

GLOBAL BROKERS WITH LANGUAGE POWER: MIGRANT ENGLISH  
TEACHERS IN GUADALAJARA, MEXICO

By

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the thesis of Troy M. Wilson find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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(Chair)

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Abstract

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Global demands for English language teachers allow English speakers to migrate to any one of the majority of nations to teach English. Migrant English teachers' (MET) reasons for relocating contrast with those discussed in the migration studies literature: METs rarely migrate out of economic or political necessity, but out of personal inclination. They are elite migrants in a working class world. Moreover, the MET's position within the milieu of power relations in any destination society is not so much determined by his/her culture of origin as by the structure of the situation in which the MET embeds him/herself. This thesis modifies Wolf's analysis of "power-brokers," to assess the MET's position in Guadalajara society. In drawing on over three years experience within Mexico's English teaching industry and interviews with 105 METs in Guadalajara, Mexico, I examine connections between general global processes and MET lives in Guadalajara to demonstrate that METs are best perceived as brokers mediating between local learners and a global society operating in a global code—English.

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## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to all those who voted me the “big mouth” of the family:

Mom, Dad, Todd, Dana, and Scott.



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### **The Aims of this Thesis**

This thesis aims to cast light on a type of migrant who is yet to be considered by scholars: the migrant English teacher (MET). Its goal is threefold: 1) to unfold and theoretically review macro-level histories of societal arrangements, relationships, and transformations pertaining to migration, the English language, and Mexico; 2) to elucidate the MET's position—social, political, and economic—in Guadalajara, Mexico, as revealed through micro-level fieldwork; and 3) to examine connections between migrant lives in Guadalajara and general global, historical processes. Ultimately, METs' position within the milieu of power relations in Guadalajara, Mexico is not so much determined by their culture (of origin) as by the structure of the situation in which they embed themselves.

My experience in the English language teaching (ELT) industry in Guadalajara, Mexico from 1999 to 2002, and again for 3 months of fieldwork in the summer of 2003, has given me privileged vision of MET behavior and their participation in both the ELT industry and Mexican society. Some of the questions that this thesis tackles are the following: Who migrates to teach English in Mexico? Which forces play a role in the decision to migrate? What are the rhythms of migrant life? Who do they interact with throughout their days? Where do these interactions take place? What is the nature of these interactions? What is the migrant's position in Guadalajara society? How does this micro-level analysis of METs in Guadalajara, Mexico, relate to global, current theories of

migration, English spread, and globalization? From global to local, from macro to micro, this thesis' ultimate goal is to assess the MET's position in Guadalajara society.

The first half of this thesis provides an appropriate global, historical context in order to present migrant English teachers within the milieu of interconnected forces and processes that have given rise to their position in the world. Chapter 2 reviews Wolf's 1956 [reprinted 2001] analysis of "power brokers", and "globalizes" this perspective drawing on Bodley's (2003) theoretical framework involving personal imperia-building, power, and scale. Chapter 2 ends by locating METs within a modified "power broker" framework, hoping to provide a brief theoretical tour of what is to come.

Chapter 3 looks at the spread of English historically, in order to understand the forces that have promoted the spread of the English language over the last 1,000 years. It explores why English has become the dominant international language, and how language pedagogy has contributed to its hegemony. ELT departments and institutions are ultimately cultural patterns for group relationships. These relational patterns have spread over the globe. As offspring and major components of this ELT industry, METs migrate around the world, mediating between the ELT industry and the society into which this industry stretches.

Chapter 4 locates METs within a history of migration and migration studies. It argues that the movements of people around the world must be seen as decisions made in response to elite decision-making. Chapter 5 begins to narrow our focus to Mesoamerica. This brief cultural history of Mexico pays close attention to elite decision-making and the relationship between an English-speaking commercial giant—the U.S.—and much poorer, Spanish-speaking Mexico.

Chapters 5 and 6 is a jump from a global, historical, theoretical framework to my micro-scale fieldwork with METs and within the ELT industry in Guadalajara, Mexico. Chapter 6 introduces four METs, and presents their stories through their words. These stories aim to provide the reader with “real migrant stories” prior to categorizing, reducing, and examining my fieldwork in the following chapters. Chapters 7-9 examine various domains relating to the migrant’s position in Guadalajara, Mexico, including MET behavior, and their cost/benefit analysis to migrate (chapter 7), the formation of the MET social network (Chapter 7), and strategies and symbols characteristic of the MET community within a social field (chapter 8). Chapters 7-9 also examine MET routines and the arenas in which they interact (Chapter 8 & 9), and global and local ELT forms along with the relationships institutionalized by these forms (Chapter 7, 8 & 9).

### **My Theoretical Framework and Two Power Theorists**

While anthropology professors and words on pages admittedly shaped my anthropological eye for fieldwork, prior experience in the field (before I knew it was my “field”) greatly impacted my perspective by giving me real situations to reflect upon during my first year of anthropological study. My experience from 1999 to 2002 in the ELT industry occurred without formal study in anthropology—which I began in the fall of 2002. Therefore, my theoretical perspective has been substantially influenced by 1) the three anthropologists that taught me that first year, and 2) the anthropological works that I enjoyed and agreed with the most. With respect to the former, Nancy McKee, John Bodley, and Jeannette Mageo showed me three different ways to operate in this world as an anthropologist. Although many different authors and many different works impacted

my views, I left for the field with two books that held theoretical approaches to the world most similar to how I viewed it: Eric Wolf's (1999) *Envisioning Power: Ideologies of Dominance and Crisis* and John Bodley's (2003) *The Power of Scale: A Global History Approach*.

