different voices become more or less hegemonic in their offered interpretations of the world” (Yuval- Davis 1997: 41). Gill Bottomley adds:

‘Culture’, in the sense of ideas, beliefs and practices that delineate particular ways of being in the world, also generates conscious and unconscious forms of resistance- to homogenization, to devaluation, to marginalizing by those who fear difference.²¹

This notion is highly related to the process of continuity and persistence of cultures, and the relationship between distinct cultures. According to Anthony Smith (1986) and Armstrong (1982), cultural myths and symbols possess a lasting ability that is becoming reproduced through generations, regardless of changeable historical and material conditions (quoted in Yuval- Davis 1997: 41). Nevertheless, even if these cultural heritages survive historical

²⁰ (Mood 1994 & Stolcke 1995 quoted in Yuval- Davis 1997: 40).

²¹ (Bottomley 1993: 12, quoted in Yuval- Davis 1997: 41).

changes, their meanings experience vital changes and usually turn into symbolic markers of identity.²²

In this processes of culture, it is very significant to emphasize two opposite elements that occur, namely: on the one hand, there is a tendency for stabilization and persistence, and on the other hand, there is a necessity for constant resistance and change. These tendencies emerge because of the strong connection between power relations and cultural practice (Yuval- Davis 1997: 41f). According to Friedman (1994: 76), culture does not only represent collections of artifacts, norms, or values, but they embrace those ‘stabilizing properties’ that are intrinsic to the processes of their social reproduction.

Overall, we should remember not to see culture as a static, fixed and homogeneous set of tradition and custom but rather as “a rich resource, usually full of internal contradictions, which is used selectively by different social agents in various social projects within specific power relations and political discourse in and outside the collectivity” (Yuval- Davis 1997: 43).

3.2 Cultural reproduction

The idea of cultural reproduction makes reference to the emergent quality of experience of everyday life- albeit though a spectrum of interpretation. That is to say that the concept serves to articulate the dynamic process that makes sensible the utter contingency of, on the one hand, the stasis and determinacy of social structures and, on the other, the innovation and agency inherent in the practice of social action. Cultural reproduction allows us to contemplate the necessity and complementarity of continuity and change in social experience (Jenks 1993:1).

Since its emergence, this concept has been analyzed within social science. However, a more modern and critical approach to this phenomenon was first established in the early 1970s by Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist and cultural theorist. Accordingly, the primary context of his work was education in modern societies, as he believed that the culture of dominant classes, their enduring dominance and exploitation of power is reproduced through the education system (Jenks 1993:1).

²² (Armstrong 1982; Gans 1979, quoted in Yuval- Davis 1997: 41)

Nevertheless, there has been some disagreement on the meaning of the concept by the British cultural studies tradition which has formulated the ‘reproduction’ in a more negative way, claiming it implies “copy and imitation, rather than [...] regeneration or synthesis” (Jenks p.2). Interestingly, Herskovits has rather seen this process as an act of *reinterpretation*, which implies all forms of cultural change. He describes it as “the process by which old meanings are ascribed to new elements or by which new values change the cultural significance of old forms” (1955: 492). One aspect of reinterpretation would be syncretism, for instance.

In conclusion, we should see culture as the set or system of meanings - which people exchange- and practices through which people construct and make sense of the world. Nevertheless, we have to remember that cultural reproduction is not cloning, but one dynamic process which emphasizes social continuity ensured through significant changes. After all, one generation does not transmit culture in the exact form to the next. We have to take into account that new generations today are subjected to more information, new contexts and interests, which certainly gives some new perspectives to the communities. In addition, the cultural reproduction is an endless process since the system of culture itself is not a static one. This is especially evident due to the globalization and modernization processes which have led to increasing migrations to urbanized areas, thus, imposing a sociocultural system to the outside influences.

This phenomenon will be clearly shown in the practical example in one of the following chapters. Through a study of Mazahuas we will see how the reproduction is not only intentional but also integrative for them.

3.3 Change and cultural persistence

Change, [...] is a universal cultural phenomenon, and the processes of change over a period of time constitute the dynamics of culture. Cultural change cannot be studied as an isolated phenomenon, for change, by and of itself, is meaningless, until it is projected against a baseline of human behaviour as of a given time and nature. Above all, it must be contrasted to the phenomenon that is always opposed to it, the phenomenon of cultural stability, which, in its psychological aspects, is called conservatism (Herskovits 1955: 446).

In order to analyze cultural stability and cultural change, it is necessary to acknowledge culture as a dynamic process, which was done in the previous chapter. According to

Herskovits (1955: 308), “the only completely static cultures are dead ones”. He emphasizes that change might occur not only as some small detail of a certain culture (a new way of food preparation or some variation in dress pattern), but also in a more apparent form, which can be easily recognized if a culture and its people are studied over some period of time.

In addition, Morin (1983:543) takes this on another level by saying that “in nature, life and death, organization and disorganization, agreements and antagonisms [...] of actions, relations and humans interactions are possible thanks to their condition of permanent movement” (qt. in Chávez Arellano 2008: 75). His major point was that we should perceive social life as one continuous process, but first we have to see the perception and knowledge of society as open to change, and not as made of fixed norms and rigid, passive laws. This, in turn, makes us think of cultural changes in a more positive way, and not only as a phenomenon that implies a loss of identity, traditions and its values.

The Indian world has experienced significant changes in a relatively short time due to the processes of modernization and globalization. With the expansion of the capitalist mode of production, processes of urbanization and migration have become particularly noticeable, which led to some new questions in the debate over sociocultural change and persistence.

For example, according to the Mexican anthropologist, Cristina Oehmichen Bazán (2005: 41f), new interests revolve around whether economic and technological changes which result from the process of globalization, have had some impacts of equal magnitude on the culture as well. She underlines that culture has its own dynamics under which it does not represent only a reflection of reality, but a universe of various meanings with which social actors interact, make sense of their world and give meanings to their experiences.

This study of sociocultural change has been present within anthropology, and usually analyzed parallel to the cultural stability. According to Herskovits (1955: 451), these processes are the outcomes of the interaction between environmental, historical and psychological factors. He emphasizes that “[c]hange [...] differs with the time, the culture, and the aspect of the culture” (1955: 450). We certainly have to take this into consideration when investigating about cultural dynamics, the forms or the structure of culture. It is also

essential that a certain society or its individuals are studied within their cultural context to which they belong.

Furthermore, it is also important to mention the levels and depth of change. For this reason Wilson and Wilson (1945: 58f) indicated the distinction between *social circulation* and *social change*. The concept of social circulation was applied with reference to usual development of the life cycle of an individual or group. This process is stimulated by external conditions. In contrast, social change is understood more as a deep transformation in a given group.

The concept of culture that directed the research on sociocultural change was more of a descriptive concept that corresponds to Tylor's definition in 1871:

La cultura o civilización, tomada en su sentido etnográfico amplio, es esa totalidad compleja que abarca al conocimiento, las creencias, el arte, la moral, la ley, las costumbres y cualesquiera otras habilidades y hábitos adquiridos por el hombre como miembro de la sociedad (Tylor 1977, quoted in Oehmichen Bazán 2005: 44).

Herskovits (1955: 450) observed that sociocultural change can take place in various ways and to varying degrees. However, he also noticed that there might be a certain resistance to new ideas as well and a clear tendency among groups to preserve the status quo, i.e., an inclination towards perseverance.

Overall, it is important to remember that the study of change is always associated with the analysis of cultural persistence. This will be shown more clearly in the practical part of the thesis which will focus on the Mazahua community.

IV Defining Indigenous peoples

“Naming give meanings rank, status, recognition, visibility, affirmation and denial” Pablo Yanes²³

Since colonial times, the independence period, and the revolution to the present, there has been much debate about the definition of the indigenous peoples and the notion of this concept remains ambiguous. For example, when Europeans came into contact with native communities from the Americas, they assigned the category of indigenous or Indians to these various peoples who maintained their own identities and specific cultures. In contrast, the

²³ See the complete report on by Yanes on “Equality in Diversity: Agenda for the Urban Indigenous peoples in Mexico”, p.87. <http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/listItemDetails.aspx?publicationID=2916>

Mexican government has adopted the language as only one criterion for awarding the name of “indigenous peoples”. However, indigenous organizations find this linguistic criterion not appropriate because it does not correspond to reality, since there are many members of indigenous peoples who have lost the language, but still maintain other essential features that keep them indigenous (Codazzi 2001).

According to Oehmichen (2005: 15), belonging to an indigenous group implies a negative identity which reduces life chances of these people and diminishes their complete social acceptance. Consequently, those persons who are classified as Indians experience various disadvantages in their struggle for a decent life within an urban environment.

There is also a controversial debate when distinguishing between indigenous people (people) and indigenous peoples (peoples). The latter concept implies the general international law for indigenous communities which would include self-determination of peoples and their free disposal of land and resources. They had usually inhabited the territory of a country before its conquest and were mostly associated with a different culture (GIZ)²⁴. In my opinion, the suffix –s refers to the wide variety of indigenous peoples in a certain country, whereas the former concept implies one indigenous community.

Even though there is no general agreement on the definition of indigenous peoples at the international level, the most commonly used is a working definition formulated by a Special Rapporteur on the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations, for the United Nations the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, José Martínez Cobo, in 1982:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems.²⁵

Although there have been certain difficulties with accepting a formal international definition, we should be also aware that such an act could cause “the disenfranchisement of individuals

²⁴ See complete article on http://www.inwent.org/imperia/md/content/bereich3-intranet/abteilung3-02/themendienst_indigene_v_lker.pdf

²⁵ José Martínez Cobo, Study of the Problems of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations, UN Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/1986/7 and Add. 1-4, 1972.

and groups who have adapted to modern circumstances or no longer reside in their territories, but are determined to otherwise preserve, develop and transmit their indigenous identity and cultural heritage”.²⁶

What about indigenous peoples in the urban setting?

It is usually considered that most indigenous peoples live in rural and isolated areas. However, this perception should probably be withdrawn due to the fact that there is an increasing number of indigenous peoples already residing in or migrating to urban cities.²⁷ One of the consequences of this phenomenon is the “marginalized social status” that is attached to them (Bacal 1990:15). Nevertheless, there is no exact percentage on this issue, considering the lack of demographic and statistical information.

The 2000 census shows that there are about 30 million indigenous peoples, whereas the approximated 12 million of them are located in urban areas. Moreover, in Guatemala and Mexico “about one in three indigenous individuals lives in urban areas, while in the remaining three countries (Bolivia, Brazil and Chile) over half of the indigenous population live in cities (particularly in Chile, where the proportion rises to 64.8%)” (Del Popolo 2007:15).

A great insight into the urban trend is showed through the work by Del Popolo, Oyarce and Ribotto (2007). As they claim, we can distinguish between three different groups of urban dwellers in Latin America, namely: 1. those already residing in the cities; 2. those indigenous peoples born in cities, (many descendants of migrants who were urban residents); 3. finally, urban indigenous peoples who migrated to the cities from rural areas or from abroad.

The self-awareness among indigenous peoples in urban places corresponds to their consciousness related to their ancestral territory. Several researches have showed that urban indigenous peoples tend to preserve their sociocultural systems while living in the cities and relationships with their communities of origin as well (Camus, 2002; UNDP, 2002)²⁸. Nevertheless, some studies also claim that the increasing urbanization process represents a

²⁶ See “Indigenous Routes: A Framework for. Understanding. Indigenous Migration”, prepared for IOM by Carlos Yescas Angeles Trujano, p.14

http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published_docs/books/Indigenous_routes_final.pdf

²⁷ See UN Doc PFII/2006/WS.3/9: p. 2.

²⁸ (qt. In CEPAL-Serie „Población y desarrollo, p.17 ” <http://www.eclac.org/publicaciones/xml/9/32549/PyD78-final.pdf>

serious challenge for indigenous peoples, especially regarding the loss of culture and identity that is likely to happen.

In general, an indigenous person in Mexico is usually related to considerable economic and social disadvantages (Ramirez 2006: 150). Although the substantial progress has been achieved in various areas, all indicators show that “indigenous people in Mexico City have lower than average life expectancies and schooling. They also have higher child mortality rates, earlier entry into the work force, more work hours and years, less income and a lower quality materials and furnishings in their homes” (Yanes 2010: 90).

4. 1 Indigenous peoples as “the other”

No existe realidad objetiva a priori: toda realidad es representada, es decir, apropiada por el grupo, reconstruida en su sistema cognitivo, integrada en su sistema de valores, dependiendo de su historia y del contexto ideológico que lo envuelve. Y esta realidad apropiada y estructurada constituye para el individuo y el grupo la realidad misma (Abric, 1994, qt. in Oehmichen 2001b: 253f).

The quote above refers to the concept of social representation as the socio-cognitive construct that creates form of socially elaborated and shared “knowledge”, which intentionally encourages the particular construction of our reality. This phenomenon implies a system of values, ideas and practices (cf. Moscovici 1988:221), which tend to constitute an order that enables individuals (in this case people in power) to construct their material and social world. Moscovici calls them also *hegemonic representations*. They are ideologically motivated, and are seen as common sense. Therefore, these representations make us classify the world into a system of categorisations, such as that of race or ethnicity. According to Stuart Hall (1981), these categorisations are considered as essential characteristics that maintain the further naturalisation of such representations (qt. by Awan 2008: 12f).

For instance, there are words in certain social and cultural contexts that are subjected to a strong valuation, which are also closely related to the exercise of power and are used in the process of social classifications. In Mexico this can be applied to the words "Indian" or "indigenous", which indicate objects of representation by becoming

elements of social categorization. As Oehmichen highlights, these elements are imposition tools of attributes which tend to express various prejudices (2005:203f).

We can define prejudices as “el conjunto de sentimientos, de juicios y, naturalmente, de actitudes individuales que provocan- o al menos favorecen y en ocasiones simplemente justifican- medidas de discriminación” (Bastide 1973:16). They are usually used to refer to the whole group of people, and not only individuals. As Billig describes, prejudices express “opiniones dogmáticas y desfavorables respecto a otros grupos y, por extensión, respecto a miembros individuales de estos grupos” (1986:576).

These processes are connected with the notion of “the other, which is especially addressed when there is need to “control” cultural difference (Yuval-Davis 1997: 46). There are actually different types of “others”, depending on the situations and ethnic projects, where those “others” are usually excluded from the rest. Within the Mexican context, it is indigenous peoples (migrants) who are perceived as “the others”. As Anthias and Yuval-Davis explain, this happens because “any culturally perceived sign could become a boundary signifier to divide the world into ‘us’ and ‘them’ (1992, qt. in Yuval-Davis 1997: 47). So, finding themselves in an urban and new environment, speaking a different language, having different religious and cultural practices are the main reasons why the concept of “the other” is imposed on indigenous peoples.

One of the ways in which the difference of the “other” is emphasized is through stereotyping. According to Stuart Hall, the process of stereotyping implies preservation of social and symbolic order. It embodies boundary between “the normal and the deviant, the normal and the pathological, the acceptable and the unacceptable, what belongs and what does not is the ‘OTHER’.”²⁹ . For example, indigenous peoples are usually referred to as “gente del campo” and thus perceived as uneducated people, people with traditions, people who do not belong to the city, dirty, poor, passive, who do not want to work, so they exploit children etc. (Oehmichen 2001b: 255).

This shows us that stereotyping can be also seen as an overgeneralization about some group of people. In my opinion, it appears to be the means of oppression used by the Mexican national ideology (power discourse) in order to maintain the current order in the society.

²⁹ See more information in the The Spectacle of the “Other” summary on <http://swithlove.wordpress.com/2010/11/06/the-spectacle-of-the-other>

4.2 Indigenous migration to Mexico City

“Increasingly, however, indigenous individuals, families and groups are leaving their long-held territories as part of the phenomenon of global migration. These migrations go beyond the customary seasonal and cultural movements of particular groups. Modern migration of indigenous peoples is characterized by its complexity in response to new conditions of industrialized and globalized lives.” (Yescas Angeles Trujano, 2008: 7)

In the course of the past few years, the relationship between migration and development has attracted great international attention, especially concerning the decisive effects of the migration process on both origin and receiving countries. Although there is an increasing flow of information about migration and its patterns, there is a lack of information when it comes to the dynamics of this phenomenon among indigenous peoples and the consequences they and their communities face during this process (cf. Ambrosi 2010: UN-HABITAT).

Migration, seen as a structural process that implies the search for basic needs outside people’s place of origin, is analyzed from different perspectives (Chavez-Arellano 2008: 72). It is known that there are permanent, temporary, internal and international migrations. For the purpose of this thesis, I will focus mainly on internal, or more precisely on rural-urban migration. The beginnings of indigenous migration in Mexico have been seen in the industrialization and urbanization processes during the second half of the 20th century (Velasco Ortiz 2007: 183). This, in turn, has led to the restructuring of the rural economy towards a more organized form of industrial economy, which was also followed by an increasing displacement of small-scale farms.