Wolf (1999:274-91) draws on three cultures, Kwakiutl, Aztec, and Nazi Germany, to elucidate how culture and power interlace. He examines how elites positioned themselves during crisis situations. In each case, they sought control over ritual, political events, and the cosmological extension to the past, the future and all of nature. As practitioners of ideation and ideology, power holders used the entire cultural world as expressed in heroic instances and mythic time in ways that made them god-like. In each case, elites positioned themselves so that the "sources of vitality enabled them to marshal the forces of growth and destruction that govern society" (1999:291).

Wolf highlights how shared "ideas" of culture evolve as merging efforts of the chiefs, dominant classes, and elites, who work with and embellish cultural material as a means of stabilizing borders and determining how borders are guarded from outsiders. These ruling powers engage cosmologies and ideologies to perpetuate their domination. He argues that culture needs to be understood as the expression of the workings of ruling individuals, whom manipulate existing symbols and structures within society.

Denying the role of cultural logic in the deployment of power basically denudes culture of any explanatory force and limits the nuances of power to the banality that everything can be reduced to power (Yengoyan 2001:xii). Throughout Wolf's writings, he attempts to demonstrate that power is multi-stranded, and how it is woven into all social relations. Wolf uses structural power as his unit of analysis. He defines structural

power as “the power manifest in relationships that not only operates within settings and domains but also organizes and orchestrates the settings themselves, and that specifies the direction and distribution of energy flows”(5). As Marx addresses the structural relations of power between capitalists and laborers, and Foucault concerns himself with the structural relations that govern consciousness, Wolf attempts to “trace out the ways in which relations that command the economy and polity, and those that shape ideation interact to render the world understandable and manageable”(Wolf 1999:5-6).

Bodley (2003) presents a related, but more materialist theory of power. He maintains that throughout world history particular individuals, driven by the “natural” human desire to accumulate social power, have promoted growth, or scale increases, in order to socialize costs and personally accumulate the concentrated power. He sorts cultural evolution and diversity into three distinct cultural worlds (see Table 1.1), each distinguished by how it organizes social power.

Important aspects of these three worlds are the scale and scope of human activities that each permits, the distinctive ways social power networks are constructed in each, and how this social power is organized and distributed. Potential social power is proportional to the size of the group; therefore, the difference between power networks in the commercial world e.g. Rockefeller, Gates, Bush, Walton, and leaders in small foraging groups (40-60 humans) is of great magnitude.

**Table 1.1**

**Cultural Worlds, Scale, and Cultural Process**

I. Tribal World, domestic-scale culture humanization: producing and maintaining human beings, societies and cultures.

- Conceptualization: producing abstract concepts and symbols
- Materialization: giving physical form to concepts
- Verbalization: producing human speech
- Enculturation: reproducing culture
- Intensification: producing more food/km<sup>2</sup>
- Sedentization: settled village life

II. Imperial World, political-scale culture politicization: concentrating social power by coopting the humanization process to produce and maintain political institutions.

- Taxation: extracting surplus production to support government
- Specialization: government employment
- Militarization: use of organized violence
- Urbanization: development of cities

III. Commercial World, global-scale culture commercialization: concentrating social power by coopting the humanization and politicization processes to produce and maintain for-profit business enterprises.

- Industrialization: mass production and distribution
- Commodification: markets for land, labor, money, and everything else
- Capitalism: control of capital separated from producer-consumers
- Externalization: costs of business enterprise socialized
- Corporatization: business enterprise becomes suprahuman
- Elitization: elites physically detached from larger community
- Supralocalization: business enterprise detached from community
- Financialization: investment detached from industry

Source: Bodley 2003:11

Commercial culture values personal wealth—property, corporate shares, bonds, business enterprises, patents, etc.—more than broadly meeting basic human needs, according to Bodley. Financial transactions run the commercial world, with the purpose of keeping the “economy” growing. The economy, in a sense, becomes disembodied from the rest of culture, symbolically becoming an autonomous entity whose growth is

considered essential for human well-being. This makes corporations vital building blocks along with the relatively few large investors and managers. Elites, well-intentioned or not, are responsible for most culture-transforming decisions. They manipulate institutions and corporate activity to enlarge and multiply their inanimate power bases—corporations. The commercial world coopts the maintenance of human beings and political institutions to produce and maintain for-profit business enterprises. They construct commercial “imperia”, which are personally directed social power networks based on personal income, ownership of wealth and property, and control over people, resources, businesses, and markets (Bodley 2003:23).

### **Codes and Migration**

As our global society grows more complex it is requiring the growth of new cultural relationships at ever-increasing frequencies in order to maintain and develop power relations according to elite interests. This entails the growth of new, perhaps more intense, modes of communication—generating, sending, and receiving messages. Wolf (1999) reminds us that messages are expressed verbally through human language and nonverbally through human gestures, bodily comportment, and displays of objects and representations:

Both modes of communication provide vehicles to convey ideas, but messages have first to be cast into appropriate cultural and linguistic codes. To speak and understand a language, one needs access to its linguistic codes, so as to identify its phonemes and morphemes as well as the syntax through which these elements are formally combined. Similarly, to take part in a ritual, one needs to have a formal script of required acts, set out in the memory codes of participants or in the written instructions handed out to an expectant audience. Codes arrange the constituent elements of the message in particular

ways, in order to convey which notion or notions are to be broadcast to an audience and how it should decode the messages heard. There would be no communication without codes, and to the extent that all social relations involve communication, they must also utilize codes and engage in coding and decoding. Thus this aspect of code and codes is applicable not only to languages and formalized behavior such as ritual but to other facets of cultural life as well. One can speak for example of dress codes, culinary codes, codes of appropriate comportment, or codes that govern gifts of flowers. [Wolf 1999:6]

Codes vary with the social contexts in which they are deployed (household, family, community, region), according to the domain they address (economic, political, religious), and according to the social characteristics of the parties to the communication process (social origins, gender, age, educational milieu, occupation, and class position) (Wolf 1999:7).

Power differentials are inherent in these social categorizations and influence contexts, performance, and comprehension of communicative acts. Different groups of people coming together under new and complex settings, working and thinking on different institutional and spatial levels, continually reposition themselves according to each other as well as to the ever-changing and interconnected matrix of group relations in this world. I want to examine how individuals and groups of individuals “come together” and “reposition themselves.” To do this, I look at migrant English teachers in Guadalajara, Mexico, and try to relate observed behavior to its contextual matrix. By “contextual matrix” I mean not only evolving relations in Guadalajara, Mexico, but also the position of these migrants is partially defined by globally-oriented forms as well.

## **Fieldwork and Methods**

In fixing my attention on METs, I did not choose migrants of any particular nationality, ethnic background, gender or age. Though most METs learned English as their primary language, this was not a criterion either. My selection criteria were inclusive of all dialects and accents, requiring only that the individuals have migrated to Guadalajara, Mexico with the intention to teach English.

After a year of considering differing theoretical paradigms, and understanding that my current theoretical framework was in a state of early “grad-student flux”, my research strategy focused on (1) collecting as much qualitative ethnographic data as I could, and (2) combining these data with language school archival investigation. Though my fieldwork goals aimed at structural power and group relationships, my observation strategies sought out basic structural relationships, important trends, tendencies, and rates of change in these relationships, daily to weekly MET routines, and different arenas of interaction. This strategy led to a more intensive focus on regions of Guadalajara that were informant/contact rich. Interviews were semi-structured, unstructured, on the phone, over msn messenger or email, and in person. I interviewed 105 teachers. All informant names in this thesis are pseudonyms. Participant observation ranged from talking with different language school staff and faculty to being a guest teacher at 6 different language schools and participating in special events, including fieldtrips to markets, restaurants, businesses like Wal-Mart, Hard Rock Café, movies (in English); weekend trips to the Barra de Navidad (a Jalisco beach), Tequila, and Mazamitla; and after-school reunions at nearby restaurants and bars. I socialized with METs at all hours of the day—weekdays, weekends, from morning coffee at the café to 3 a. m. trips from

cantinas to taco stands. I acquired quantitative information on language school and teacher employment information at the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information (INEGI).

## CHAPTER TWO

### POWER BROKERS WITH CODE POWER

While migrant English teachers need to be examined through a global, historical perspective, one that traces power, processes, and decision-making, this analysis must be able to articulate with small-scale ethnography. Today's world is shaped by millions of individuals interacting through a variety of global-oriented forms. These forms are the result of elite imperia-building and strategic networking. Since METs operate within the structures of a global-oriented form—the ELT industry—their position as a migrant in any given society is a product of global-oriented relations evolving on a global scale and micro-level relations evolving at a regional level.

For the purpose of this study, micro-level relations are examined at the level of the “city”—Guadalajara. However, I see these relationships to agree significantly with those established at the “national community” level—Mexico. Whereas most of my ethnographic work was within the state of Jalisco, extensive travel throughout Mexico leads me to believe that relationships between METs and the local populace in Mexico City, Monterrey, and other cities are similar to those in Guadalajara. Naturally, the size of the city (with respect to population, environment, and population density) impacts these relationships. For example, English learners in Ciudad Guzman, a small town south of Guadalajara, and their counterparts in Guadalajara have different notions of community and the world. Nevertheless, I believe these differences are probably minimal when compared to ELT student-MET relations in Chile, Japan, or Germany. In positioning themselves between power differentials, METs usually considering the

economies of their nation of origin and that of destination. Therefore, I fit migrant English teachers into both macro and micro theory as “power brokers.”

Introduced into anthropology by Eric Wolf in 1956, the concept of power-brokers as a unit of study first appeared in his research on “aspects of group relations in a complex society.” Power-brokers are people or groups of people who act as buffers mediating between power differentials (Wolf 2001). Wolf’s fieldwork, also in Mexico, emphasized economic and political aspects of relationships between community-oriented and nation-oriented groups. Stressing the historical dimension of these relationships, he shows that mediating-types of cultural forms have often been an aspect of group relations in Mexico.

### **Theory: Power-Brokers in a Complex Society**

Eric Wolf approached the world of humankind as historical and processual emergent. He advocated an anthropology that spells out the processes of power that created the present-day cultural systems and the linkages between them (Wolf 1969:10). In his final book, he admonishes anthropology’s “obtuseness:”

Cleaving to a notion of “culture” as a self-generating and self-propelled mental apparatus of norms and rules for behavior, the discipline has tended to disregard the role of power in how culture is built up, maintained, modified, dismantled or destroyed. We face a situation of complementary naiveté, whereby anthropology has emphasized culture and discounted power, while “culture” was long discounted among the other social sciences, until it came to be a slogan in movements to achieve ethnic recognition. (Wolf 1999:19)

Wolf sees culture as fully embedded in power relations. All social-structural relations exhibit a power differential determined by who controls what and who controls whom.

Therefore, power is involved in the creation and maintenance of the traditional anthropological phenomena, such as class, kinship, race, ethnicity, peasantry, cultures, and nation-states. Wolf argues that anthropologists need to ask how power is articulated through these categories.

In an overview of his Mexican experience, Wolf (2001) deals with the relations of community-oriented and nation-oriented groups that characterize Mexico as a whole, emphasizing power differentials and their historical dimension:

Mexico—or any complex system—is more than a sum of its constituent communities. It is also more than a sum of its nation-level institutions, or the sum of all the communities or national-level institutions taken together. . . it is, rather, the web of group relationships that connects localities and nation-level institutions. The focus of study is not communities or institutions but groups of people. (Wolf 2001:126)

Throughout Mexican history, social groups have arranged and rearranged themselves in conflict and accommodation along major economic and political axes, each rearrangement producing a “changed configuration in the relationship between community-oriented and nation-oriented groups” (Wolf 2001:135). Through examining these “shifting relationships” Wolf points at “the tendency of new group relationships to contribute to the preservation of traditional cultural forms:”

The Crown reorganized the Indian communities; they became strongholds of the traditional way of life. The haciendas transformed the Indian peasants into part-time laborers; their wages stabilized their traditional prestige economy. The Revolution of 1910 opened the channels of opportunity to the nation-oriented; it reinforced the community orientation of the immobile. It would indeed seem that in Mexico “the old periods never disappear completely and all wounds, even the oldest, continue to bleed to this day” (Paz 1947:11). This “contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous” is responsible for the “commonsense” view of many observers that in Mexico “no problems

are ever solved” and that “reforms always produce results opposite to those intended.”