As already mentioned in the II chapter, Mexico City with approximately 20 million inhabitants at the beginning of the 21st century, occupies a space that can be characterized by a constant increase in population and at the same time, rich cultural diversity. Today, we find in Mexico City a large number of migrants from rural areas and abroad, which gives it a cosmopolitan nature, as one of its most recognized characteristics. As stated by Acharya & Barragán Codina (2012: 141), rural-urban migration is an effect of a widespread destruction of the primary sector, lasting poverty and poor development of the agricultural sector. It should be also noted that “, [t]oday, nearly seventy-nine million Mexicans (out of 110 million) live in various urban centres, out of which nearly 60% live in three metropolitan

cities: Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey” (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Geografía, INEGI, 2011).³⁰

Furthermore, these migrations, whether being only occasional or permanent movements from the place of origin, cause many economic and cultural changes and transformations in the lives of indigenous peoples. As reported by Albertani (1999: 197f) one of the main complaints of indigenous people refers to the tendency of calling them “indigenous” or “Indian” migrants, which are nothing else but productions of colonial time, and these concepts disguise real power mechanisms. In addition, the ideological use of these terms is also misleading since it prevents us from seeing the plethora of movements, characteristics and effects caused by migration processes. He indicates that it is common to perceive the word “migrant” as a problem: “[l]a idea es que los migrantes son una carga, que vienen a estorbar, que está no es su tierra y que tienen que regresar a su casa” (Albertani 198).

Migration processes can be influenced by the manipulative media that sells indigenous peoples the story of a better life in urban places. According to Albertani, the main push factors for making this decision of leaving their places of origin are mostly: agricultural backwardness, low land productivity, lack of opportunities, the dispossession from their lands, political and cultural subordination etc. (p.198).

As the migration process starts, a group performs simultaneously adaptive processes to the new urban environment. During this phase, the group might break its attachment with the place of origin or, in contrast, preserve its relationship with those members who remain there. Consequently, this socio- cultural change experienced by the community might shift from the redefinition of its traditional patterns and forgetfulness, and, between its restructuring and dismemberment. In addition, migrants redefine their past within the new context and redirect their future. During this process the group can rearrange and re-signify its traditional custom, or tend to assimilate into the host society, by accepting foreign patterns and breaking ties with its native territory (Giménez 1994, qt. in Oehmichen 2002: 126).

³⁰ (quoted in Acharya & Barragán Codina (2012): “*Social segregation of indigenous migrants in Mexico: An overview from Monterrey*”).

Although usually documented cases emphasize the need of finding ways for economic survival, another common reason for migration of indigenous peoples to Mexico City is to avoid violence in the region of origin. For instance, this has happened to most of the Triquis, now living in camps in the central area of the city, though still having high mobility between the city and their region of origin, but avoiding potential relationships in the city, not only with their people but also with non-indigenous people (Mendoza Gonzalez 2004, qt. in Molina Ludy/Hernandez 2006: 37). They probably still do not have that strong attachment to their new urban residence.

Furthermore, a similar situation of the violent expulsion of people happened to Mazahua women from San Antonio Pueblo Nuevo, who in the late 1950s and early '60s were widowed and thus faced no economically sustainable opportunities in their village (Arizpe 1975: 56). Obviously, there are significant variations when it comes to adapting to the city's environment, mostly depending on the socioeconomic circumstances in their places of origin.

What is being reinforced by the theories of modernization is that those people who are not assimilated to an urban lifestyle, and who tend to keep their self-identification as indigenous, are the ones kept apart from the urban society. Consequently, this implies that it is their own fault for having such a marginalized status in the city. In contrast, there are also some claims that urban migration has obstructed the traditional cultural practices of indigenous peoples. Whatever the case may be, Molina Ludy & Hernandez conclude that,

Es también conveniente revisar el estereotipo a la luz de las ocupaciones de la población indígena en la ciudad: en ellas encontramos desde mendigos hasta profesionistas con doctorado en ciencias o humanidades (2006:41).

Although recent decades have shown a decline in migration to the country's capital city, Mexico City still continues to be a centre of attraction for the indigenous peoples. Confrontations with unknown problems, but also new opportunities in the urban areas represent an enormous challenge for indigenous people. Whether they are really resistant to changes or their cultural practices and rituals are being lost in an urban environment, will be one of the main points to analyze later in the thesis on the example of Mazahua people.

As Stuart Hall says, “we construct our understanding within an ideology, we ‘speak through’ ideology and that ideology enables us to ‘make sense’ of our social reality and our position

within it.” (1981, quoted by Awan 2008: 12). Through which ideology does Mexican society function and make sense of the world will be shown in the next chapter.

V Identity and Ethnicity

Before portraying how Mazahua people are accepted in Mexico City, it is necessary to provide a theoretical background, although a detailed discussion of the various forms of identity and ethnicity is not possible. Therefore, I will focus on those definitions and statements that can make contribution to my thesis.

In the present work the concept of identity is to be seen both as individual and as a collective category. First, it concentrates on the development of identity in the individual. Identity develops itself through communication and symbol- mediated interaction (cf. Mead 1968). In contrast, the basis for collective action is a common pattern of reciprocal behavioral expectations. A very clear definition of this term provides the Mexican anthropologist Gilberto Giménez, when he says that:

la identidad es una construcción social que se realiza en el interior de marcos sociales que determinan la posición de los actores y, por lo mismo, orientan sus representaciones y acciones. Por lo tanto, ni está totalmente determinada por supuestos factores objetivos, como pretenden las concepciones objetivistas de la identidad, ni depende de la pura subjetividad de los agentes sociales, como sostienen las concepciones subjetivistas (Giménez 2004:12f).

As stated by Oehmichen Bazán (2001a: 237-239), identity is formed through multiple dimensions. So, besides social affiliations which are extremely important, these attachments can be also developed within the family, ethnic group, nation, etc. These associations are comprised of a precise set of accepted behaviours and actions that create crucial characteristics of the group (Dewey, 2002)³¹.

Moreover, to be part and belong to a social collective means to share large part of its symbolic repertoire. According to Mercado Maldonado and Hernández Oliva (2010: 233), individuals experience group membership when they find themselves in the interaction with members of another group³². The group membership is also formed through a categorization process in which individuals perceive their environment through categories or stereotypical

³¹ Quoted in Identity Theory: A Literature Review by Deborah L. Wise
http://debwise.com/Matrix_2_files/wise_identityLR-1.pdf

³² This can be applied to Mazahua people and the inter-ethnic relations in Mexico City that will be discussed later on.

beliefs that are shared by their particular group. On the example of Mazahua people and their identity, we will see that the urban environment of Mexico City does not necessarily lead to the disintegration of cultural and traditional paradigms. In order to explain the relation between identity and culture, Gimenez describes how

La identidad requiere siempre, como punto de apoyo, una “matriz cultural” portadora de los “emblemas de contraste” que marcan sus límites, pero esa matriz no se identifica con la cultura objetivada observable desde el exterior, sino como la cultura subjetivada resultante de la internalización selectiva de algunos elementos de la cultura institucionalmente preconstruida (Giménez 1994: 172).

According to Stryker (2000), identity and ethnicity are seen as equivalent, as they both consist of “the ready-made set of endowments and identifications that every individual shares with others from the moment of birth by the chance of the family into which he is born at that given time in a given place”.³³

Therefore, identity, whether collective or individual, establishes a deep foundation for social life and thus is crucial in processes such as interpersonal contacts or relationships among groups (cf. Giménez 2006: 5). As we will see later in the thesis, belonging and differentiation play an essential role in the constitution of personal and social identities.

The use and definition of the term "ethnicity" is certainly not an easy task as well. This also refers to the concepts of “ethnic groups” and “ethnic identity” which were the focus of many theorists who have tried to reveal their true functions and role within the interethnic relations. The first attempt to closely define the concept of “ethnic communities” was carried out by Max Weber who related it to the belonging to a group with common customs and traditions as well as to the memory of a common destiny and the community’s beliefs (Weber 1980:237). He perceived it rather as an artificial collectivization of a group related by an actual blood-relationship or common ancestry.

The term *ethnicity* has its beginnings in the social sciences since the 1970s, but it has been difficult for academic discourse to develop a generally accepted definition due to its complex nature (Alvarsson 1990: 7). According to Peter Wade (1997: 16), it was mainly used to describe groups of people (minorities) inside larger nation states, and one of the reasons for its increased use within an academic and popular discourse are the social changes that have

³³ Quoted in „Identity Theory: A Literature Review „, by Deborah L. Wise .University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center

caused new nations and massive flows of migrations. From an anthropological perspective, ethnicity is

A collection of rather simplistic and obvious statements about boundaries, otherness, goals and achievements, being and identity, descent and classification, that has been constructed as much by the anthropologist as by the subject (Banks 1996: 5, qt. in Wade 1997: 16).

In addition, Wade states that we should perceive it as a social construction that focuses on the “identifications of difference and sameness”, but what makes it different from the concepts of gender or race is the notion that ethnicity is associated with cultural differences (p.16). Frederik Barth (1998: 13f) indicates that ethnic groups can be seen as “a form of social organization”, where “actors use ethnic identities to categorize themselves and others for purposes of interactions [...]”. Characteristics that are considered within this process of interaction are those which are seen as important by the actors themselves. Moreover, he claims that ethnic identity is „superordinate to most other statuses, and defines the permissible constellation of statuses, or social personalities, which an individual with that identity may assume”. This means that ethnic identity restrains an individual various roles he/she may assume and it proves not to be a statistic formation but rather a phenomenon which is always subject to changes. Furthermore, within his theory Barth indicates that ethnic distinctions create the basis on which embracing social systems are built. However, despite existing migratory flows of people, these boundaries between ethnic groups continue to exist (Barth 1998: 9f).

What is important to remember is that ethnic identities can be seen as having a “Russian doll” form, which implies that people do not have one, fixed ethnic identity but rather multiple identities, depending on the context (Wade 1997: 18). The cultural characteristics that signify boundaries might change, and cultural elements within the community could be changed; nevertheless, the dichotomy between community members and outsiders still persists, which enables us to analyze “the nature of continuity” and “the changing cultural form” (Barth 1998: 14).

The structure of ethnicity and all its functions would be clearer if we consider the significance of social identities within the context of the nation state. The majority of former colonies still have to fight with the consequences of what happened 500 years ago. Today’s

multiethnic states and the strategy of the inclusion of indigenous peoples are meant to suggest a progress towards a pluralist democracy as something which would benefit *everyone*. The basic idea has been that “everyone has a right to be recognized as different” (Wade 2001: 861). However, this notion stands in opposition with particularistic inclination which implies the privilege enjoyed by only certain categories. Therefore, we cannot talk about a drastic break with former social relations as there is still strong persistence with the past.

Before discussing today’s multicultural nature of Mexico City, I will first take a historical perspective and address the construct of Mexicanidad or Mestizaje, as this ideology had certainly contributed to the position and image of indigenous peoples in Mexico and in Latin America, in general.

5. 1 Mestizaje and the discourse of national identity

The concept of *mestizaje* is closely related to hegemonic racial ideologies and the process of miscegenation, and it refers to mixture of both “human substance and culture”, representing “a trajectory for the formation” of new nations (Wade 2001: 849). Within the Mexican context, mestizaje encompasses a historical process which established the *Mestizo/a*³⁴ as “the subject of Mexican national identity” (Moreno Figueroa 2011: 124). These concepts have various meanings that reveal us how racial discourses functioned in Mexico.

According to Moreno Figueroa (2011: 124), *Mestizo* represents “a polyvalent category” which refers to distinct moments of Mexican history and it is attributed to a person of mixed heritage, namely of European and Latin American indigenous origin. Basically, it symbolizes a flexible social identity that is attributed to the distinctive miscegenation which first occurred throughout the colonial period in Latin America, between European settlers, African descendents and indigenous peoples. In this way, the new created national identity would make the ‘promise of improvement through race mixture for individuals and the nation’ (Wade 2001: 849). However, this was also an extremely discriminatory ideology as it perceived indigenous peoples, and the non-white population, in general as degenerate and

³⁴ The word Mestiza/o, is derived from the process of mestizaje, and it describes a person or practice that is culturally or racially mixed. It can be used as a noun or adjective.

inferior. It was believed that “the whiter populations [will] lead nations into modernity” (Wade 2008: 180).

This peculiar notion was also emphasized by a sociologist Andreas Molina Enriquez who approved the supremacy of the mestizo race which he described as

an expression of the law of natural selection; moreover, the history of Mexico had to be understood as a triumphal march towards mestizaje. Since the Indians had suffered four centuries of exclusion and extreme poverty, and their ancient polities had been dismantled and fragmented, they could not provide a solid basis for national identity [...] (de la Peña 2006: 280).

Nevertheless, with the Independence and the early nation-building period (1810-1910), the mestiza/o got a more positive connotation – it was seen as an ideal subject of national identity, “ideologically reconstructed to create a new sense of nation” (Moreno Figueroa 2010: 390). Therefore, the Mestiza identity and the ideology of mestizaje became centrepiece of national belonging; so “‘the’ Mexican and the bonds of Mexicanness [...] were thereafter persistently (re)created” (Moreno Figueroa 2011: 125).

Even though many scholars were in favour of this ideology, it was the Mexican writer and education minister José Vasconcelos, who in the postrevolutionary Mexico published “*La Raza Cósmica: Misión de la raza iberoamericana*” and thus demonstrated the beginning of this dominant ideology of *mestizaje* (Miller 2004: 27). In this book he claimed that the ethnic strategy of Spanish America was to create a “synthetic race that shall gather all the treasures of History in order to give expression to universal desire” (Earle 2007: 206). It was believed that this hybrid race is a key for the bright future, as no single race could be seen “capable of forging civilization by itself”³⁵. However, despite the fact that the cosmic race had ‘good intentions’ and it was emphasizing good sides of all races, Vasconcelos has claimed that we could not have seen independence as a movement which would eventually lead to Indian liberation because

[...] the Indian had already ceased to exist; he perhaps never existed as a national entity, and at that time did not exist spiritually, given that all that he knows, all that he thinks, all that he is today is the result of the European invasion. His own identity disintegrated, just as the identity of all ancient cultures has disintegrated, never to return.³⁶

³⁵ (Vasconcelos 1979: 32, qt. in Earle 2007: 206)

³⁶ Vasconcelos, *Indologia*, Obras, 2: 1177; quoted in Earle (p. 207).

Furthermore, many scholars came to the conclusion that mestizaje ideology and its positive attitude did not handle the problems of race and class in the right manner. As Moreno Figueroa concludes:

While mestizaje offers the possibility of flexible inclusion, it also allows an everyday experience of racism that continues to privilege processes of whitening alongside notions of whiteness and uses the national discourse, such as a 'Mexican' identity, to cover up and render invisible processes of discrimination and social exclusion (2010: 399).

The main problem seems to be that Mexican nationalist discourse demanded primarily the "civilized" Indian from the past, whereas today's presence of Indians is considered to be the major obstacle in the path of achieving "El Progreso" (Iwanska 1964: 533). Obviously, the image of indigenous peoples as "the others" has been reinforced within the nationalist discourse, even though the initial idea was the appreciation of Indian history and the heritage of European culture that was supposed to integrate and create a coherent and unified national identity. Unfortunately, this underestimated and negative image of indigenous peoples has been kept within Mexican society, and even further demonstrated through assimilatory processes by *Indigenismo*.

Nevertheless, Indigenism has been an unsuccessful strategy that mainly resulted from the government's abandonment of strategic goals to establish democracy and social justice. Guillermo de la Peña claims that this failure also occurred because the Mexican citizenship was seen in the form of "cultural homogeneity" that rejected requests of indigenous peoples regarding their political and cultural recognition and it prevented their participation within the public sphere (2006: 281). Moreover, even though the ideology of Indigenism was highly visible in Mexico and it glorified the nation's indigenous peoples, its main goal was "to extol indigenous history, rather than contemporary indigenous populations" (Wade 2008: 181). Basically, it had represented indigenous peoples, without including them into Mexican society.

Consequently, despite being promoted as the key element in the formation of Mexican identity, the indigenous peoples belong to the poorest part of its society today. Ethnic discrimination is only one of various forms of horizontal inequality that seriously separates the Mexican society (Puyana & Murillo 2001: 2). In addition, indigenous population faces relentless discrimination regardless of various programmes to combat poverty.

Overall, the development of *Mexicanidad* occurred out of necessity, as the state, followed by the political independence, wanted to create the nation that would bring together socially,

culturally and geographically distinct parts in order to achieve a complete national unity (Mader 2004:4). Despite the fact that Mexican national ideology glorified Indian-ness, which was mainly reflected in Mexican art, “[it] is given the silent treatment by the Mexican population” (Iwanska 1964: 534). We can see mestizaje ideology as a lens through which to analyze the intricate history of Mexico. Today’s Mexico is confronted with a complex society which has given rise to different types of racism. According to Moreno Figueroa (2010: 391), Mexico has created “a raceless social context” so that people do not overtly recognize racism, but they face its consequences and omnipresence due to its “distributed intensity”.