(Wolf 2001:136-137)

According to Wolf, cultural forms are always intrinsically connected to the domain of public power. Certain economic and political relationships are essential to the functioning of any complex society. All interpersonal and intergroup relationships in a complex society must at some point conform to the dictates of economic and political power.

No matter what other functions a society may contain or elaborate, it must both produce surpluses and exercise power to transfer a part of these surpluses from the producing communities to people other than the producers. No matter what combination of cultural forms such a society may utilize, it must also wield power to limit the autonomy of its constituent communities and to interfere in their affairs. (Wolf 2001:127)

In his analysis, Wolf also identifies groups of people who mediate between community-oriented groups in communities and nation-oriented groups that operate primarily through national institutions:

In post-Columbian Mexico, these mediating functions were first carried out by the leaders of Indian corporate communities and royal officials. Later, these tasks fell into the hands of the local entrepreneurs, such as the owners of haciendas. After the Revolution of 1910, they passed to nation-oriented individuals from the local communities who established ties with the national level and who serve as “brokers” between community oriented and nation-oriented groups. (Wolf 2001:137-138)

These brokers “stand guard over the crucial junctures or synapses of relationships that connect the local system to the larger whole.” Their position demands that they serve both groups, coping with conflicts raised by the collision of their interests:

Their basic function is to relate community-oriented individuals who want to stabilize or improve their life chances, but who lack economic security and political connections,

with nation-oriented individuals who operate primarily in terms of the complex cultural forms standardized as national institutions, but whose success in these operations depends on the size and strength of their personal following. (Wolf 2001:138)

Since they often act as buffers between groups, maintaining the tensions that provide the dynamic of their actions, they are “exposed” to the community. Their position would not exist without these between-group “tensions.” Still, they also need to maintain a grip on these tensions. If conflict gets out of hand, better mediators may take their place.

Power-brokers work within the boundaries of existing cultural forms. Their functions are expressed through cultural forms and mechanisms that will differ from culture to culture. Examples of such forms are *Compadrazgo* (Mintz and Wolf 1950), *Kan-ch’ing* (Fried 1953), *Oyabun-kobun* (Ishino 1953), and *Kijaji* (Geertz 1960).

### **Brokers equipped with the Global Code**

In order to perceive migrant English teachers as brokers dependent on power differentials, we must first ask what is “community-oriented” and “nation-oriented” in our world today. Wolf states

The dependence of communities on a larger system has affected them in two ways. On one hand, whole communities have come to play specialized parts within the larger whole. On the other, special functions pertaining to the whole have become the tasks of special groups within communities. These groups Julian Steward calls horizontal sociocultural segments. I shall simply call them nation-oriented groups. They are usually found in more than one community and follow ways of life different from those of their community-oriented fellow villagers. They are often agents of the great national institutions that reach down into the community, and they form “the bones, nerves and sinews running through the total society, binding it together, and affecting it at every point” (Steward 1950:115). (Wolf 2001:125)

The “agents of the great national institutions” are now global agents. Moreover, different notions of community have synchronically arisen with the global spread of dominant cultural forms and processes.

### *Globalizing the Theory*

Perceptions of “community” are derived from the nature of group relationships. In a commercial world, the frequency and nature of group interaction changes rapidly because the exchange transaction is what counts (Bodley 2003:25). Transactions are cultural conceptions involving social relations between people. The commercial world allows commercial elites to “concentrate social power by coopting the humanization and politicization processes to produce and maintain for-profit business enterprises” (Bodley 2003). Commerce is a means of meeting human needs by promoting human creativity and stimulating production and distribution, but commerce can easily be subverted for imperial purposes (Bodley 2003:24). Bodley (2003:22-27) describes how elites have used commercial processes to expand the scale and power of their personal power networks. Elites benefit from commercial activity while spreading the costs and human risks of that commercial activity. They are completely detached from communities, and they sit on boards directing multiple corporations that are suprahuman and detached from communities as well. While creating unlimited opportunities for elites to build ever-larger imperia, the commercialization process drives globalization.

The global-oriented community consists of a small number of elites. In 1999, out of 6 billion people in the world who made up 1.2 billion households, 0.6% of the households had 9% of the world income (Bodley 2003:218). Their social power is dependent upon their commercial power first and foremost. National institutions, along

with national ideologies, are set in place by commercial elites operating in political fields.

An example is the current U. S. federal administration:

President Bush, Vice President Cheney, and the cabinet secretaries were all global super-elite multimillionaires, with average net worths ranging from \$9.3 to \$27.3 million (Wetherell 2002). Bush himself was worth more than \$27 million, and the wealthiest cabinet member, Deputy Commerce Secretary Samuel Bodman, was worth anywhere from \$49 to \$164 million based on his public disclosure statement. [Bodley 2003:251]

Elite loyalties are international rather than regional, national, or local. The market in which they operate is global in scope. Their fortunes are tied to enterprises that operate across national boundaries. They are more concerned with the smooth functioning of the system as a whole than with any of its parts.

I will refer to all remaining individuals, all non-elites, as the community-oriented population. Worldwide, average community-oriented household incomes in 1999 ranged from \$6,784 to \$170,415 (Bodley 2003:218). Whereas community-oriented individuals seek power in a local community and earn income from professional salaries or wage labor, globally-oriented individuals seek power throughout the global community and construct commercial imperia—“personally directed social power networks based first of all on personal income, ownership of wealth and property, and control over people, resources, businesses, markets, and secondarily on political power” (Bodley 2003:23).

Today’s power-brokers can be identified by investigating global-cultural forms—corporations. Corporations, directed by global-oriented individuals, are given the rights of individuals yet are legally immortal. Detached from particular communities in which they reside, they reach down into the community, forming “the bones, nerves and sinews

running through the total [global] society, binding it together, and affecting it at every point” (Steward 1950:115).

*The ELT Institution and Language Brokers*

To want to acquire a new language, an individual must be dissatisfied with their present socioeconomic status and confident that the configuration of their lives will improve with the addition of that language (Scotton 1982:85). Simultaneously, shifts in language usage and adoption are due to changes in power among the speakers, nations, or other groups associated with these tongues (Liebersohn 1982:42). In recent decades, English has been promoted ideologically as the language of global-oriented communication largely because English speakers have, since 15<sup>th</sup> century British mercantilism and its successive expansion, acquired more social power than speakers of other languages. People make a decision to learn English, and in so doing, learn a new code to utilize in global-oriented social relations—an arena of interaction in which participants are, or are believed to be, “wealthy,” “successful,” “powerful,” and “intelligent.” Since each group of people is composed of individuals who vary in their abilities, competitiveness, and resources, language learning must be seen in the light of an individual and his/her opportunities in society. People act in their own interest, or at least what they believe to be their own interests. However, their beliefs and opportunities are ultimately manipulated by elites pursuing personal power.

Over the last 40 years, English language teaching (ELT) has proliferated in university departments, language schools, publications, and conferences. As such it has greatly contributed to the dominance of English worldwide (Phillipson 1992). ELT

institutes have spread over the globe, altering patterns for group relationships wherever they go. A primary component of this cultural form is the MET.

The ELT industry is a global force impinging on community-oriented individuals in Mexico. Community-oriented Mexicans learn English because they “lack economic security” and “want to stabilize or improve their life chances.” They believe that learning how to communicate in English will make them more likely to find work or promotion within globally-operating corporations.

METs obviously play a smaller role than the elites directing ELT expansion. The MET’s impact is local, where ELT elites operate globally. As will be discussed in later chapters, METs tend to be more self-absorbed than interested in constructing imperia. They are opportunists with enough personal power to consider multiple variables in cost/benefit analyses prior to migration. They are migrants with the luxury of choice. In choosing to teach English “abroad” they are vectors of not only English language transmission, but also cultural transmission at large. And as conduits of the English language and an English-speaking culture they are often highly regarded and quickly befriended in Guadalajara, Mexico. The position allotted to them by their students and the local populace in general is one of socio-economic prestige, one that emerges from a mentoring relationships in general, and more specifically, one that comes with having knowledge of the English language—a global code. As such, in a micro-level sense, METs are power brokers. They mediate between local learners and a global society operating in a global code—English. They are often neutral conduits of language rather than active brokers of power like the institutes for which they work; however, the potency and capability of each MET and their ability to interact with others varies. Some

grow to believe in their institution's ideology while others merely acknowledge it for the purpose of getting their next paycheck.

### **Domains and Forces of Power Brokers**

In 1956, Wolf (2001:138) said that “the study of these ‘brokers’ will prove increasingly rewarding as anthropologists shift their attention from the internal organization of communities to the manner of their integration into larger systems.” The increasing interconnectedness of the world only makes the study of interactive processes that much more important. By promoting scale increases, global-oriented elites have gleaned more benefits and socialized the costs of their commercial activity. This process of what Bodley (2003) refers to as “imperia-building” requires mediators within multiple power domains. A continued study of different kinds of power brokers would certainly prove to be useful. It will be important to ask in which domains brokers operate. Do these domains of power interact, and if so, how?

Brokers create and maintain the bonds that connect community-oriented and global-oriented groups. The bonds derive from social power differences between those groups. I want to suggest a way of looking at the different power domains on which brokers depend and in which they operate. To do this, I will borrow Michael Mann's (1986:22-28) “four sources of social power:” ideological, economic, military, and political. Ideological power derives from meanings, norms, and aesthetic/ritual practices. Economic power derives from the satisfaction of subsistence needs through the social organization of the extraction, transformation, distribution, and consumption of the objects of nature, and all sorts of commercial products—labor and “capital” of all kinds.

Military power derives from the necessity of organized physical defense and its usefulness for aggression. Political power derives from the usefulness of centralized, institutionalized, territorialized regulation of many aspects of social relations. Where Mann (1986:24) believes that the boundaries and capacities of these networks do not coincide, individuals may operate within more than one domain. While any given power-broker relies on power differentials within more than one of these domains, distinguishing the primary “source of social power,” or the primary domain in which the broker operates, would provide insight into the functions and dysfunctions of a global society.

Studying power domains and changing power differentials within these domains sheds more light on the nature and function of power-brokers. The important questions are: from which domains do METs draw their social power; and how do these different powers interact in the formation and disintegration of broker power? A global language is a global system of symbols used for communication between organized groups that speak different languages. This clearly falls into the ideological power domain. However, since the English language offers access to a global-oriented, commercial world, to what extent can METs be economic brokers as well?