5. 2 Plurality of cultures and multiculturalism

In our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace (UNESCO)³⁷

During the last decades, the globalization process and the increasing urbanization have contributed to the enormous ethnic and cultural diversity of cities, primarily through processes of migration, national and international. Mexico City represents one of those pluri-cultural cities in Latin America.

One of the roots of the cultural diversity of Mexico City are native peoples, descendants of the Nahuatl culture societies, which are characterized by historical communities with a territorial basis and distinct cultural identities. They geographically concentrated in areas of the delegations of Milpa Alta, Xochimilco, Tláhuac, Tlalpan, La Magdalena Contreras and Cuajimalpa (Sánchez 2004: 58). Nevertheless, the political organization of the city has restrained the settlement and the plural expression of its rich diversity. Moreover, as Consuelo Sánchez emphasizes:

En esencia, en este desfase entre la realidad de su rica diversidad y el arreglo político que le impide su pleno despliegue, radica el problema del multiculturalismo en la Ciudad de México (como en el conjunto del país) [...] La persistencia de estos pueblos y su deseo manifiesto de autogobernarse y conservar sus identidades propias hace que la naturaleza de la ciudad sea pluriétnica, aunque esta pluralidad no se expresa en su organización política. Ésta se ordenó a partir de un patrón cultural, económico y político, pretendiendo que los diversos grupos abandonaran sus identidades particulares y se asimilaran a ese molde (2004: 57).

³⁷ See complete UNESCO report on „Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity“
http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13179&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

We are aware that multiculturalism belongs to those groups of terms which are being discussed constantly, and there are distinctive meanings ascribed to it. For example, Fuentes indicates how

multiculturalism is about accommodation of cultural differences in society through legal and institutional recognition of the ethno-cultural diversity, providing –as a policy– recognition and open public space to all cultural entities that are present in a given society. In this sense, multiculturalism advocates for the incorporation of non-dominant/minoritarian cultural views and understanding into the common societal good (2010: 35).

The literature on multiculturalism which goes back to different academic disciplines has been criticized by anthropologists and sociologists because the multicultural policies are frequently developed on that disputable perception of culture as something “singular, unified and bounded” (Phillips, 2007: 53). If the regime of multiculturalism is formulated on such an essentialist understanding of culture, then Mexico City itself is at risk of denying, rather than encouraging the equal rights of indigenous peoples. Phillips indicates that the strong emphasis has been placed on respecting group rights; however, the “group” is rather perceived as a narrow cultural entity, which is highly detrimental for the acknowledgement of rights of an individual.

We are aware that Mexico has a large number of distinct indigenous populations in Latin America. Even though the country accepted the presence of indigenous peoples and their contribution to the construction of the country, only with the 1992 Constitution the nation was officially considered as pluri-cultural. Mexico's indigenous population comprises 12.7 million people (13 % of the total national population) who are speaking 62 distinct languages.³⁸ As already mentioned in the chapter concerning indigenous peoples, official statistics only used the linguistic criteria to determine the indigenous population, which certainly underestimates this increasingly urban population, as many people despite their lost of original language still have managed to preserve their identity and culture .

Multiculturalism itself is seen as a fashionable discourse that “extols a new kind of ‘imagined community: the nation not as *mestizaje* (or ‘melting pot’) but as a mosaic of peoples, each with its distinct cultural manifestations (de la Peña 2006: 281). Cultural diversity has been accepted and approved by international agencies as a worthwhile strategic resource. However, others refer to its problems such as: “political fragmentation, inequality, ‘ethnic cleansing’, and violation of human rights in the name of cultural privileges” (Sartori 2001;

³⁸ For more information see <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,MRGI,,MEX,49749ce423,0.html>

Barry 2001 quoted in de la Peña 2006: 281). Nevertheless, some authors have seen this acceptance of multicultural policies as a justification for the rejection of social policies, thus approving neoliberal orthodoxy³⁹. This, on the one hand, implies a defence of cultural diversity and the necessity of governments to distribute functions to ethnic organizations and acknowledge some minority rights (e.g. bilingual education); while, on the other hand, making no changes in the political structure of the nation.⁴⁰

According to Guillermo de la Peña (2006: 294), cultural rights are acceptable only if they are constrained to the family domain and their local rituals, without interfering with the public sphere. Therefore, within this discourse of superficial glory for plurality and cultural diversity it should be remembered that the indigenous inclusion into the public sphere is mainly portrayed through the reproduction of social inequality (exclusion) and through the reproduction of racism and discrimination (Yanes 2010: 102).

In my opinion, it is paradoxical to say that cultural rights are recognized by the nation, whereas there is no real freedom for their expression. To describe this situation, there is a concept of so called *regulatory multiculturalism*, coined by Charles R. Hale (2002) that implies “a sort of neo-liberal blueprint for cultural diversity, where the state recognises a minimal package of cultural entitlements but has abdicated all social responsibilities and uses ethnic divisions to restrain civil and political rights” (qt. in de la Peña 2006: 294).

It seems that the terms of diversity and plurality have to be stated more clearly. As Yanes (2010: 102) indicates, a cultural coexistence is not possible without equity and equality. Moreover, diversity without rights should not be called diversity; but rather cultural heterogeneity with exclusion.

In conclusion, learning to live within cultural diversity is the challenge for the inhabitants of Mexico City, which demands being more open-minded when it comes to difference and diversity, and to develop tolerance towards indigenous peoples' presence in the city. Such improvement is, according to Chavero Maldonado (2006:44), required at different levels, but

³⁹ (Favre 1996 qt. in de la Peña 2006: 281)

⁴⁰ (Hale 2002; Hernandes et al. 2004, qt. in de la Peña: *ibid.*).

mostly in the design of public policies, public health programs, and the transformation of the institutions (such as education systems).

Esto es lo que los mazahuas, como los demás indígenas de los diferentes pueblos, nos recuerdan y nos piden todos los días con su esfuerzo por ser reconocidos como parte vital y necesaria de esta realidad urbana, dejándonos no sólo la pregunta de cómo la ciudad influye y transforma a los indígenas que migran a ella, sino cómo a su vez los indígenas influyen y transforman esta ciudad con su aportación a la riqueza cultural de la misma, así como con su trabajo de todos los días (Chavero Maldonado 2006:44f.).

VI The Case of Mazahuas

In this part of the thesis I would like to demonstrate some of important issues about culture and ethnicity that were mentioned in the theoretical chapter. Being led by the research question, special focus will be given to challenges experienced by indigenous peoples in Mexico City and the nature of their cultural reproduction within this urban environment. In addition, I will also address issues of migration, identity and cultural changes as they are all closely related to each other and they will help us to get an overall picture about urban indigenous peoples. However, since Mexico City is made out of many different indigenous peoples and traditions, I decided to focus on Mazahua people of the state of Mexico as I believe they seem truly representative of the most indigenous communities in Mexico which have come into contact with the urban and modern world. I have chosen Mazahua people, only to exemplify the situation where Indians live in their home and later in Mexico City, of course, there are differences arising from the specific characteristics of each group from their places of origin, and in particular forms of integration in the city.

Before analyzing these issues mentioned above, it would be useful to first introduce Mazahua people and say some basic and important information.

6.1 The Mazahua people

There is no certainty regarding the origin of the word Mazahua. On the one hand, there are some assumptions that it comes from the name the first head of this village, which was called Mazatlí-Tecutli. On the other hand, some believe that it was actually derived from the

Nahuatl Mazatl word meaning “*venado*” (deer) or Mazahuacan “*donde hay venado*” (where deer is) which is the name of the place of origin of these people. The roots of this population are said to originate from the racial and cultural fusion of Toltec settlements - Chichimeca.⁴¹

There is not so much cultural data about Mazahuas’ early days. However, until today, one can observe certain cultural events that were passed down from generation to generation and are still well preserved despite the centuries passing by. The remaining cultural relics can be seen in their language, music, dance, handicrafts, ritual practices etc. Today, the use of their own language is one of the main links that keeps the community together (Gonzalez-Hernandez 2012).

What seems clear is that Mazahuas are by no means a closed, clearly definable ethnic group which has only preserved their traditional way of life. Their flexible attitude is expressed in the following quote:

We cannot say that our children are going to keep the same customs. They will know the best what to do in their own time. And their customs may be better than our own. All we wish is that they should know how their fathers lived, just as we ourselves want to know how ours lived (Iwanska 1971: 47).

Therefore, it is better to perceive it as *a hybrid culture* (Bronfes & Marius 1997)⁴². Although Mazahuas’ traditions have preserved their pre-Hispanic roots until this day, with the Spanish conquest, they adopted some new elements in their culture. This especially refers to their social organization and religion which represents a syncretism of formal, Catholic faith and their traditional customs. Even though Mazahuas are now inserted into the capitalist system, their traditional industries are well maintained (cf. CDI 2006).

Mazahuas’ main settlement area is located in the north-western part of the State of Mexico, and what is characteristic for this region is the great abundance of water. However, they cannot be found only in this core region, as they are very often faced with economic marginalization and poverty, which obligates them to migrate in order to survive (CDI 2009). The most attractive destination for migration of the Mazahua people is Mexico City.

⁴¹ See more of the Mazahua profile on

http://www.cdi.gob.mx/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=616&Itemid=62

⁴² „Hybrid ist alles, was sich einer Vermischung von Traditionslinien oder von Signifikantenketten verdankt, was unterschiedliche Diskurse und Technologien verknüpft, was durch Techniken der collage, des samplings, des Bestelns zustande gekommen ist“ (Bronfen & Marius 1997: 14).

Mazahua language has been classified within the family Otopamean, which is composed of associated languages into three main groups: the Otomi and Mazahua, the matlatzinca and atzinca, and Pame and Chichimeca (Oehmichen 2005: 77). Manrique describes the same classification, but distinguishing *pames* of the North and of the South (1967: 331-348). The language is known as *Jñatjo* by its speakers, who refer to themselves as *Hñatho*. According to Pellicer (2006: 329), this language is on the 12th place among the 16 main indigenous languages, regardless of the Mazahuas' marginalized historical role. Of all the languages *otomianas*, Otomi and Mazahua are languages that have the closest relationships and considers its differentiation occurred between 400 and 800 BC.

Although there are Mazahua peoples in the Mexican states of Michoacán, Tamaulipas, Queretaro, Chihuahua and Guanajuato, the greatest number of Mazahua speakers are located in the State of Mexico as the largest ethnic group in this region, especially in the municipality of San Felipe del Progreso. According to data from *the Census of Population and Housing 2010 of National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics* (INEGI), the State of Mexico reported 379, 075 people of 3 years and more who are speakers of an indigenous language, of which 222, 394 speakers belong to the native peoples (Mazahua, Otomi, Nahuatl, and Matlatzinca Tlahuica). In this sense, the Mazahua people are the most numerous, consisting of 116,240 (53.85%) speakers of that language, followed by the Otomi people who recorded 97,820 (43.20%) speakers, and the Nahuatl people with 6,706 (3.27%), while the small numbers of speakers belong to Matlatzinca and Tlahuica people.⁴³

Although most indigenous peoples in Mexico City live in poverty, there are big differences between them (cf. Arizpe 1975). However, in contrast to other indigenous migrants, the Mazahua people have adapted quite well to the situation in the city. Even though many young Mazahua members do not speak the indigenous language, they are more flexible and open to the urban lifestyle, and still cherish their ethnic consciousness (Lemos Igreja 2000: 103-109). In contrast, Triqui people are seen as more closed and strictly organized. As they value a good education so highly, their members possess higher level of education and even have academics among them (Lemos Igreja 2000: 164-178). On the other hand, among the largest

⁴³ See more statistics on Consejo Estatal para el Desarrollo Integral de los Pueblos Indígenas del Estado de México <http://qacontent.edomex.gob.mx/cedipiem/pueblosindigenas/estadisticas/index.htm>

group of indigenous migrants in México City, the Otomí from Santiago Mexquititlán have the poorest education and do not show any interest in changing this situation (Scholz 2004: 29).

Concerning their self-ascription, Mazahuas are familiar with the term “Indians” as they are usually called by the non-Indian population of Mexico, but they never use this concept because of its pejorative connotation (Iwanska 1964: 534). Besides, membership or identity of any person is rather a subjective thing, which can be defined through the language, the place of birth, gender, etc., thus not providing an adequate measurement tool. Therefore, it seems quite problematic to precisely define what a ‘typical’ Mazahua individual is, especially if we take into account that over time, other elements from rather dominant cultures were added to one’s own culture, or that certain aspects of their tradition were re-defined or abandoned. As it was mentioned in the theoretical part, culture tends to change due to its dynamic nature.

As stated by the *Gobierno del Estado de México* (2009), Mazahua culture expresses itself not only through the language, but through the multiple cultural determinants, which are clearly visible and expressed in their everyday life through the relationships within their community and outside of it: at work, through diet, leisure activities, the social organization, customs, traditional medicine, clothing, handicrafts, migration etc.⁴⁴ These characteristics of Mazahua culture occur with even greater intensity during festivals of their respective patron saint as well as in *the rites of passage* (such as birth, baptism, marriage or death) which further strengthen their family relationships (Sandoval 1997: 93).

Even though Sandoval only paid attention to the most visible elements of the Mazahua culture, he also asserts that there are hidden symbols and norms, transmitted through the oral tradition within the social space of the community or household, which are not excluded but they are rather being reconstructed and modified. For instance, many authors have claimed that one of the most important cultural and identity features of Mazahuas is their social organization, which is defined in *the cargo system*. This institution will be given more attention in one of the following chapter.

⁴⁴ See more information on Mazahua profile on <http://www.edomex.gob.mx/portal/page/portal/edomex/nuestro-estado/identidad-mexiquense/pueblos-indigenas/mazahuas>

6.2 Location

The Mazahua are located in the northern, central and eastern part of the State of Mexico and some villages are located in a small area east of the state Michoacan along the border with the State of Mexico. Their territory is high and cool with heavy rains. The Mazahua region is comprised of 11 municipalities, of which 10 are located in the State of Mexico: Almoloya, Atlacomulco, Donato Guerra, El Oro de Hidalgo, Ixtlahuaca, Jocotitlán, San Felipe del Progreso, Temascalcingo, Villa de Allende and Villa Victoria, and one, Zitacuaro, in the state of Michoacán. To the north their region is bordered by the state of Querétaro and municipalities of Acambay and Timilpan of the State of Mexico; the south by the municipalities of Zinacantepec, Toluca, Amanalco de Becerra, Valle de Bravo and Ixtapan del Oro, to the east by the municipalities of Temoaya, Jiquipilco and Morelos; and to the west by the municipality of Morelos in the state of Michoacan (CDI: 2009)⁴⁵.

Due to its proximity to Mexico City, Mazahua region is provided with good road infrastructure. However, there has been a tendency to identify them as a homogenous group, but according to few ethnographic researches and experiences, it was confirmed that there are substantial differences of political and religious organization between peoples and specific regions as well (Chávez Arellano 2004: 1).

Figure 1: the State of Mexico

Source:

<http://ignorantisimo.free.fr/CELA/docs/Mazahuas.pdf>

Because of their formally done spatial location Mazahuas tends to be identified as a homogeneous group, having a territory, with political boundaries and



⁴⁵ For more information see homepage of *Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas* http://www.cdi.gob.mx/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=616&Itemid=62

established administration (the state, the municipality and the people). Even though they occupy an important part of the north- western state of Mexico, it has to be indicated that there are some differences in political and religious organization between certain Mazahua people and their regions (Chávez Arellano 2004: 1). For this reason, in this part of the thesis I will generally refer to Mazahuas from Mexico State, but very often to Mazahuas from Pueblo Nuevo de San Antonio because the largest concentration of Mazahua people in Mexico City come from this municipality.

6.3 Historical perspective

Due to the lack of definite sources, the reconstruction of the Mazahuas' history has been full of gaps; therefore, it is mostly based on certain assumptions. However, the focus on the history is considered to be indispensable since all those cultural communities that are called "ethnic" today, are actually a product of a long historical process which is known as the ethnicization process, according to which some communities are characterized and perceived as outsiders and foreign in their own territories (cf. Gimenez 2000; Oommen 1997).

Although we can differentiate between different types of ethnicization, what they have in common is the separation or the transformation of ties of cultural community with their ancestral territory. Therefore, this separation between culture and territory puts at risk a first nation because, as Giménez (2000: 51f) claims: "[...] una nacion no podria mantener su ethos cultural e incluso su identidad como comunidad imaginada sin la referencia a un territorio que le sirve como lugar de anclaje, espacio de inscripcion de su cultura y referente simbolico".