Moreover, power-broker behavior within communities should be examined as related to the power domains in which they operate. We need to ask who decides to broker in which power domains for what reasons. One reason many METs admitted to considering prior to migration is their dating and mating potential in different destination societies. Male METs coming from lower socioeconomic statuses (with respect to their origin) are interested in long-term relationships with local “Tapatias” (the term used by

Guadalajara men and women to refer to Guadalajara women) because the difference in environment elevates their social status, providing them with more attractive mates from which to select. Many female METs are looking for relationships as well, mostly long-term relationships. They “become prettier” and increased male-male competition brought about “better” and wealthier Mexican mates than in their home country. Examining how socio-economic status and mating/dating opportunities intertwine with other forces pushing someone to choose a particular field of brokering will offer insight into the creation of these cultural forms of mediation. Lastly, how does the emergence of a migrant social network interplay with the personal power of METs as language brokers in a community? The remainder of this thesis explores and attempts to address these questions while constantly trying to uncover the MET’s position in Guadalajara society.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE RISE OF ENGLISH AND ELT

I begin this chapter by discussing theories of language spread. Next, I utilize Bodley's (2003) theory of "imperia and scale" and Phillipson's (1992) theory of "linguistic imperialism" to briefly examine each of the following: 1) the rise of commercial elites in Europe, 2) British expansion and the Americas, 3) colonial education and language policies, and 4) the U.S. as a dominant culture. After that, I characterize the ELT industry, finishing with a description of a global-oriented language school—Wall Street Institute. While I find it useful to use these theoretical frameworks as tools in my analysis, I understand that all theories have limitations. However, I need to start somewhere.

Historically, social change has caused various languages to gain or lose power and influence. This is not to say that languages differ amongst themselves in their inherent power, but the users of languages do, so that the speakers of different languages differ in their ability to alter the existing language-use patterns, thereby affecting the spread of languages (Liebersohn 1982: 41). Shifts in language usage and adoption are due to changes in power among the speakers, nations or other collectivities associated with these tongues (Liebersohn 1982:42). On the surface, models of power and language appear to explain the spread of a given language, but in reality offers no explanation without an independent empirical measurement of power (Liebersohn 1982:42). Other factors also play a variety of roles in any language spread situation.

According to Kachru, “the power of English resides in the domains of its use, the roles its users can play, and—attitudinally—above all, how others view its importance” (1990:4). He goes on to describe the “supernatural” powers of English:

In comparison with other languages of wider communication, knowing English is like possessing the fabled Aladdin’s lamp, which permits one to open, as it were, the linguistic gates to international business, technology, science, and travel. In short, English provides linguistic power [Kachru 1990:1]

Anderson (1980:13) says, “All the great classical communities conceived of themselves as cosmically central, through the medium of a sacred language linked to a superterrestrial order of power.” He refers to a particular script-language offering privileged access to truth, precisely because it is an inseparable part of that truth (1980:36). According to this, we might ask whether English language learners perceive English as “a sacred language” linked to the commercial world—“a superterrestrial order of power?” Regardless of differing perceptions of English, historical processes have given rise to its position in the world today, and people have made decisions to set these processes in motion.

### **Two Theories of English’s Spread**

Bhatt (2001:527) wrote an overview of the theoretical, methodological, pedagogical, ideological, and power-related issues of “World Englishes”—varieties of Englishes used in diverse sociolinguistic contexts. He holds that over the last three decades there has been a growing consensus among scholars that there are many different Englishes around the world that represent “diverse linguistic, cultural, and ideological voices” (pg. 527). This assertion is grounded in what has become known as liberation

linguistics (see Bhatt 2001:527-528 for more). Though this thesis is not directly concerned with these currents of sociolinguistic theory, they are worth considering because they have taken off from the same theories of language spread and language change that I employ.

Phillipson (1992) believes that the spread of English in nonnative contexts has been actively promoted. He holds that major English-speaking states use ELT agencies such as the British Council and TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) as instruments of foreign policy. This theory, English linguistic imperialism, argues that these agencies introduce and impose the English language, which they use to perpetuate asymmetrical social, political, and economic relationships.

A working definition of English linguistic imperialism is that dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstruction of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages. Here structural refers broadly to material properties (for example, institutions, financial allocations) and cultural to immaterial or ideological properties (for example, attitudes, pedagogic principles). English linguistic imperialism is one example of linguisticism . . . [Phillipson 1992]

Linguicism occurs with the development of ideologies, structures, and practices that are used to legitimate, effectuate, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) among groups, which are defined on the basis of language (Phillipson and Skuttnabb-Kangas 1986; Phillipson 1988, 1992). The priority given to English in teacher training, curriculum development, and school timetables in non-English-speaking countries is an example of linguisticism (Phillipson 1992).

Imperialism theories focus on political economy, class structure, the dynamics of capital accumulation, and the transformation of precapitalist societies by colonial and

neo-colonial capitalism (Phillipson 1992:51). Despite imperialism theories continually being questioned (Galtung 1988; French 1986; Harding 1986) on grounds of ethnocentricity and reductionism, they remain useful for understanding the complex ways in which superordinate cultures dominate subordinate cultures. Nevertheless, these theories do not stress individual imperia, power-seeking, and the decisions made in the process. Imperialism is a type of relationship wherein one society, or collectivity, dominates another. People and groups of people have relationships. Culture is both a derivative and a product of these relationships. “Culture” cannot be given agency, for it is the powerful people within a society who direct and manipulate its culture as they make personal imperia-building decisions based on available cultural material.

Quirk (1988), on the other hand, uses the econocultural model to describe the spread of English. Bhatt (2001:532-533) explains this model:

Industrial revolution, trade practices, and commercial exploitation of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century England created conditions where one language had to develop as the language of the world market, the “commercial lingua franca.” With England and the U.S. in the epicenter of industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century, it was natural that English became the language of global commerce. Especially after World War II—with the establishment of the United Nations, World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Health Organization, and, a few years later, the Commonwealth and the European Union—it was inevitable that the general competence in English in different political, social, cultural, and economic markets would continue to grow rapidly (Mazrui & Mazrui 1998, Brutt-Griffler 1998). The success of the spread of English, tied to the economic conditions that created the commercial supremacy of the United Kingdom and the United States, is guaranteed under the econocultural model by linguistic pragmatism not linguistic imperialism.

While this model appropriately pays more attention to the intimacy between English and the commercial world, it also neglects to consider individual decision-making in this process. The advantage to considering both of these models lies in trying to see them both at work at the same time. Both English's ties to the commercial world and the promotion of the language by an elite few are apparent.

### **The Rise of Commercial Elites**

Though the commercialization process reached its earliest heights in Italy with the Medici imperium (see Bodley 2003:108-110), Italian administrative methods quickly made their way to France and England in the 14th and 15th centuries.

Many small market towns grew organically from villages, but in England the king still had to approve town charters, and this meant that a developer needed political influence. This public-private partnership of government and commercial elites became the prototype for virtually all commercially motivated expansion. From 1066 to 1370 some 380 new towns were deliberately "planted" in England, Wales, and Gascony (France) by English kings, clerics, and private entrepreneurs who enjoyed royal favor (Beresford 1967). [Bodley 2003:107]

Urbanization and the outright transformation of European society and culture was a byproduct of early elites seeking more social power. Medieval and early commercial elites developed commercial imperia "because it became possible to do so and because those who may have been negatively impacted by such developments did not have the power to resist"(Bodley 2003:104).

Plagues, a "little ice age," famine, and wars characterize 14th century Europe (Bentley 2002:586). During these crises, a few elites were able to control the great social transformations that led England into the modern age of commercial capitalism, "and

these few benefited enormously while relatively powerless millions paid disproportionate costs and struggled to receive the smallest benefits” (Bodley 2003:110). Crisis created new opportunities for urban and rural elites to stabilize and enlarge their power networks.

They sought new places to invest their money, new and larger markets, and more effective government support for their commercial interests. The elite devised new government and commercial institutions to support larger urban places and larger markets. These institutions became more bureaucratic, more powerful, and more intrusive in everyone’s lives. Ultimately the scale of both government and commerce increased. Power became more concentrated and the elite formed new interest groups to protect their gains. [Bodley 2003:111]

London’s population escalated from 200,000 people in 1600 to almost 575,000 in 1700, continuing a power shift from rural to urban (Bodley 2003:111). The growth logic of the British Empire also promoted commercial interests in military invasions in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, creating the United Kingdom.

At the end of the 16th century, the number of mother-tongue English speakers in the world was between 5 to 7 million, almost all of them living in the British Isles (Crystal 1997:25). In 1952, there were some 250 million mother-tongue English speakers, most of them living outside of the British Isles (Crystal 1997:25). It is important to understand the rise of British commercial elites when considering the dominance of the English Language today. A language is only as powerful as its speakers are. English-speaking, British elites, and their self-interested pursuit of power during a drastic cultural transformation, explains the rise of English.

## **British Expansion and the Americas**

The geographical movement of British commercial activity explains the expansion of English. The discovery of the “New World” created further growth opportunities for London’s elite. During Elizabeth I’s reign (1558-1603), with royal beneficence still flowing freely, “a handful of wealthy English merchants and landed aristocrats pooled their wealth to finance the early stages of English overseas colonial mercantile expansion” (Bodley 2003:118). In a unifying effort designed to secure their investments, elites created and assembled the infrastructure for global-scale commercialization (Bodley 2003:116). The essential institutions were the British East India Company (1600), Hudson Bay Company (1670), the Bank of England (1694), the Royal Exchange (1695), Lloyd’s of London (1769), and the Stock Exchange (1772). With these corporate institutions in place, a few elite were able to develop and profit from the newly discovered opportunities presented by the land, resources, and peoples of the New World, Africa, and Asia (Bodley 2003:116).

Hancock (1995) shows how virtually all commercial activities represented between 1735 and 1784 involved the interlocked power network of Augustus Boyd, Richard Oswald, John Sargent II, and Sir Alexander Grant. They made themselves wealthy by real estate speculation, land development, plantation agriculture, slave trading, shipping, providing legal and financial services, and military contracting (Bodley 2003:120).

Initial British settlements in the Americas set English as the common language of the colonies. Crystal (1997:30) notes that within one or two generations of arrival, most immigrant families had come to speak English. This was due to many interacting forces.

Initial British settlements established cultural forms similar to England, and the infrastructure was originally formulated within the prisms of the English vocabulary. Once the majority of the population shares a mutually intelligible language, that language gets a sort of “native power.” The worth of newcomers begins to be measured by use of linguistic tools. *Outsider* accents, *improper* pronunciations and *foreigner* language conveniently separated groups of people. Immigrant populations and ethnic minorities delicately balance acculturation and identity preservation through means of language.

Throughout the colonial era, British institutions of business and government worked in a close partnership:

The British East India Company operated as a commercial monopoly and a quasi-government under royal charter. The Company produced enormous financial returns to a relative handful of shareholders and officials from its commercial operations and the revenues extracted from the native population of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay. [Bodley 2003:120]

The largest shareholders received nearly a quarter of the company’s total annual dividends and interest payments (Dickson 1967:287, in Bodley 2003:120). The company’s influence grew in the Indian subcontinent, eventually taking over revenue management in 1765 in Bengal. From 1765 until Independence in 1947, English gradually became the medium of administration and education throughout the subcontinent (Crystal 1997:42). British colonial expansion allowed London-based elites to not only acquire great wealth and social power while the costs were distributed elsewhere, but also to make decisions that essentially defined reality for peoples impacted by their commercial activity.