Historians have not reached agreement on the origin of the Mazahua people and the time when they reached the Valley of Mexico. The territories which have been settled by Mazahuas are located in Central Mexico, namely, northeast of Toluca. According to historians and archaeologists, Mazahuas belong to one of the oldest occupants of this territory, despite other indigenous peoples now living there (Iwanska 1971: 19). Mazahuas have never been isolated from other cultures. Many authors such as Carrasco (1979) and Sugiura (1998) have acknowledged through their works that Mazahuas were in contact with

other Mesoamerican cultures. Belonging to the Otomi group, Mazahuas had contacts with the Chichimeca peoples and they also preserved some own practices such as hunter-gathering and fishing. Their economy was mainly based on agriculture, and some of their major crops were: corn, beans, chili and squash (Oehmichen 2005:79).

As new elements have been introduced by archaeologists, other ways of interpreting Mazahua history emerged. For example, there are data referring to the province of Mazahuacan, which was the administrative center of Jocotitlan village (Limon 1978)⁴⁶. So it is believed that people who inhabited this village in the time of the conquest were actually speaking mazahua language.

It is assumed that these Mazahua Indians from Mazahuacan have established a higher culture, which includes: a complex political structure, an elaborate division of labor, art, social organization etc. Since Otomies have been their neighbours, it is also possible that they took over some of their cultural practices into their own society.

In the end, we will have to wait for more archaeological and ethnohistorical studies in order to clarify the situation of this important city. Among other references, Mazahuas had been one of five Chichimeca tribes that migrated in the 13th century, one of which was headed by Mazahuatl, leader of this group, which is considered the oldest of the founding members of the tribes of cities Culhuacan Otompan and Tula, composed of Mazahua, Matlatzincas, Tlahuicas and Toltecs (CDI)⁴⁷.

It is believed that the last period preceding the colonialism was the hardest for the Mazahua people. For example, the overwhelming dominance of the Aztec empire over the defeated peoples was much more oppressive and decisive for them. This was followed by the threat of cultural and physical survival. With the consolidation of Aztec power, Mazahuacan province was under the reign of Tlacopan. Iwanska (1971: 20) mentions that Mazahuas were probably “nahuatized” by these Nahua-speaking Aztecs as it happened to Otomies. However, it is assumed that their cultural practises have stayed the same.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Oehmichen Bazan 2005, p.79

⁴⁷ For more details on Mazahua see the home page of *Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas*. http://www.cdi.gob.mx/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=616&Itemid=62

During the expansion of the Aztec empire, and being under the rule of Moctezuma Ilhuicamina (1449 A.D.), Mazahuas were forced to participate in the conquests of the southern lands. Mazahua group was effectively controlled by the Aztec king Axayacatl⁴⁸.

At the time of the Conquest, and with the arrival of Gonzalo de Sandoval in 1521, Mazahua territory was subjected to the new regime. They actually joined this Spanish army, in order to fight against the Aztecs. However, this new regime imposed three institutions on Indians, namely: the Catholicism, Spanish political organization and hacienda.

The Hacienda arrangement adversely affected the daily life of the indigenous peoples. Although the Spaniards aimed to eliminate native governments, certain Indian political organizations managed to survive, and some of them became even stronger after this period (Iwanska 1971: 21).

With the independence of Mexico, the structural relationship which resulted from the ethnicization process has not changed dramatically. Like other Indians, Mazahuas faced a serious hazard with their territories which even further intensified with the enforcement of laws that led to the confiscation of goods. This was followed by the decline of Indians' political rights, and thus by the abolishment of their republics. Consequently, under the establishment of formal equality, indigenous authorities were denied (Oehmichen 2005:86).

Nevertheless, the significant improvement for Mazahua population took place with the Agrarian Reform in the 1930s. The land reallocation from the big haciendas significantly affected Indian people. The Agrarian Reform represented an effective *acculturative force* and with the creation of *ejidos*⁴⁹ the indigenous peoples were in a more direct contact with local mestizos and with the Mexican government. However, despite these consequences, Indians even managed to consolidate their traditional governments and the indigenous inhabitants had their own land (Iwanska 1971: 22)⁵⁰.

⁴⁸ *Ibíd.*

⁴⁹ Associations of the recipients of lands that were allocated through the Agrarian Reform

⁵⁰ At least this is the case for smaller Mazahua communities, such as El Nopal where alicja Iwanska carried out her research.

6.4 Migration of Mazahua people to Mexico City

[...]la migración puede considerarse como un drama social cuya estructura es similar a la de los ritos de paso, ya que involucran la reinterpretación del pasado con miras hacia un “futuro orientado” que provee a los grupos de opciones tanto regenerativas como destructivas (Oehmichen 2002: 126).

In the theoretical part of the thesis we could see that the migration phenomenon can be seen as a structural factor that usually emerge from adverse conditions which force people to find better living conditions outside their community. This, in turn, leads to a series of transformations and changes, not only of economic nature, but also cultural, and these influence people’s lifestyles (cf. Chavez Arellano 2008).

The region of *San Antonio Pueblo Nuevo* contains certain historical accounts concerning its population mobility. In addition, special attention to this region was devoted by Arizpe (1976) who recorded the causes and patterns of migration of this region and the presence of its members in the urban environment Mexico City. The beginnings of Mazahua flows of migration to different regions of Mexico are incomplete, but there are some reliable sources. For example, Gomez Montero (1986: 128) emphasizes how the migration process of Mazahuas from *San Felipe del Progreso* had its peak at the beginning of the 20th century, mainly because in the travelling commerce were engaged those Mazahua men who were not bound to the hacienda and as they were faced with poor agricultural contributions, they used to travel in order to exchange or sell goods from their region.

Furthermore, Yhmoff (1977) underlines how first mass migratory movements had been made by people from San Antonio Pueblo Nuevo because of the conflict between some leaders over the dominance of the *ejido*⁵¹, which obligated most people from the losing side to migrate to Mexico City where women dedicated themselves to selling fruits on the street, while men were engaged as truck loader at the Merced market⁵². Since that time there have been enduring movements of Mazahua communities from this north-western part of the State of Mexico, despite many cases of police repressions.

A relevant fact that draws a special interest to Mazahuas’ migration refers to them as being one of the indigenous groups with the largest number in Mexico City. Although there were

⁵¹ communal lands

⁵² (quoted in Chavez Arellano 2008: 73)

even earlier migrations of other indigenous communities to the urban environment of the city, Mazahua people indicate a different profile as they were between the late 40s and the 70s of the 20th century, the first visible mass migration to Mexico City (Chavero Maldonado 2006: 26). They entered through the main gateway that links the countryside to the city, that is: La Merced and its area of influence (Valencia, 1965).⁵³ The reasons for migration have not changed to this day, so mainly out of economic reasons due to the lack of land and poor employment in the place of origin.

Of course, there are certain differences between different communities, depending on their conditions and the structure of their groups, but for the largest Mazahua community from San Antonio Pueblo Nuevo and most others, main factors are those various disadvantages in their communities derived with the expanded process of capital accumulation. This, in turn, has generated social stratification processes, and violence that has resulted in the expulsion of indigenous migrants (Oehmichen 2005: 110).

Nevertheless, the type of work that they have been doing in Mexico City has considerably changed. Initially, they used to be incorporated into the second and third sectors, but eventually they were transformed into the informal sector. During the '50s and '60s women worked mainly in factories, while men were engaged in construction works; in the '70s they worked increasingly in the households of wealthy people, but since the '80s, they have been more and more visible on the streets, thus having more obvious presence, and working usually as street vendors, squeegee persons or beggars, what they actually do today as well (Ströbitzer 2006: 66f).

Mazahua women are primarily engaged in the fruit trade, handicrafts and industrial goods in the streets and avenues where they become very often victims of the continuing police eviction processes, extortion of street leaders or inspectors and hostility from many passengers and other street vendors with whom they compete for an urban space (Oehmichen 2002: 124) Mazahuas have not fully integrated into the lifestyle of the city, because the integration itself has not been easy.

However, among these main push factors of low income and lack of employment, migration process is also determined by the lack of education, health, drinking water, electricity etc. Moreover, an acute problem are also small landholdings due to the population growth, which

⁵³ (quoted in Oehmichen 2002: 125)

make it impossible to achieve sufficient production capacity from the small plots in order to support their families. Consequently, this situation forced them to either rent or sell their land (Chavero Maldonado 2006: 29). According to Arizpe (1979),⁵⁴ beside all these macro-structural factors, there are also those which are influenced by personal experience, i.e. “[...] motivaciones individuales y familiares, las cuales son lo contingente, accidental o coyuntural, factores precipitantes de una problemática colectiva que se vive en el espacio local y su interrelación con el regional y nacional”. When talking about the reasons for migration in interviews that she conducted with some Mazahua people, answers were usually related to people’s hope to find a higher and stable income due to the poor condition and desperation they feel in their village (qt. in Chavero Maldonado: 29).

Mazahuas’ migratory strategies could be explained from the *collective level*, as there are not only individual decisions that result in this process, except some isolated cases, such as the case of seasonal migrants and women who are employed as domestic workers. The following quote indicates this collective pattern of Mazahua migration:

El cuerpo central del flujo migratorio está constituido por familias enteras, y extensas por añadidura, incluyendo a los hijos casados y a los hijos de éstos [...] No se trata de familias que decidieron independientemente venir a probar suerte a la ciudad. Al contrario [...] las familias de migrantes están entrelazadas por parentesco o matrimonio y por un intercambio constante de información y de dinero con la comunidad. Es esta estrecha relación entre familias, reforzada por su cultura común, es decir, su identidad étnica, la que en última instancia las impulsa a seguir un patrón colectivo de migración y de especialización ocupacional en la ciudad (Chavero Maldonado 2006: 30).

This implies that there are close links between migration strategies and survival strategies in the city. Even those who decide to migrate individually, they usually do that through contacts with their relatives or familiar people from their community from whom they get support or help in the city. Overall, it can be also said that migration is influenced by the labor market, where there is a selection of individuals who are chosen to perform certain types of work depending on their sex, education, ethnicity, age and social class.

Because of their precarious positions in the city, Mazahuas communities tend to do similar activities and share common spaces (social, physical, economic) which form their meeting place. Their homes are usually located in old and ruinous neighbourhoods of the historic centre and also in the suburbs, northwest and east of the metro area (Oehmichen 2002: 123).

⁵⁴ (quoted in Chavero Maldonado 2006 : 29)

Despite their dispersion, Mazahuas communities maintain good communication with those who remain in the place of origin as well as in the cases of their spatial separation in the city, with the help of networks created in the capital city, there is no interruption in their flow of communication or exchange of goods and services (Oehmichen 2002: 124).

Regarding feminine migration, there are some claims that migrations of women are more conditioned in contrast to men, mainly because of living stage in their life history, marital status, the absence of children or partner etc. (Szasz 1995: 130). In addition, the role assigned to women in the reproduction process makes the context of family more important in their decisions to migrate, rather than it does for men. As it was already mentioned, women as well as men, who migrate to the cities, usually find employment in those activities whose access is not hindered by their low cultural capital. According to Oehmichen (2005: 111), cultural capital is even smaller for women as they usually show low or no schooling at all and they have a more limited control of the Spanish language.

Furthermore, we could see that women usually have no access to paid employment, so they are mostly engaged in economic activities that are “consistent” with their reproductive role. Consequently, they are producers of handicrafts and informal traders who sell their goods on public roads. In this way they can earn some income and take care of their young children, as it is the case with Mazahua women in the Federal District. What has to be remembered is that Mazahua women, in contrast to men, never migrate or live alone, but they always tend to be in the company their relatives or some familiar people from their community (cf. Szasz 1995).

Obviously, Mexico City became a major attraction for the rural sector, due to its industrial expansion during the forties, thus causing massive flows of migrations. Moreover, other factors have also influenced the decision to emigrate, as the idea created about life in Mexico City by returning community members, who, according Arizpe (1975), do not mention the heavy sacrifices and they tend to exaggerate about high incomes and entertainment in the city, which encourages the common people to leave their community. This had such an impact on the Mazahua people of San Antonio Pueblo Nuevo that, especially in the early sixties, some families sold their land in order to migrate to the city.

At the end, migration can be seen as *a social drama* whose structure is similar to that of the *rites of passage*, as they both involve the reinterpretation of the past with a view toward future that might provide both regenerative (promising) and destructive options (cf. Oehmichen 2002). Most importantly, Mazahua migrants participate in the construction of their community, even beyond the boundaries of their place of origin. This, in turn, leads to the renewed importance obtained by traditional patterns, very often followed by the reformulation of their worldviews in the urban contexts. Even among those young migrants the links to their places of origin have not been broken. For example, marriage alliances are common between those living in the city and those living in the village. Most importantly, there are special occasions, like traditional festivities (offerings to the dead etc.), which represent suitable occasions for their socialization. These issues will be addressed in the following chapter.

6.5 Social organization

The nuclear family, consisting of parents and children, is the basis of social organization of Mazahua people. Each family member has well defined roles, and these depend on their sex, age and place they occupy within in the family. For example, the mother is responsible for preparing food, washing clothes, sewing, cleaning the home, picking up the wood⁵⁵ and water; taking care of the children, and looking after the animals in the backyard. The father is mainly engaged in farming; children cooperate in some activities of the field, in collecting firewood and grazing animals, the girls help the mother with the housework. The highest authority within the family is exercised by the father (CDI 2009). Of course, certain replaceabilities are also possible, as will be shown on some examples.

The Mazahua group also performs collective work called *faena*, which implies the cooperation of all community members in undertaking works or collective benefits (schools, markets and roads etc).

Status inequalities within Mazahua communities are very often assumed according to the different clothing habits between men and women, since women have not been allowed to participate within the public sphere. However, one would be surprised with the actual social

⁵⁵ In El Nopal, bringing firewood is done by a man.

relationship within Mazahua population, as it was by the Alicja Iwanska herself, when she was doing her research in El Nopal community:

Men of El Nopal treat their women with a profound respect, and women, in turn, treat their men with similar respect. This reciprocity and similarity of respectfulness is indeed surprising to an observer from the Occidental World where men's patterns of respect toward women are often markedly different from those women follow in regard to men. An adult married man is not always considered the head of the household in El Nopal. It is the oldest person in the family, man or woman, married or widowed, who is the head of the family in El Nopal, and who is accorded the appropriate respect [...] The respect with which Mazahua from El Nopal [sic!] shower each other daily is a monolithic type, a "blinding" kind of respect, in which even the vices of a respected person are interpreted as virtues (Iwanska 1971: 50).

Of course, this does not apply to every Mazahua community. They might have similarities in their way of life, but that does not make them absolutely identical. In my opinion, one of the reasons for deep respect they feel for each other is that El Nopal is a rather small community, where people have to rely on each other, cherish their relations and protect their social morality. In a bigger community, circumstances might be different.

In El Nopal, for example, it is considered that women do not know how to speak in public, but they are still consulted and ready to express their opinion concerning familiar or communal decisions. Specific patterns of interaction between Mazahua men and women can be clearly understood through the division of labor. As already mentioned, despite traditionally defined roles in a society; "the interchangeability" of male and female tasks is also possible due to some necessary situations within a family or for the well-being of the community (Iwanska 1971: 51). These exceptions usually happen during childbirth or if a woman suffers from some sickness. In the same way, in case of some emergency, Mazahua women are also willing to replace their men in the agricultural works.

This practice of interchangeability has been developed during the colonial period, when Mazahua men and women had to work in the fields for the owner of hacienda, which were usually far from their home. As Iwanska indicated, Mazahua from El Nopal "have been consciously cultivating this pattern, in spite of their daily condemnations of the "times of hacienda". Seeing good sides of predominantly bad phenomena has been characteristic, indeed, of the outlook on life of these villagers" (p.53). Nevertheless, there is one case where this pattern of interchangeability is not allowed, namely: within the politico- religious sphere (the traditional Indian government). But there are some less important offices to which married women might be elected.

Despite these flexible pattern described above, there are certain norms that come in force during periods of religious and cultural reactivation in the Mazahua communities, like during the patronal festival. Its organization is primarily regulated by means of *mayordomias*, which represents part of a complex *cargo system*. Moreover, political and civil duties are also organized through this structure, which will be explained briefly in the next chapter.

6.6 Cargo- System

The cargo system indicates an important heterogeneous institution, and it is believed that this institution is the foundation for all other patterns of the interaction between members of the communities (González de la Fuente & Salas Quintanal 2012: 41). As Sandoval indicates, it is a civil-religious institution that goes back to colonial times, and it represents an integral part of most Mazahua communities today, influencing their social, cultural and religious life. In addition, a significant part of this system are migrants, who maintain their social, family, religious or cultural ties with their place of origin (2001: 79).

According to Korsbaek (2009)⁵⁶ “the cargo system is an institution apt for the formulation of a social project, thus creating a community”, where the size of the community or its history is insignificant. In the same way, Sandoval emphasizes that the roles played in a Mazahua community, and everyone’s participation, consolidate the cargo system itself, making it an interacting and coherent system (2005: 266).

The cargo system in more traditional communities dictates the same ancestry structure to be the foundation of the social organization, in that way that communities with widespread participation in *mayordomias* also show a close link between the kinship system, human settlements in the community, and membership in a family oratories. Within the hierarchical system of cargos, the principal *mayordomo* is the oldest man in the family, while the rest of *mayordomial* personnel consists of patrilineal cousins, sons and nephews (Gonzalez Ortiz 2001: 25).

⁵⁶ (quoted in González de la Fuente & Salas Quintanal 2012: 45) http://www.drustvo-antropologov.si/AN/PDF/2012_1/Anthropological_Notebooks_XVIII_1_delaFuente.pdf

Duties which are led by this system can be divided into civil and religious ones. Civil tasks usually refer to the administrative matters, such as: use and control of water, authorities over ejidos and other community ownerships, control of forest stand, preservation of roads, schools, cemeteries etc. The religious side of the cargo system is usually associated with the traditional festivities in honor of the community's respective patron saint. By oral history it is known that this is the main reason why *mayordomias* are formed, as they organize and control these festivities. These religious cargos are considered more prestigious than civil ones (Sandoval 2001: 76f).

It is important to mention that there are some Mazahua communities where the participation in the mayordomal structure is obligatory and inherited, whereas in some other communities the participation is not allowed for all its inhabitants (Gonzalez Ortiz 2001: 19).

In conclusion, *the system of cargos* which represents a social organization specific to the Mazahua population signifies a structure that encourages and preserves the cooperation within a community, as it leads to the consolidation of social networks with their community members who left their place of origin and live now in urban areas. Therefore, we can perceive this system as a crucial identification factor in all Mazahua communities. This intensity of the relationship within the social organization of Mazahua people which we could perceive by cooperation of their society (cf. Wilson & Wilson 1965), is certainly one of the decisive factors that contributes to their cultural reproduction.

However, as it was mentioned before, the migration of indigenous peoples leads to certain socio-cultural changes in a family life, and within a community in general. Since cargo system is an essential part of Mazahua identity, I believe that this social structure maintains the ties between those Mazahua people in urban areas and their places of origin. This peculiar social organization system is what stimulates urban Mazahuas to still participate in the development of their communities.

As we could see, the functions of mayordomias are closely related to the organizations of Mazahua rituals and festivities. These two traditions play an important part in Mazahuas' lives and, in my opinion; they also contribute to their cultural reproduction in urban environments such as Mexico City. Therefore, it would be useful to mention some of the most important points.

6.7 World view and religious rituals of Mazahuas

The research on the nature of world-views was carried out by Robert Redfield (early 1950s). He claimed that all societies make same kinds of basic distinctions when categorizing things in the world.⁵⁷ In small-scale societies such as El Nopal in the State of Mexico, people usually share the same world views on the grounds that they are socialized in the same way⁵⁸. Nevertheless, according to Iwanska (1971: 71), even in the most diverse societies, individuals feel that strong impulse for their social, natural and supernatural environments.

Mazahuas have a secular view about their natural environment. They find the physical universe to be interesting and useful. They never tend to express their moralistic attitudes toward it. For them, work in the cornfields is what they know and appreciate, while any other way seems odd⁵⁹. Mazahuas believe that their knowledge of the agricultural work is perfect and complete, something that only local farmers possess and that cannot be learned at school. Mazahua people, such as those from El Nopal, are extremely devoted to their village – this affection refers to their community of people who tend to live in harmony and under the protection of their patron Saint. In addition, they have a driving and self-conscious aspiration when it comes to accepting some new things from *El Progreso*⁶⁰. Such as technological progress and literacy (*Ibid*: 77). Basically, they are open to changes, as long as they seem meaningful and useful for their community, in general.

Even though they think of themselves as a community, an individual and his/her attitudes are also significant. What is highly respectable is not that an individual follows local customs but also that he/she displays great modesty and effective restraint, especially when it comes to good, desirable or bad and undesirable things. Something that has been known about Mazahuas and confirmed by different writers is that they express their emotions through dreams, or recollection of dreams. This is what Alicja Iwanska had experienced during her research in El Nopal:

I had assumed wrongly that like Tzeltals or Papago Indians, Mazahuas “see in their dreams” distant and often unknown places or future events. With great surprise, I realized that there were no telepathic or prophetic elements in their dreams at all. A great deal of emphasis was placed, however, on dreams and they were constantly told and retold by the dreamers

⁵⁷ See more details on http://anthro.palomar.edu/social/soc_2.htm

⁵⁸ However, in more complex and large-scale societies, there are often differences in world-views, due to the fact that these complex societies usually have culturally heterogeneous population.

⁵⁹ Those who do not work on cornfields are seen as strangers or impoverished who deserve their help and sympathy, for example, young boys are usually landless (Iwanska 1971: 75).

⁶⁰ Meant as Occidental universe

themselves and by their relatives and friends as well. Only at the end of my field work, I concluded that almost everything which was so carefully hidden and suppressed in their lives: strong emotions, anxieties, hidden aspirations, was allowed free expressions on occasion of the recollection of their dreams (Iwanska 1971: 92).

Furthermore, Mazahuas have attached an immense importance to their dreams because through them they also communicate with their deceased. They do not have any specialists to interpret dreams, but the dreamer and his/her family try to define them. Nevertheless, there are some older people who are known as best interpreters and they are also called *healers*. Namely, through dreams, the deceased communicate with their living relatives, but they are also seen as the carrier of bad news. For example, a person knows that he/she will die soon if the deceased come back in his/her dreams to communicate (Oehmichen 2002: 129).

This outstanding importance of dreams for Mazahua people is placed at the core of their culture, especially because even outside their traditional territory, and in very different socio-cultural contexts, they manage to preserve a complex interpretive process of this custom (Oehmichen 2002: 132). Dreams can be perceived as social representations, together with myths and rituals. Although they are described as rather private and flexible experiences, while myths are seen as public, with fixed linguistic forms; in many societies, dreams and myths are considered closely related (Tedlock 1995: 49)⁶¹.

For this thesis, it is important to emphasize that dreams and the relationships with the deceased members associate Mazahuas migrants to their traditional territories where their ancestors are buried. Therefore, although some of the members in the urban areas stop using Mazahua language as they try to integrate in the new society, they certainly cherish their ties with their place of origin, which further contributes to their cultural reproduction. Cristina Oehmichen indicates (2002: 143) how young people are the ones who no longer speak the language and, therefore, they cannot transmit it to their children. However, the children and grandchildren of Mazahua speakers continue being attached to their ethnic community. Even though they do not speak the language, they understand it. There are times when they go for some months in the place of origin of their parents and grandparents, where they are able to learn how to speak Mazahua more fluently.

⁶¹ (quoted in Oehmichen 2002: 132)

What is being easily noticed about Mazahuas is their serious concerns about society, like: “their self-assertions, as members of their village, and recently more and more as members of their *Ejido*, are stronger than their familial identifications; [t]heir main gratifications and social controls come from their village community [...]”(Iwanska 1971: 94).

When it comes to Mazahua social identification and its complexities, it has to be underlined that Mazahuas do not describe themselves as Indians. Paradoxically, they are usually identified as such by the Non-Indians. Out of respect, Iwanska states that anthropologists and promoters of Mexican national ideology tend to refer to them as “*Indigena*”, as they believe it implies more scientific nature of the concept (p.97). Nevertheless,

The term “*Indigena*” is not only respectful, but is also falsifying. It means the recognition of the rights of this category of people in contemporary Mexico and the commitments of the Mexican government, anthropologists, and other protectors to active help in solving the tremendous cultural, economic and political problems they face. It means outspoken admiration for the great precolonial past which is still, apparently, personified by them. But it also means a tremendous oversimplification of this greatly admired past and a great underestimation of the variety of cultures and problems which exist within this heterogenous not-yet-Mexican population (Iwanska: 97).

Concerning the religious beliefs of Mazahuas, their tradition of the personification of the supernatural dates back into the remote past. Those Supernatural beings are considered as *superhumans*. It is rather their permanency that makes them like that, not any kind of super power⁶². Their continuity and stability of supernatural beings is maintained through rituals and a profound respect and daily honoring.

Current characteristics of the Mazahua religion could be seen as a combination of pre-Hispanic and Catholic elements, thus syncretism, which embodies certain festivities and customs such as the cult of the dead, belief in certain diseases, the ritual of new fire, the cult of the water, their everyday life and the importance of dreams to Mazahuas as it was already mentioned (CDI 2009).

In every community, there is the *fiesta patronal* which takes place on the day of a community’s patron saint, where the common one is *San Isidro Labrador*. People pray to him, express their adoration and deep gratitude, asking him for the well-being of their community. During these days, people tend to decorate their plots of land with branches of flowers and adorn their oxen, mules and donkeys with flower necklaces⁶³. Religious festivals

⁶² Ibid., p.103

⁶³ For more information see the homepage of Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas. 2006 http://www.cdi.gob.mx/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=616&Itemid=62

that are common across the entire region are *el Día de Muertos* (Day of Dead or sometimes called All Souls' Day) and the festival of *Santa Cruz* (Holy Cross). In addition, the dances that Mazahuas very often perform in their festivities include: dancing of Pastors, Santiagueros dance and Concheros dance.

Mazahua community organize the Day of Dead every year, in order to celebrate the ritual return of the souls of their loved ones. However, I believe that it is not the ritual itself which explains their connection with the deceased ones, but the whole symbolic arrangement on this day. On that occasion, they place a special offering of food which their deceased one preferred during life or food that is common in the region as well as beverages such as *pulque*⁶⁴ or beer. The most traditional food offering consists of the bread, sweets, and fruits, and they are placed on a table, decorated with flowers from the fields and marigold. Marigold petals are used to mark the way that souls will travel from the graveyard to the place where a great feast await. Some also adorn the altar with embroidered tablecloths that additionally indicates Mazahua culture (CDI 2006).

The complete ceremony is considered to be as important as the feast of the patron saint, especially because many migrants return to their villages that day and they tend to make huge expenditures to celebrate the Day of the Dead, at least that is common in Pueblo Nuevo and Crescencio Morales (Oehmichen 2002: 129).

This tradition demonstrates another factor which increases the intensity of relations of Mazahua people, and that is continuity of these traditional values. According to Wilson and Wilson (1965:27), continuity implies “the volume of material co-operation and communication with the past, and the non-material unity that exists when people act, speak and feel as if it were a reality”. They describe non-material continuity as cultural similarity or keeping up with the same customs which were followed and respected by their fathers.

The worship of water is held between August 15th and 16th every year when Mazahua people carry offerings to the water, dancing around a lake or river. The main reason for this is that water god remembers Mazahua people and in this way they show their thankfulness for having water and apologize for any misuse. Moreover, this ritual is also done by Mazahua

⁶⁴ A traditional Mexican drink which is made by fermenting sap from the maguey.

people who are faced with water scarcity, so through their offering they believe that god will help them (CDI 2006).

As religious life and cosmology have a fundamental role in Mazahuas' lives, and for their community, in general, these customs are of crucial importance for their cultural reproduction, not only within their community but also in the urban areas. We have to remember that even though the social context has changed for some Mazahua members, the structure of their traditional customs is being reproduced in the new way, i.e. by accepting new elements of the city into them.

6.8 The role of a Mazahua woman

I would like to devote this chapter to Mazahua women, as essential actors in the socio-cultural processes, especially within the phenomenon of cultural reproduction.

Mazahua people are seen as a strong patriarchal culture, where the main decisions not only within the household but also in the public sphere are made by a man. The indigenous woman is faced with the triple discrimination, which is based on her ancestry, economic class and her gender within and outside her indigenous community. Beside her common domestic tasks such as preparation of food and raising children, Mazahua women also contribute to the completion of the field work, as they assist in task such as planting and harvesting of crops. In addition, they take care of animals in the backyard, make different handicrafts and sometimes even work in nearby factories (cf. Sandoval 1997: 64).

Most importantly, Mazahua women play an essential role in the cultural reproduction. Since they have a major part in their children's education, they are the ones who pass on the Mazahua language. Women, more than men, tend to be monolingual, which is usually the case if they have not left their community (Sandoval 1997: 65). Furthermore, Mazahua women have still preserved their traditional way of clothing, whereas men's clothes changed over time. In its project on Mazahuas' profile, *Gobierno del Estado de México* (2009) has provided clear description of women's traditional:

El vestido de la mujer mazahua, que constituye una preservación cultural, está compuesto de falda de manta blanca que remata con bordados de motivos zoomórficos o florales. Sobre esa falda, usa otra de satín, de colores fuertes, como el amarillo, el rosa mexicano, el morado, el verde, el lila y el azul rey. La mujer mazahua también utiliza una faja de lana muy larga,

hecha a mano, que alcanza para darle varias vueltas a su cintura. La blusa es del mismo material y color que los de la falda. El vestido se adorna con un collar de cuentas de papelillo, de numerosos hilos, cuyo color contrasta con el de aquél. El adorno se complementa con grandes arracadas de filigrana y con cintas que utiliza en sus trenzas, que pueden ser de color rojo, verde o guinda (Gobierno del Estado de México 2009).⁶⁵

Furthermore, they also have a relevant role in the social organizations in their community, which is highly visible during the migration of their spouses. Beside those who leave their communities in search for better conditions, members who remain in the place of origin have to make significant adjustments in order to continue with the organization of their every-day lives, which leads to the reassignment of activities inside their households (Chavez Arellano 2008: 72). Those members who stay tend to reorganize their actions with the aim of perseverance of their family group, where each member assumes certain role, in order to further ensure the socio-cultural and economic reproduction of the family in their community.

For example, some studies have showed that the inclusion of women in these productive actions of their village has led to their empowerment (cf. Townsend & Zapata). Other studies have indicated the attendance of women in different organizations of women peasants or *ejido* members that were fighting for the persistence of their families and better access to material resources. What stands out in all these situations is women's active role and the effort they have made in order to receive proper recognition. However, as Chavez Arellano (2008:77) indicates,

[r]ecognition of activities and the resulting incursion of Mazahua women from Pueblo Nuevo in activities that are fundamentally masculine, such as forms of government, access to government supports or the social and individual acceptance of a feminine majority due to the absence of men from families, do not necessarily change the structural order of the basis of gender relations.

Furthermore, despite women's and children's engagement in agricultural activities, this is not seen as some kind of interference in the men's world, because their performance is considered only as a support of help for their men, thus they occupy subordinate role. Even though married women very often spend longer periods without their spouses, their sexual modesty and loyalty is highly expected as a key factor in their stability of life. In case of

⁶⁵ See more information on <http://www.edomex.gob.mx/portal/page/portal/edomex/nuestro-estado/identidad-mexiquense/pueblos-indigenas/mazahuas>

some transgression of the norms, they would have to face consequences, not only from their husbands but from the society as well.⁶⁶

For example, women are not “allowed” to migrate alone, but always in company of their spouses or their family. However, in case that happens, those women who are traveling alone and living outside their community, run the risk of being stigmatized, seen as morally lost (Oehmichen 2005: 142). Therefore, this normative aspect of gender attributes to a woman a heavy burden of responsibility concerning reproduction and gives the family context a great importance when it comes to female migration.

VII The presence of Mazahuas in Mexico City

Mexico City has been one of the main centres of attraction for Mazahua people, who have been migrating from their places of origin in search of better employment, services and better living conditions, in general. Due to migratory movements, their communities have spread beyond their territorial boundaries to which they were once confined. Therefore, beside their traditional territories located in the north of the State of Mexico and in the towns of Zitacuaro, Michoacan, Mazahuas can be also found in the metropolitan area of Mexico City, where they have established their permanent settlements. They are, of course, not the only urban indigenous group in Mexico City, but as already mentioned, they stand out from the others because of the greatest number of their members in the city, and because of their preference for the trade, as a type of activity to which they have been dedicated throughout their mobile relation with this city. Their trade work has consisted of: the sale of fruits, sweets, stuffed toys (like Mexican dolls), paid domestic activities, brickwork etc.

As it was already mentioned in the first chapter of the thesis, since the thirties and forties, Mexico experienced its industrial revolution. This so-called "Mexican miracle" included into the industry a workforce that in that way managed to improve its living conditions and thus enjoyed considerable benefits. Nevertheless, not all indigenous migrants managed to be involved in the thriving industry. There were those who could not enjoy social mobility nor achieve benefits from this urban industrial growth. As stated by Oehmichen (2005: 179f), this

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.85

has been the case of Mazahuas who came to settle definitively in the capital city but whose status such as: illiteracy, poor education, the lack of job skills, the lack of mastery of the national language or any type of documents (as a birth certificate, transcripts), place them in a disadvantageous situation.

7.1 Settlement

The proximity of the traditional Mazahua area to the Federal District has given this indigenous group a set of important features, especially regarding their constant mobility to the city, their forms of appropriation of urban spaces, their struggle for their spaces in order to perform their daily street trade work in the city, the use or disuse of their own language and Spanish etc (Chávez Arellano 2004: 3).

As it was previously mentioned, most Mazahua people who have migrated to Mexico City are those from the municipality of *San Felipe del Progreso* (the State of Mexico), specifically from the region of *San Antonio Pueblo Nuevo*. They have been migrating mainly for economic and political reasons and for interplay of multiple other factors. Today, in Mexico City we can find temporary seasonal and permanent migrants.

It was emphasized how there are always strong networks between the new, urban environment and the place of origin, so when Mazahua people are coming to Mexico City, they very often come with family, who help them with accommodation and job seeking. Consequently, they often tend to focus on those areas in the city where their relatives live as well, because “[e]s sólo en su grupo de paisanos donde los indígenas encuentran relaciones sociales, ayuda financiera y apoyo moral. Recíprocamente, al replegarse a su grupo de paisanos, los indígenas se separan socialmente del resto de los estratos de la sociedad urbana” (Arizpe 1979: 130). So, Mazahuas tend to live with their family in urban areas, not only for moral or financial reasons but also because they can share with them their values and traditions.

Therefore, we can conclude that there is a close relation between Mazahuas’ migration pattern and their settlement in Mexico City. Furthermore, their occupation patterns are also strongly connected with their housing settlements, which partly explain their poor employment (Chavero Maldonado 2006: 32). The next quote clearly explains this situation:

[...] Las familias de migrantes están entrelazadas por parentesco o matrimonio y por un intercambio constante de información y de dinero con la comunidad. Es esta estrecha relación

entre las familias, reforzada por su cultura común, es decir, su identidad étnica, la que en última instancia las impulsa a seguir un patrón colectivo de migración y de especialización ocupacional en la ciudad (Arizpe 1979: 10, qt. in Chavero Maldonado: 32).

Mazahuas' first settlement areas that appeared between the '40s and the '70s were in the areas near the *Merced*⁶⁷, in the neighbourhoods of the streets of Belisario Domínguez, Guatemala, Moneda, Cuba, San Marcos and Santísima. In addition, seasonal and temporary migrants were obligated to pay a certain amount of money per day in order to sleep every night in those neighbourhoods. A couple of years later, some of them have managed to obtain a land in the municipalities such as: Chimalhuacán, Nezahualcóyotl, Naucalpan or Ecatepec⁶⁸. Nevertheless, despite living in these suburban municipalities, they have often continued to come to Mexico City, in order to work as street vendors.

But in more recent years, their work places and habitation sites have expanded. For instance, many Mazahua families, especially those younger generations are now established in Pantitlán, Iztapalapa, Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, Ecatepec or Xochimilco. Their main business activity has not been reduced only to the sale of fruits but now they also trade sweets, juices, tacos and other various items, and their trade stalls are now also located close to different subway stations such as Pantitlán, Zocalo, Pino Suárez, Tereo (Chávez Arellano 2004: 3).

7.2 Problems of Mazahuas in the city

By coming to the city, many indigenous migrants are confronted with new challenges and difficulties. Some of the most serious problems include: unemployment, limited access to social services, low levels of education, violence, inadequate housing, discrimination, difficulties in preserving their culture etc⁶⁹. Despite being in an urban and modernized environment, they still continue living in poverty.

The processes of segregation and exclusion that Mazahuas face in Mexico City can be primarily seen through their employment. Of course, there are other kind of problems they face, which inevitably result from their subordinate position in the urban space and discrimination they suffer in their every-day life. In addition, disadvantageous circumstances regarding the employment and the urban space have assigned Mazahuas at the main entrance

⁶⁷ the countries' largest indoor market

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.33

⁶⁹ See United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. 2007. "Backgrounder: Urban Indigenous Peoples and Migration: Challenges and Opportunites." http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/6_session_factsheet2.pdf

of the Merced and its areas of influence, where most of other poor rural migrants have been located too. *La Merced* has established itself as central supply and distribution center of food that was in the city and neighboring states. Moreover, it has been established as one of quite dense spaces for employment, residence and sociability, which has further increased the bonds of Mazahuas' community relations (Oehmichen 2005: 180ff).

Mazahuas arrived to the Merced in order to work as porters, stevedores and machete, which all represent not only physically difficult activities, but also poorly paid, low prestigious and without any social security system. This physical work has represented an inseparable attribute to their Indian "nature" and one of the fundamental capitals available to them to use it in the labor market. Namely, the physical force was the most important attribute that Mazahuas used to survive in the city; since they lacked the cultural capital necessary to join the expanding industry (Oehmichen 2005: 183).

Since it was not possible to survive only with the income coming from the household head, the wives and children were forced to work as well. In contrast to the men, the majority of women were engaged in selling fruit bought at Merced, different kinds of nuts or sweets, and handicrafts. Today, these women are usually engaged in trade (artisans), especially in street vending or in domestic employment (Chavero Maldonado 2006: 34). It is worth mentioning that such work is a second daily work, since they are responsible for the household and taking care of children too.



Figure 2: *Mexican dolls*

Source: http://www.hiscec.com/en/Detail/Artesanias_Souvenirs_Regalos_Tipicos_monumentos-historicos.html



Figure 3: *Street vending at the Merced*

source <http://comoseviveenixtapaluca.blogspot.co.at/2010/05/zonas-turisticas>

Those Mazahuas from San Antonio Pueblo Nuevo are especially known as street vendors, which has been their primary occupation, while they are rarely engaged as employees in private homes or in construction works. Interestingly, some use these latter activities only as some 'transition phase', so they can establish themselves as traders in Mexico City. Those Mazahuas who do not manage to ensure or prolong their stay in this way, are often forced to return to their towns, thus visiting Mexico City only occasionally (Chávez Arellano 2004: 3).

Obviously, the street represents the main working environment and space of everyday action for Mazahua people where they perform their tasks, together with people from their region, and where new socio-cultural processes occur. However, by working on the streets they are increasingly exposed to discrimination and mistreatments by holders of official shops or local administrative authority since some of them do not possess sale approval (Lemos Igreja 2000: 196).

One of the main problems of Mazahuas' employment in Mexico City, Indians cannot access better positions in the urban market because they do not have qualifying skills due to the poor education or other requirements such as experience, letters of recommendation, etc. in addition, many of them do not have any identification documents, such as ID, as in the community of origin it was sufficient that the person has been born in it in order to receive a social recognition. Consequently, this situation leads to the marginalization not only regarding the possibility of getting a job, but also the ability to access many other services such as health care etc. (Oehmichen 2005: 183f).

Their precarious conditions are even more intensified because of the discrimination they experience within the new environment. Due to the lack of legal protection, the situation of Mazahua workers is deteriorated because of their ethnicity. Not only do they suffer from marginalization in Mexico City, but they also find themselves under political exclusion, which often denies them the opportunity to improve their situation. Moreover, indigenous migrants in the city experience a second process of *ethnicization*, which very often leads indigenous peoples to eliminate or transform those cultural traits that objectified them.

However, this strategy of escaping discrimination does not always succeed, as they are frequently recognized by their accent in the interaction with mestizos. In addition, the most visible element of identification is the traditional clothing, which can be still noticed on

Mazahua women. In contrast, men tend to avoid their distinctive clothing, so in the city they dressed as the mestizos (Oehmichen 2003: 324ff.) Therefore, it seems that ethnic discrimination might be gender variant as Mazahua women are more exposed to the discrimination and racism because they are primer carriers of their ethnic identity. However, these unfavourable circumstances have led Mazahua people to establish certain organizations which have put forward their central demands and supported Mazahua population in the city. Therefore, even Mazahuas' positions of marginalization, and discrimination they face, strengthen the awareness of their indigenous population, which in turn consolidate their sense of solidarity, and differentiate them from other groups.

It is clear that the informal economy has been the only opportunity of employment for Mazahuas in Mexico City. However, it offers certain advantages as well, such as :special training is not required, flexibility regarding time off during periods of planting and harvesting, and the possibility of incorporating all family members into the work, female work has been integrated as part of the subsistence activities of migrants (Oehmichen 2005: 184). For example, the sale of dolls has been the tradition among Mazahua women and even the younger ones have learned this skill from their mothers or aunts. In addition, the itinerant sale is for indigenous migrants, especially women, the easiest way to access work, as there are rarely any other alternatives (cf. Aripze 1989: 264).

Despite the strong problems and the difficulties they face in the city, Mazahuas indicate that life is harder in the village, so many of them do not return, regardless of the hostile attitude of non-Indians. In the end, they are Mexican citizens as well, and they are only looking to improve their standard of living, as other people in the city. Therefore, they should have the right of free movement and residence in Mexico City.

7.3 Mazahuas as political subjects

Due to their precarious conditions, Mazahuas, together with other indigenous groups have been organized in the city with the aim of raising their standard of living, which is the main reason why they established several organizations. Their goal has been to put forward specific social demands concerning their employment, housing, respect for street vending activity, respect for their rights and better access to public services.

Both Mazahua men and women have been fighting for the re-evaluation of their culture and identity, because they do not want to be neglected anymore and fall into the anonymity of this urban city. Therefore, the development of their organizations is vital for their cultural survival, and they believe this gives them the opportunity of becoming visible as the strategy of being heard and respected. It is astonishing how women were the ones who have predominated in these Mazahua organizational processes and political struggle (Chavero Maldonado 2006: 36).

Nevertheless, despite their struggles, their claims have not been considered by the federal government. They became aware that the achievement of their claims and solutions of their main problems are easier to handle if they are organized as a group than doing it individually. In addition, this struggle of Mazahua is even more intensified as they have joined their powers with other indigenous organizations in the Mexico City with the goal of receiving the recognition of their culture and collective rights as peoples (Chavero Maldonado 2006: 37).

Some of these Mazahua organizations in the city are : *Asociación de Inquilinos Mazahuas, Cooperativa Flor de Mazahua, Organización Mazahua San Antonio Pueblo Nuevo, Unión de Artesanos Indígenas y Trabajadores no Asalariados, grupo Otomí, Los comuneros organizados de Milpa Alta* etc⁷⁰.

Even though Mazahuas still have to strengthen their institutions in order to make their voices heard, I believe that their mere decision to establish these organizations has been encouraged by their strong need for the reaffirmation in the city.

7.4 The Flor de Mazahua Cooperative

I would like to specifically address this organization because of two main reasons: 1. It is established only by Mazahua women, 2. It has a vital role in the cultural reproduction of Mazahuas, in general.

The Flor de Mazahua embodies a small group of Mazahua women who dedicated themselves to making traditional crafts (beautiful pieces of Mazahua art with all its symbolic content). I believe that this organization, in the best way exemplifies Mazahua women as eager subjects in the fight for the cultural preservation, which is expressed in their production of traditional

⁷⁰ See the complete list of different organizations and their addresses on <http://www.redindigena.net/dirnac/df.html>

objects which maintain both distinct technique and aesthetic of Mazahua traditional culture. This particular role they have in the urban area contradicts with those stereotypes about them being passive and having marginalized role in the process of change. Faced with precarious conditions in the urban space, they took things into their own hands because they believed that certain cultural customs have to be preserved as distinct markers of Mazahua tradition.

Their long trajectory of sleeping in the market at night to the development of this organization with many members and their own house in Mexico City is an outstanding story. As indicated by the Center for Peace named “Casa de los Amigos”:

The Mazahua women have had to fight discrimination, defamation, the city government (many times), unscrupulous squatters, and even the Instituto Nacional Indígena, which for years gave the Mazahua a place to make their crafts and paid them for their work, while selling their textiles in a high-end store at hundreds of times what the women received. Their struggle to establish a co-op was followed nationally in the press, and seen as a significant social victory and inspiration for other indigenous artisan and cooperative groups (p.14)⁷¹.

However, their struggle carries on, especially since the economic crisis occurred which has affected the Cooperative as some members have been forced to find other work and many of the original associates approached the retirement age, requiring care and support.⁷² At the end, we should remember that despite difficulties they face in Mexico City, the Flor de Mazahua Cooperative- made of migrants of this particular indigenous group- has continued to cherish its tradition of craftsmanship of their people.



Figure 4: *Famous Mexican dolls*

Source: <http://www.toltecyotl.org/tolteca/index.php?limitstart=65>

⁷¹ See the complete article on <http://www.casadelosamigos.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/lavoz/Invierno%202010%20esp%20SITIO.pdf>

⁷² (ibid., p.14).

7.5 Change and persistence

In this last chapter, I would like to specifically address the issue of cultural reproduction of Mazahua people in Mexico City, since it was the main focus of this master thesis.

On the example of Mazahua people, we have seen migration process as a social drama which pattern is similar to that of the rites of passage, as it also involves the redefinition of the past with a future-oriented view, and might affect groups in a regenerative or destructive way.

According to Iwanska (1971: 129), two main goals of Mazahuas are: to keep their traditional way of life as much as it is possible and accepting those things from the Occidental world (*El Progreso*) which seem meaningful and beneficial for their particular community (for example, education or technology). These kinds of communal decisions are made by using “the hierarchy of values” (Iwanska: 133). Therefore, these crucial decisions are mainly based on desires and eagerness from within the Mazahua community as a whole.

These aims are constantly discussed within the community and every new perspective is estimated according to these two goals. As Iwanska states:

[t]heir way is to look around, to reflect about what they see, to predict, to evaluate and to enjoy whatever they find enjoyable. They do this even when a lot of the most vital “problems” they face are “unsolved”. The attitude of “clearing ground for action” so prevalent among Occidental people, is unknown to them (1971: 130).

Of course, very often it is not possible to control every aspect of our lives, so when dramatic changes occur, they can be opposed to our accustomed lifestyle or obligate us to make serious decisions. The following figure indicates this process:

FIGURE 12.2
CULTURE CHANGE:
CULTURAL AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

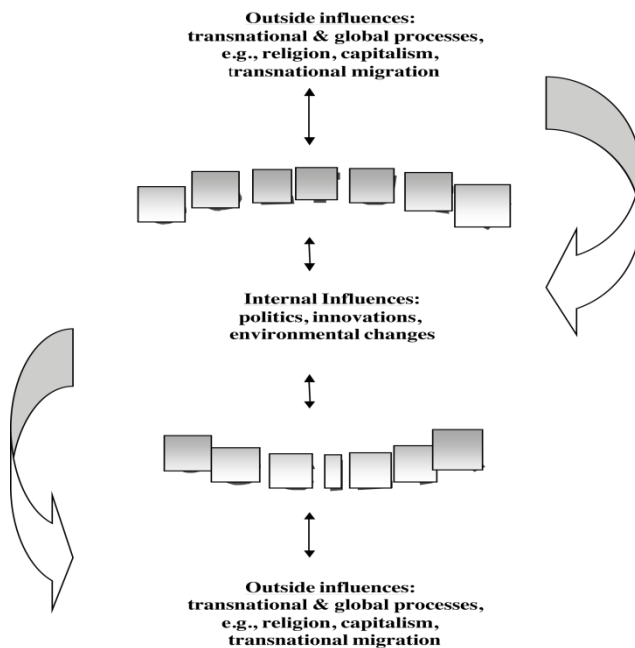


Figure 5: Cultural reproduction (Chavez 2006: 295f).

This image shows us how socio-cultural system should be seen as a fluent and dynamic phenomenon and not like a fixed, unchanging essence. We might be able to control certain things within our own community to some extent, but there are outside influences which affect us and make us take some crucial decisions in our lives. For example, in the past Mazahuas were influenced by societal pressures of Spanish invaders, and they adopted some elements of their culture (religion, new ways of living). Today, Mazahua people are confronted with another powerful source, and that is migration to urban environments.

Mazahua people who are residing in Mexico City experience cultural changes but, at the same time they also show continuities. Even among those born in the city it is possible to notice a deep attachment to the territory of origin. Most importantly, the territory represents a symbolic element of their identity: “[l]os montes y montañas, los ríos, ojos de agua [...] se integran como geosímbolos y referentes de la tradición oral, de los mitos, de la ritualidad. En ese sentido los territorios se constituyen como territorios culturales” (Oehmichen 2005: 101).

This strong attachment can be seen through their participation in the rituals and different ceremonies of their village or in certain contexts where it is required to express their ethnicity or wear their traditional clothes (Oehmichen 2003: 318f). In addition, even new generations

of migrants, especially second generations, demonstrate adaptive cultural changes without giving up of their ethnic identity. Oehmichen emphasizes that these changes should not be seen only as resulted from migration, because even among those who didn't leave their traditional territory, there are often acculturation pressures by the Mexican state and its different institutions, which have been exercised throughout the 20th century and until this day.

Therefore, we can conclude that there is a certain feeling of belonging in those Mazahua people in Mexico City. Even though they do not live anymore in their places of origin, the paradigm of the *mayordomias* which are transmitted from one generation to the other, obligate those urban members to return each year for the traditional celebrations, as it was described before. Those urban family members have an enormous economic contribution towards the celebration of their patron saint festivals or other traditional customs, as well as towards the development and improvement of community's church building (Chavez Arellano 2008: 79). Consequently, the family context proves to be the key factor in the cultural reproduction of urban Mazahuas.

Furthermore, authors such as like Paradise (1986:140)⁷³ argues that this strong sense of belonging and ethnic identity is what enabled Mazahua people the resistance to urban lifestyles that surround and threaten their cultural integrity. As we could see on the example of Mazahuas from El Nopal and the Cooperative Flor de Mazahua, the resistance is also related to the processes of exclusion and marginalization of these people, which encourage them to keep together and fight as a group, and thus lead to the emergence of a feeling of belonging identity.

Another possibility of cultural reproduction is through various narrative fragments that are essential part the worldview of Mazahuas located in Mexico City. Such fragments represent symbolic elements that allow them to redefine their sense of ethnicity even in places outside their community. These elements are present in the oral tradition and they are expressed through beliefs, myths or ritual practices of Mazahuas. In addition, these narratives are transmitted through generations within families and are a common way of referring to the place of origin and Mazahuas' common ancestry. Most importantly, they show continuity in the urban environment of Mexico City and enable migrants to have a living memory of their territory of origin (Oehmichen 2002: 123f).

⁷³ (quoted in Chávez Arellano 2004:5)

An important role in the socio-cultural process is played by Mazahua woman despite stereotypical beliefs that women have a marginal position within the processes of cultural redefinition or change. As Pellicer (2006: 335) confirms:

Those who maintain their mother tongue within the social unity of the rural home are mostly peasants who live off the land and small-scale business at the local market or at home. Those who maintain it in an urban context earn a living mostly as artisans, street or market vendors, or as domestic help. In fact, these women have not lost contact with rural homes and socio-cultural background but continue to form part of the family network, which benefits economically from the fruits of their labors in the city.

Overall, taking an active role in the Cooperative “Flor de Mazahua”, the preservation of traditional crafts, the transmission of the native language as well as through their traditional clothing, Mazahua women represent themselves as essential actors regarding the cultural reproduction in the urban setting.

VIII Conclusion

In the previous chapters of my work I was using relevant information from other ethnographic studies in order to discuss the theoretical concepts of identity, ethnicity, culture and persistence as well as interrelations and their transformational character. These phenomena are subjected to certain changes, which come to the surface especially in migratory processes, during which new relationships between people occur and people develop themselves in a new socio-cultural context.

According to the leading research question of this thesis it is possible to indicate that major challenges faced by Mazahuas in Mexico City are those related to their precarious employment, limited access to public services and poor housing, which are greatly intensified by processes of discrimination and racism. Moreover, they might also experience difficulties in preserving their identity and culture which usually results in a loss of their values and heritage. However, despite these difficulties which enormously complicate Mazahuas' cultural reproduction, Mexico City has proved to be a place where Mazahua people have managed to maintain their networks and strong ties to their place of origin, which shows us that one's ethnic identity is not completely abandoned. It is obvious that family relationships have a great importance in the lives of urban Mazahuas. In their community of origin, the social life is reflected within the family circle, while on their arrival in Mexico City, they are dependent on the support of their relatives who had come before them and who usually help them in seeking work.

Consequently, Mazahua migrants tend to settle in origin-specific communities. This strategy offers Mazahuas the opportunity to maintain cohesions and preserve specific elements of their common ethnic identity, as it was showed on the example of Flor de Mazahua Cooperative. However, it poses a great risk as well, since it might lead to the emergence of the ethnic enclaves, which can make it even harder for Mazahua members to integrate into the urban society or might exclude them further from the public space. Therefore, this Mazahua tendency proves to be a knife with two blades.

We could see how they have changed their lifestyle in the city, without jeopardizing their deepest values, such as their traditional patterns. Most importantly, this thesis showed that Mazahua kinship relations are one of the cultural elements that have showed greatest persistence, even though many Mazahua members have moved to Mexico City and some of them have abandoned their native language.

This, in turn, displays strong loyalty and solidarity between Mazahua members in Mexico City and those at home. Although urban Mazahuas are physically remote from their place of origin, their traditional territory proves to be a fundamental reference of their group identity. It has a special ancestral character which links Mazahua migrants to their past and their history, as it was showed on the example of their traditional festivities and myths. This attachment to their community has been maintained through continuous visits to their places of origin, even by those members who were born and socialized in Mexico City.

Obviously, these factors are the most important strongholds in the city. Moreover, they enable cultural reproduction in Mexico City and allow Mazahuas to survive on the margins and handle unfavourable conditions of the urban environment. Accordingly, this ethnic community has been preserved regardless of its borders.

Furthermore, those alarming conditions they encounter in the city (social segregation and exclusion) give rise to the unification with other indigenous populations in Mexico City with similar problems and goals, and stimulate them to form effective groups for social action in order to oppose powerful and destructive forces. This has generated many indigenous organizations in Mexico City, as it was mentioned in the chapter 7.3. I devoted a particular attention to the Flor de Mazahua Cooperative because it was created only by Mazahua women. I believe that their main activities, which consist of making traditional crafts, are an embodiment form of cultural transmission (reproduction). Moreover, this organization is a social space for Mazahua women that contributes to a sense of collective belonging to a group defined by ethnicity, gender and shared experiences in the city.

In my opinion, urban places, such as Mexico City, affect perceptions that Mazahua women have of themselves, especially since the new environment has made them to group themselves and fight for their rights and values, thus making them more active and visible subjects.

Finally, is it true that “*el sol sale para todos en la ciudad de México*”⁷⁴, as it is commonly mentioned in Mexico City? Maybe in the future we will see more positive results. Today, Mazahuas are still inserted into the low skilled activities with poor payment. Nevertheless, the marginalization, ethnic discrimination and racism they face in the city raise their

⁷⁴ (translation: “*the sun shines for everyone in Mexico City*” - it is a well-known quote)

awareness and lead to the preservation of their identities and cultural distinctiveness, which in turn strengthen their feeling of solidarity.

Overall, urban Mazahuas have demonstrated that migration does not necessarily imply the dissolution of an individual from existing cultural, social or economic ties to its community of origin. In the case of Mazahua people, family context and networks have a positive impact on the preservation of their ethnic identity in the city. Consequently, the type of any individual's transformation in the urban area can be measured according to the level of commitment to community of origin, which determines their cultural reproduction as well.

IX Bibliography:

Acharya, Arun Kumar/ Barragán Codina, Manuel R. (2012): “Social segregation of indigenous migrants in Mexico: An overview from Monterrey”, In: *Urban izziv* (translated title: *Urban Challenge*) 23(1), pp. 140–149.

www.ceeol.com. [Accessed January 19, 2013]

Albertani Claudio (1999) “Los pueblos indígenas y la ciudad de México: una aproximación”, *Política y Cultura*, n.12, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Distrito Federal, Mexico, pp.195-122.

<http://redalyc.uaemex.mx/pdf/267/26701211.pdf> [Accessed February 10, 2013]

Alvarsson, Jan-Åke (1990): *Ethnicity in Latin America*. Centre for Latin American Studies. Uppsala: Univ. of Uppsala.

Ambrosi, Eugenio (2007): “Indigenous People and Migration toward the Cities: Intercultural Analysis of the Situation and of Present Tendencies”. Expert Group Meeting on Urban Indigenous Peoples and Migration, Santiago de Chile, Chile.

Américas MRG Directory. ”Mexico: Mexico Overview”

<http://www.minorityrights.org/?lid=4460&tmpl=printpage> [Accessed January 15, 2013]

Awan, Fatimah (2008): “Chapter 2: Representation”. In *Young People, Identity and the Media: A Study of Conceptions of Self-Identity Among Youth in Southern England*.

<http://www.artlab.org.uk/fatimah-awan-03.pdf> [Accessed December 30, 2012]

Arizpe, Lourdes (1975): *Indígenas en la ciudad. El caso de las “Marías”*, Colección SepSetentas, Secretaría de Educación Pública, México.

(1976). *La ideología del indio y la economía campesina*. In: *Capitalismo y campesinado en México. Estudios de la realidad campesina*. México. INAH. 126 p

(1993) *Una sociedad en movimiento*, in: Arizpe, Lourdes (ed.), *Antropología breve de México*, México D.F.: Academia de la Investigación Científica, pp.373- 98.

Bacal, Azril (1990): *The Emergence of Ethno-Development in the Social Sciences*. In: Alvarsson, Jan-Åke (ed.): *Ethnicity in Latin America*. Centre for Latin American Studies. Uppsala: Univ. of Uppsala.

Barth, Frederic (1998): Introduction. In: *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries – The Social Organisation of Cultural Difference*, (ed.F. Barth).Illinois: Wavelandpress.

Bastide, Roger (1973): *El prójimo y el extraño. El encuentro de las civilizaciones*. Buenos Aires: Amorrortu.

Billig, Michael (1986): “Racismo, prejuicios y discriminación”, In S. Moscovici, *Psicología social, II. Pensamiento y vida social. Psicología social y problemas sociales*. Barcelona: Paidós.

Bronfen, Elisabeth/Marius, Benjamin (1997): Einleitung. In: Bronfen, Elisabeth [et.al.]: *Hybride Kulturen. Beiträge zur anglo-amerikanischen Multikulturalismusdebatte*. Tübingen: Stauffenberg Verlag. pp. 1-30.

Carrasco, Pedro (1979): *Los otomies*. Mexico: UNAM.

Champagne, Duane (2005): *Rethinking Native Relations with Contemporary Nation-States*. In Duane Champagne/ Karen Jo Torjesen/ Susan Steiner (eds.): *Indigenous peoples and the modern state*. Walnut Creek, Calif. [et al.]: AltaMira Press, pp. 3-24.

Chavero Maldonado, Gerardo (2006): “Indígenas mazahuas: migración, sobrevivencia y reproducción cultural en la ciudad de México”. CEPE- UNAM.

<http://132.248.130.20/revistadecires/articulos/art8-1.pdf> [Accessed December 10, 2012]

Chávez-Arellano, María Eugenia (2008): “Mazahua Families From San Antonio Pueblo Nuevo, San Jose Del Rincon Municipality, State of Mexico, Mexico”. Estado de México: Programa Universitario de Investigación en Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades. Universidad Autónoma Chapingo. <http://www.colpos.mx/asyd/volumen5/numero1/asd-09-005.pdf> [Accessed December 15, 2012]

Chávez-Arellano, María Eugenia (2004): “Identidad y migración. Imágenes y expectativas de algunos mazahuas en la ciudad de México”, In: *Gazeta de Antropología* (20).

http://www.ugr.es/~pwlac/G20_07MariaEugenia_Chavez_Arellano.html

[Accessed February 5, 2013]

Chavez, Leo R (2006): *Culture Change and Cultural Reproduction: Lessons from Research on Transnational Migration*. In, Janice Stockard & George Spindler (eds.): *Globalization and Change in Fifteen Cultures: Born in one World and Living in Another*. Belmont, CA: Thomson-Wadsworth.

<http://www.socsci.uci.edu/~lchavez/bio/Chavez-culture.pdf> [Accessed December 10, 2013]

Codazzi, Roberto (2001): “Autonomía indígena en Chiapas: educación, usos y costumbres.”

<http://spazioinwind.libero.it/educazioneinchiapas/index.htm> [Accessed February 10, 2013]

Connolly, Priscilla: “The case of Mexico City, Mexico”. Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Azcapotzalco, pp.1-38.

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu-projects/Global_Report/pdfs/Mexico.pdf [Accessed December 15, 2012]

De la Peña, Guillermo (2006): “A New Mexican Nationalism? Indigenous Rights, Constitutional Reform and the Conflicting Meanings of Multiculturalism.” *Nations and Nationalism* 12 (2): 279-302.

http://gdelapen.com/Resources/%20A_New_Mexican_Nationalisma.pdf [Accessed December 20, 2012]

Del Popolo, Fabiana (2007): “Spatial distribution of indigenous peoples in Latin America: A census based interpretation”, In Del Popolo, F., Oyarce, A. M (et.al): *Indigenous peoples and urban settlements: spatial distribution, internal migration and living conditions*. Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) Population Division. Santiago de Chile.

<http://www.eclac.org/publicaciones/xml/9/32549/PyD78-final.pdf> [Accessed January 20, 2013]

Earle, Rebecca (2007): *The return of the native: Indians and myth-making in Spanish America, 1810-1930*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Fernández-Martorel, Mercedes (1997): *Antropología de la convivencia*. Madrid, Editorial Cátedra.

Friedman, Jonathan (1994): *Cultural identity and global process*.

Fuentes, Alejandro (2010): *Cultural diversity and indigenous peoples' land claims. Argumentative dynamics and jurisprudential approach in the Americas*. Dissertation.

<http://rwi.lu.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Alejandro-Fuentes-doctoral-thesis.pdf> [Accessed January 15, 2013]

Giddens, Anthony (1989): *Sociology*. Cambridge : Polity

Giménez, Gilberto (2000): “Identidades étnicas. Estado de la cuestión”, In *Los retos de la etnicidad en los estados-nación del siglo XXI*. México: INI-CIESAS- Miguel Ángel Porrúa, pp. 4570.

(2004): *Identidades étnicas: Estado de la Cuestión*

http://www.paginasprodigy.com/peimber/id_etnicas.pdf. [Accessed December 25, 2012]

(2006): *El Debate contemporáneo en Torno al Concepto de Etnicidad. Cultura y Representaciones Sociales*.

<http://www.culturayrs.org.mx/revista/num1/gimenez.htm> > [Accessed February 10, 2013]

Gómez Montero, Raúl (1986): Los primeros movimientos migratorios en la región mazahua de San Felipe del Progreso, Estado de México. Memoria del primer encuentro de estudios sobre la región mazahua. México. Mimeo.

González de la Fuente, Iñigo / Salas Quintanal, Hernán (2012): Community projects in the era of globalization: The case of a local rural society in Mexico. In: *Anthropological Notebooks*, Vol. 18 (1), pp.41–64.

http://www.drustvo-antropologov.si/AN/PDF/2012_1/Anthropological_Notebooks_XVIII_1_delaFuente.pdf

[Accessed February 10, 2013]

Gonzalez-Hernandez (2012): “Los Mazahuas”

<http://aldo-alejandro-gonzalez-hernandez.blogspot.co.at/2012/06/fundamentacion-antecedentes-no-hay.html> [Accessed February 5, 2013]

Gonzalez Ortiz, Felipe (2001): “La organización social de los mazahuas del Estado de México”. In: *Ciencia Ergo Sum*, Vol 8 (1). Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México. Toluca: México, pp. 19-29.

<http://redalyc.uaemex.mx/pdf/104/10402003.pdf> [Accessed February 5, 2013]

Gormsen, Erdmann (1994): Die Stadt Mexico- Megalopolis ohne Grenzen, in Gormsen/Thimm, Andreas: Megastädte in der Dritten Welt. ,pp. 73-117.

Hall, Stuart (1981): The Whites of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media, in M. Alvarado and J. O. Thompson (eds.) (1990) *The Media Reader*, London: BFI, pp. 7- 23.

Herskovits, Melville J. (1955): *Cultural Anthropology*. New York: Knopf, inc.

Hofmeister, Hans-Georg (2003): Mexico-City - Eine Metropole des Südens im globalen Restrukturierungsprozeß. Germany: Kassel University Press, pp.1-357.

<http://www.uni-kassel.de/upress/online/frei/978-3-89958-016-7.volltext.frei.pdf> [Accessed December 20, 2012]

Iwanska, Alicja (1965): “The Mexican Indian: Image and identity”, In: *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 529-536.

< <http://www.jstor.org/stable/165002> > [Accessed December 25, 2012]

(1971): *Purgatory and Utopia: A Mazahua Indian Village of Mexico*. Schenkman Publishing Company: Cambridge.

Jenks, Chris (1993): Introduction: The analytic bases of cultural reproduction theory, In: Chris Jenks, *Cultural Reproduction*. London: Routledge.

Korsbaek, Leif (2009): El sistema de cargos en San Francisco Oxtotilpan. In: Leif Korsbaek & Fernando Cámara (eds.), *Etnografía del sistema de cargos en comunidades indígenas del Estado de México*. Mexico: MC, pp. 207–31.

Lemos Igreja, Rebecca (2000): *Derecho y diferencia étnica: la impartición de justicia hacia los indígenas migrantes en la ciudad de México* (tesis de maestría). México D.F.: CIESAS

Lomnitz, Larissa (1977): *Networks and marginality: life in a Mexican shantytown*. New York: Academic Press.

Mader, Elke (2004): *Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie Lateinamerikas – Eine Einführung. Kultur, Macht und Identität*.

<<http://www.lateinamerika-studien.at/content/kultur/ethnologie/pdf/kulturmacht.pdf>>

[Accessed Februar 10, 2013]

Mancebo François (2007): "Natural hazards and urban policies in Mexico City", in *Revue de géographie alpine/Journal of Alpine Research*, n° 95-2. Armand Colin: Grenoble, pp. 108-118. <http://rga.revues.org/266> [Accessed December 25, 2012]

Manrique, Leonardo (1967): "Jiquilpan Pame", *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, Austin Texas, University of Texas Press, vol. 5, pp. 331-348.

Mead, George Herbert (1968): *Geist, Identität und Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Mercado Maldonado & Hernández Oliva (2010): "El proceso de construcción de la identidad colectiva".

Miller, Marilyn Grace (2004): *Rise and fall of the cosmic race: the cult of Mestizaje in Latin America*. Austin, Tex. [et.al.]: University of Texas Press.

Molina, Virginia/ Hernández, Juan Jesús (2006): *Perfil sociodemográfico de la población indígena en la Zona Metropolitana de la ciudad de México, 2000. Los retos para la política pública*, In: Yanes, Pablo/ Molina, Virginia/ Óscar González: *EL TRIPLE DESAFÍO*

Derechos, instituciones y políticas para la ciudad pluricultural. México, D.F.: Dirección General de Equidad y Desarrollo Social, Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México.

Moreno Figueroa, Monica G. (2011): 'Naming Ourselves: Recognising Racism and Mestizaje in Mexico', In J. McLaughlin, Phillimore, P. & Richardson, D. (eds) *Contesting Recognition: Contemporary Cultural and Institutional Disputes*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, pp-122-143.

(2010): *Distributed intensities: Whiteness, mestizaje and the logics of Mexican racism*. In: *Ethnicities*, 10(3) 387–401. Newcastle University, UK: SAGE.

Moscovici, Serge (1988): 'Notes Towards a Description of Social Representations', *European Journal of Social Psychology* 18: 211-250.

Narro Robles, José (2011): Prolog, in Meléndez Yúdico, Jordy & Zapata Garesché, Eugene: Mexico city: Global city-Local actions, international commitment. México, D.F. p. 122

http://www.ciudadglobal.df.gob.mx/work/sites/cdg/resources/LocalContent/397/5/Version_I_NGLES_com.pdf [Accessed January 5, 2013]

Oehmichen Bazán, Cristina (2005): *La multiculturalidad de la ciudad de México y los derechos indígenas*, In Yanes, Pablo/ Molina, Virginia/ Óscar González: Urbi indiano la larga marcha a la ciudad diversa. México, D.F.: Dirección General de Equidad y Desarrollo Social, Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México.

http://www.sideso.df.gob.mx/documentos/2006_urbi_indiano.pdf [Accessed December 15, 2012]

Oehmichen Bazán, Cristina (2001a): Mujeres indígenas migrantes en el proceso de cambio cultural. Análisis de las normas de control social y relaciones de género en la comunidad extraterritorial. México D.F. : UNAM

(2001b): "La multiculturalidad de la Ciudad de México y los Derechos Indígenas". In: *Boletín Antropológico*, Vol III, (53). Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas; Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. pp. 249-268.

http://www.saber.ula.ve/bitstream/123456789/18389/1/cristina_oehmichen.pdf

[Accessed January 5, 2013]

(2002): Comunidad y cosmovisión entre los mazahuas radicados en la Ciudad de México. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México: México, D. F. pp.124-148.

(2003): Relaciones interétnicas en la ciudad de México. In: Castellanos, Alicia (coord.): *Imágenes del Racismo en México*. Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana: Iztapalapa, pp. 315-360.

Oommen, Tharrileth K. (1997): *Citizenship and national identity. From colonialism to globalism*. New Dehli [et.al.]: Sage Publ.

Ortiz, Felipe Gonzalet (2001): *La organización social de los mazahuas del Estado de México*. Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México:Toluca, México, pp. 19-29.

<http://redalyc.uaemex.mx/pdf/104/10402003.pdf> [Accessed February 5, 2013]

Parnreiter, Christof (2007): *Historische Geographien, verräumlichte Geschichte – Mexico City und das mexikanische Städtenetz von der Industrialisierung bis zur Globalisierung*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

(1999): Megastadtentwicklung, Globalisierung und Migration- Fallstudie Mexico City, In: Husa, Karl (1999): *Megastädte der Dritten Welt im Globalisierungsprozeß: Mexico City, Jakarta, Bombay - vergleichende Fallstudien in ausgewählten Kulturkreisen*. Wien: Ins. Für Geographie, pp-59-186.

Pellicer, Dora (2006): Stages of bilingualism. Local conversational practices among Mazahuas. In Hidalgo, Margarita (ed.), Mexican Indigenous Languages at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century. Mouton de Gruyter: Berlin & NY, pp. 325-357.

Phillips, A. (2007): Multiculturalism without culture. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Puyana, Alicia/ Murillo, Sandra (2011): "Trade Policies and Ethnic Discrimination in Mexico". In: THE IDEAs Working Paper Series, pp.1-51.

http://www.networkideas.org/working/nov2011/03_2011.pdf [Accessed January 30, 2013]

Ramirez, Alejandro (2006): Mexico. In Hall, Gillette & Harry Anthony Patrinos: Indigenous Peoples, Poverty and Human Development in Latin America 1994–2004. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.150-199.

Sánchez, Consuelo (2004): "La diversidad cultural en la Ciudad de México. Autonomía de los pueblos originarios y los migrantes, In Yanes Pablo, Molina Virginia, González Oscar: Ciudad, Pueblos Indígenas y Etnicidad. Universidad de la Ciudad de México-Dirección General de Equidad y Desarrollo Social, México, D.F., 2004, pp. 57-89.

http://www.sideso.df.gob.mx/documentos/ciudad_pueblos_indigenas.pdf [Accessed January 5, 2013]

Sandoval Forero, Eduardo Andrés (1997): Poblacion y cultura en la etnorregion mazahua jantjo). Mexico: Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Mexico.

(2001): La ley de las costumbres en los indígenas Mazahuas. Estado de México: UAEM.

(2005): La organización social indígena mazahua. In: Hilario Topete et al. (eds.), La organización social y el ceremonial. Mexico: MC, pp. 261–80.

Scholz, Andrea (2004): Soziale Netzwerke indigener Migranten in Mexiko- Stadt. Bonn: Diplomarbeit.

Speiser, Sabine (2004): „Indigene Völker in Städten: präsent und doch nicht wahrgenommen“, In: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH: Indigene Völker in Lateinamerika und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit. Eschborn: Kasperek-Verlag, pp.169-189.

< <http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/04-0306.pdf> > [Accessed December 8, 2012]

Stryker, S./ Owens, T.J./White, R.W. (2000). Self, Identity, and social movements. Minneapolis: University of Minesota Press

Ströbitzer, Elisabeth (2006): Wasserkonflikte und indigene Völker – Anhand der Fallstudie Frente Mazahuas gegen Mexiko-Stadt. Wien: Diplomarbeit.

Sturken, Marita / Cartwright, Lisa (2001): *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. Oxford [et.al.]: Oxford Univ. Press.

Sugiura Yamamoto, Yoko (1998): "Desarrollo histórico en el Valle de Toluca antes de la conquista Española: proceso de conformación pluriétnica", In: *Estudios de Cultura Otopame* (1). México: Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, UNAM, México.

Szasz, Ivonne (1995): "Migración y relaciones sociales de género: aportes de la perspectiva antropológica", In: *Estudios demográficos y urbanos* (25). México: El Colegio de México, pp. 129-150.

Townsend, Janet/ Emma Zapata (1999): *Women and Power, Fighting patriarchies and poverty*, New York, St. Martin's Press.

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. 2007. "Backgrounder: Urban Indigenous Peoples and Migration: Challenges and Opportunities."

UN-Habitat & OHCHR (2010) : "Urban Indigenous Peoples and Migration: A Review of Policies, Programmes and Practices", Nairobi: UN-Habitat.

<http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/listItemDetails.aspx?publicationID=2916>

[Accessed January 8, 2013]

Valencia Rojas /Alberto Javier /Rubio Jiménez /Miguel Ángel (2009): "México en el nuevo milenio: La redefinición de una nación pluriétnica y multicultural."

<http://www.nacionmulticultural.unam.mx/Portal/Central/EDITORIAL/pdfs/edit04.pdf>

[Accessed January 8, 2012]

Vasconcelos, José (1958) [1927]: *Obras completas*. Vol. II: *Indología*. Mexico City: Libreros Mexicanos Unidos.

(1979): *The Cosmic Race: A Bilingual Edition*. Trans. by Didier Jaén. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.

Velasco Ortiz, Laura (2007): "Migraciones indígenas a las ciudades de México y Tijuana". In: *Papeles de Población* (052). Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México: Toluca, México. pp. 184-209

<http://redalyc.uaemex.mx/pdf/112/11205207.pdf> [Accessed January 10, 2013]

Wade, Peter (1997): *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America*

(2001) *Racial identity and nationalism: A theoretical view from Latin America*. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24(5): 845–865.

(2005) *Rethinking mestizaje: Ideology and lived experience*. *Journal of Latin American Studies* 37: 239–257.

Wilson, Godfrey / Wilson, Monica (1965): The analysis of social change. Based on Observations in Central Africa. Cambridge Univ. Press: London.

Weber, Max (1980): Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriß der verstehenden Soziologie. Besorgt von Johannes Winckelmann. Studienausgabe, Tübingen.

Yanes Rizo, Pablo Enrique (2004): Urbanización de los pueblos indígenas y etnización de las ciudades. Hacia una agenda de derechos y políticas públicas. In: Ciudad, Pueblos Indígenas y Etnicidad (Hrsg.: P.Yanes/ V.Molina/ O. Gonzáles). Mexiko: UCM.

Yanes, Pablo (2010): Equality in Diversity: Agenda for the Urban Indigenous peoples in Mexico. In UN-HABITAT/ OHCHR: 'Urban Indigenous Peoples and Migration: A Review of Policies, Programmes and Practices', United Nations Housing Rights Programme, Report No. 8. pp.87-109.

<http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/listItemDetails.aspx?publicationID=2916>

[Accessed December 8, 2012]

(2007): Los Indígenas urbanos o la Espiral de la Desigualdad. Cámara de Diputados. http://www3.diputados.gob.mx/camara/content/download/162701/402338/file/INDIGENAS_URBANOS_bis002.pdf. [Accessed January 10, 2013]

Yescas Angeles Trujano, C. (2008), "Indigenous Routes: A Framework for Understanding Indigenous Migration", IOM, Geneva.

Yhmooff, Jesús (1977): El municipio de San Felipe del Progreso a través del tiempo. México. Biblioteca Enciclopédica del Estadode México.

Yuval, Davis (1997): Gender & Nation. London: Sage Publ.

Links:

Casa de los Amigos:

<http://www.casadelosamigos.org>

Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (México):

http://www.cdi.gob.mx/index.php?id_seccion=1809

(2006): http://www.cdi.gob.mx/mazahuas_edomex/indice.html

(2009): http://www.cdi.gob.mx/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=616&Itemid=62

(2009) Gobierno del Estado de México:

<http://www.edomex.gob.mx/portal/page/portal/edomex/nuestro-estado/identidad-mexiquense/pueblos-indigenas/mazahuas>

UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues:

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/6_session_factsheet2.pdf

UNESCO

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/>

X Appendix

A. Curriculum Vitae

Dragana Marusic

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Geburtsdatum | 13. März 1987 |
| Geburtsort | Doboj (Bosnien Herzegowina) |
| Staatsbürgerschaft | Bosnien |
| Familienstand | ledig |
| E-Mail | draganamarusic225@hotmail.com |

Ausbildung

| | |
|--------------|---|
| 1994-1996 | Grundschule, Jugoslawien |
| 1996-2002 | Grundschule, Bosnien |
| 2002-2006 | Gymnasium (Allgemeine Richtung), Bosnien |
| Seit SS/2007 | Studentin an der Universität Wien, Studiengang: Internationale Entwicklung; Nebenfach: Anglistik und Amerikanistik |

Andere Auslandsaufenthalte

September 2012- Mexico City
Februar 2011 - Mexico City
September-October 2010- Mexico City & Querétaro. México

Berufliche Erfahrung

Juli 2011- Ferialpraktikum im Erste Group Bank AG (Loan Administration)
August 2011- Volontariat bei den Internationaler Versöhnungsbund (FOR Austria)
August 2012- Ferialpraktikum im Erste Group Bank AG (Industry and Business Development)

Sprachkenntnisse

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Serbokroatisch | Muttersprache |
|----------------|---------------|

Deutsch : Ausgezeichnet in Schrift und Wort; 4 Jahre Schulkenntnisse, 6 Monate Privatschule, 1 Semester Deutschkurs in Wien.

Englisch: Ausgezeichnet in Schrift und Wort; 8 Jahre Schulkenntnisse, Sprachferien in Toronto, Kanada.

Spanish: fließend gesprochen, gut schriftlich

B. Abstracts

English:

The increasing globalization and modernization processes are strikingly affecting the lives of many indigenous peoples in Mexico. City life is now seen as an integral component of their lives, such as is the case with a multicultural and multiethnic Mexico City. The indigenous populations have encountered many challenges due to the continuing economic, political, social and cultural changes.

Marginalization and increasing poverty of the indigenous populations in urban environments inevitably lead to transformations of cultural and social processes, as well as to a changing construction of identity through a confrontation with “the Other”. Nevertheless, these phenomena have also offered indigenous peoples potential opportunities for resistance and a chance to empower themselves, especially with the help of non-profit organizations.

Under these circumstances, the process of cultural reproduction in an urban area is particularly important, as it implies the experience of everyday life of indigenous peoples in that new place. In order to narrow my research and study unit, I decided to focus only on Mazahua people, so to demonstrate the situation and circumstances in which these Indians live in their place of origin and later in Mexico City. Moreover, the process of Mazahuas’ cultural reproduction in Mexico City will be addressed, as the focal point of the thesis. Of course, one has to remember that there are differences in specific characteristics of each group depending on their places of origin, and particularly in their forms of integration in the city.

Overall, this study on Mazahuas in Mexico City will demonstrate how they have changed their lifestyle in the city, without jeopardizing their deepest values, such as attachment to the place of origin and their traditional patterns. Most importantly, this thesis will show that Mazahua kinship relations are one of the cultural elements that have showed greatest persistence, even though many Mazahua members have moved to Mexico City and some of them have abandoned their native language.

German:

Die zunehmende Globalisierungs- und Modernisierungsprozesse beeinflusst das Leben vieler indigener Völker in Mexiko. Stadtleben kann heute als integraler Bestandteil ihres Lebens betrachtet werden, wie es der Fall mit einer multikulturellen und multiethnischen Vielfalt in Mexico City ist. Die indigene Bevölkerung haben viele Herausforderungen aufgrund der anhaltenden wirtschaftlichen, politischen, sozialen und kulturellen Veränderungen aufgetreten.

Marginalisierung und zunehmende Armut der indigenen Bevölkerung in städtischen Umgebungen führen zwangsläufig zu Veränderungen der kulturellen und gesellschaftlichen Prozesse, sowie zu einer verändernden Konstruktion von Identität durch eine Konfrontation mit "dem Anderen". Dennoch haben diese Phänomene indigenen Völker auch mögliche Chancen für den Widerstand angeboten und die Chance sich selbst zu ermächtigen, vor allem mit Hilfe der Non-Profit-Organisationen.

Unter diesen Umständen ist der Prozess der kulturellen Reproduktion in einem städtischen Gebiet besonders wichtig, da sie die Erfahrung des täglichen Lebens der indigenen Völker in diesem neuen Ort bedeutet. Um meine Forschungs- und Lehreinheit einzugrenzen, entschied ich mich nur auf Mazahua Menschen zu konzentrieren, und zu zeigen, die Situation und die Umstände, unter denen diese Indianer in ihrem Herkunftsort und später in Mexico City leben. Darüber hinaus wird der Prozess der kulturellen Reproduktion Mazahuas in Mexiko-Stadt angesprochen, als der Schwerpunkt dieser Arbeit. Natürlich muss man sich daran erinnern, dass es Unterschiede in den spezifischen Merkmalen der einzelnen Gruppen je nach ihren Herkunftsorten und insbesondere in ihren Formen der Integration in der Stadt gibt.

Insgesamt wird diese Studie über Mazahuas in Mexiko-Stadt zeigen, wie sie ihren Lebensstil in der Stadt verändert, ohne dabei ihre tiefsten Werte wie Verbundenheit mit dem Herkunftsort und ihren traditionellen Mustern in Gefahr zu bringen. Vor allem aber wird diese These manifestieren, dass die Mazahua Verwandtschaftsbeziehungen eines der kulturellen Elemente, das die größte Ausdauer zeigte, obwohl viele Mazahua Mitglieder nach Mexiko-Stadt gezogen sind und einige von ihnen ihre Muttersprache aufgegeben haben.