These power networks stretched around the globe. Crystal (1997: 24-53) explains the historical context of the English language following British colonialism around the globe, the making of different accents, pidgins, and creoles. Initial British settlements and immigrations to Canada challenged French claims. But it wasn't until 1776, following the U.S. Declaration of Independence, that loyalist supporters of Britain (the 'United Empire Loyalist') left the U.S. for Canada. They settled first in Nova Scotia then moved to New Brunswick and further inland. The policy of slave-traders was to bring people of different language backgrounds together in the ships; communication barriers made it difficult for slaves to plot rebellions. Several pidgins developed, in particular a pidgin between slaves and English-speaking sailors. These pidgins continued to develop in southern plantations, coastal towns and islands. Meanwhile, standard British English was growing in prestige throughout the area because of the emerging commercial and political influence of Britain. Great Britain transported 130,000 prisoners to Australia from 1788 to 1838 and an official colony was established in New Zealand in 1840, following the Treaty of Waitangi between Maori chiefs and the British Crown (Crystal 1997:35). The English language followed British settlers to South Africa beginning in the early 1800s and developed in other African countries as well, many of which have declared it an "official language" (see Crystal 1997:43-47).

### **Colonial Education and Language Policy**

In 1834, Lord Macaulay, chairman of the Governor-General's Committee of public instruction in India, said that the English language should be used to educate a class of Indians who could function as interpreters between the British colonial power

and the millions of Indians they governed, “a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect” (Lord Macaulay’s dictum of 1834, quoted in Phillipson 1992:110). The British policy of indirect rule was to essentially educate the indigenous elite through the medium of English. Non-elite children could learn within the vernacular through primary school, but the few that moved on to secondary school would have to switch to English (Khubchandani 1983:121). In British colonies in Africa, early education in African languages “was invariably seen as a transitional phase prior to instruction in English” (Phillipson 1992:112). Colonial societies, whose structural organization was engineered by a colonial power’s transforming ideology, never accorded high status to local languages.

The educational system in the colonies was the most important instrument of reproduction of English symbolic capital because schools had the monopoly over the reproduction of the market on which the value of linguistic competence depends (Bourdieu 1977). Cultural capital refers to the “system of meanings, abilities, language forms, and tastes that are directly or indirectly defined by dominant groups as socially legitimate” (Apple 1978:496). Moreover, the production of hegemonic ideologies hides in schools (Giroux 1988). Although colonial educational policy was fundamentally linguisticist, “there is no doubt that many of the policy makers and the workers in the field were well-intentioned and genuinely wished not only to export what was best in British education to the colonies, but also to adapt the education to perceived local needs” (Phillipson 1992:11). They “knew” that English proficiency was essential for functioning in British colonial settlements. The most prosperous of colonizers directly dealt with the British mainland, and English was the required medium to be successful in these

dealings. Education always served the interests of the colonial elite, who largely ignored local traditions in educational practice (see Phillipson 109-134).

### **The U.S.: A Dominant Culture**

Whereas England experienced a long cultural transformation from agricultural production in the political world to commercial transactions in the commercial world, America was born into this cultural behavior. Mercantile ventures, finance, rents, land development, and land speculation were already the primary sources of elite fortunes in colonial America (Bodley 2003:138). The American Revolution was due to colonial elites becoming angered by England restricting their imperia-building.

As decision-making in London became more centered in Parliament, it became more difficult for American elites to influence events in their favor. Many specific new measures imposed on the Americans by Parliament—such as prohibition on American paper money, Crown control over territories taken from the French in 1763, Crown patents required for fur traders, as well as many efforts to spread the tax burden—all tended to favor the interests of English elites over the Americans. [Bodley 2003:138]

A handful of American elites turned America into a federalist government. They wanted America to become a “wealthy nation and a great world power, and they correctly believed that rapid economic growth, supported by government power, was the fastest way to achieve their goal” (Bodley 2003:141). These elite, in turn, directed the rise of Big Business and its expansion for their own personal gain while expanding the arena over which to socialize costs.

## **ELT, Professionalism, and the Promotion of English**

Many have been concerned with the teaching and learning of English, and have questioned the language pedagogy professionalism that ELT has inherited. Day (1981) investigates the history of American language policy on Pacific islands, the insufficiencies of ESL programs, and asks whether Peace Corps Volunteers who teach English are merely teachers, or agents of linguistic, and cultural imperialism. Rogers (1982) calls attention to English language promotion creating “false expectations” among educational “push-outs” in the Third World, and to ignoring the social contexts in which English-teaching takes place. Richards (1984) conveys skepticism of methods used and promoted in ELT, such as the “communicative method” that subscribes to (and promotes) “English only” in the classroom, both for teachers and students. Brumfit (1985) is concerned with how ELT professional methodologists ignore social and ideological messages transmitted during language learning situations. Krasnick (1986) points out three fictitious ELT images condemning learners as deficient: 1) they are in need of “special education;” 2) they are treated as non-students in need of language, not content; and 3) they need re-socializing in order to behave properly.

The majority of teacher training programs and METs pay attention only to linguistic and pedagogical matters, largely ignoring its political, economic, military and cultural implications and ramifications. Language pedagogy tends to focus on what goes on in the classroom, and on related methodological and organizational matters. When people learn English, for whatever reason and by whatever pedagogical method, they directly and indirectly acquire knowledge of English-speaking cultures, institutions, and

ways of thinking and communicating (Phillipson 1992). ELT operates at several levels and cannot be divorced from its social context.

The belief that ELT is non-political serves to disconnect culture from structure. It assumes that educational concerns can be divorced from social, political, and economic realities. It exonerates the experts that hold the belief from concerning themselves with these dimensions. It encourages a technical approach to ELT, divorced even from wider educational issues. It permits the English language to be exported as a standard product without the requirements of the local market being considered except in a superficial way [Phillipson 1992:67]

ELT does not pay the majority of its teachers well (Phillipson 5). This is an element of the major structural imbalances among the professional aspirations of recruits to the profession, the output of MA graduates, and market forces that are more characteristic of an industry than a profession. It is also ironic that this transnational business has its headquarters in Britain and the USA, countries that are renowned for their backwardness in foreign language learning.

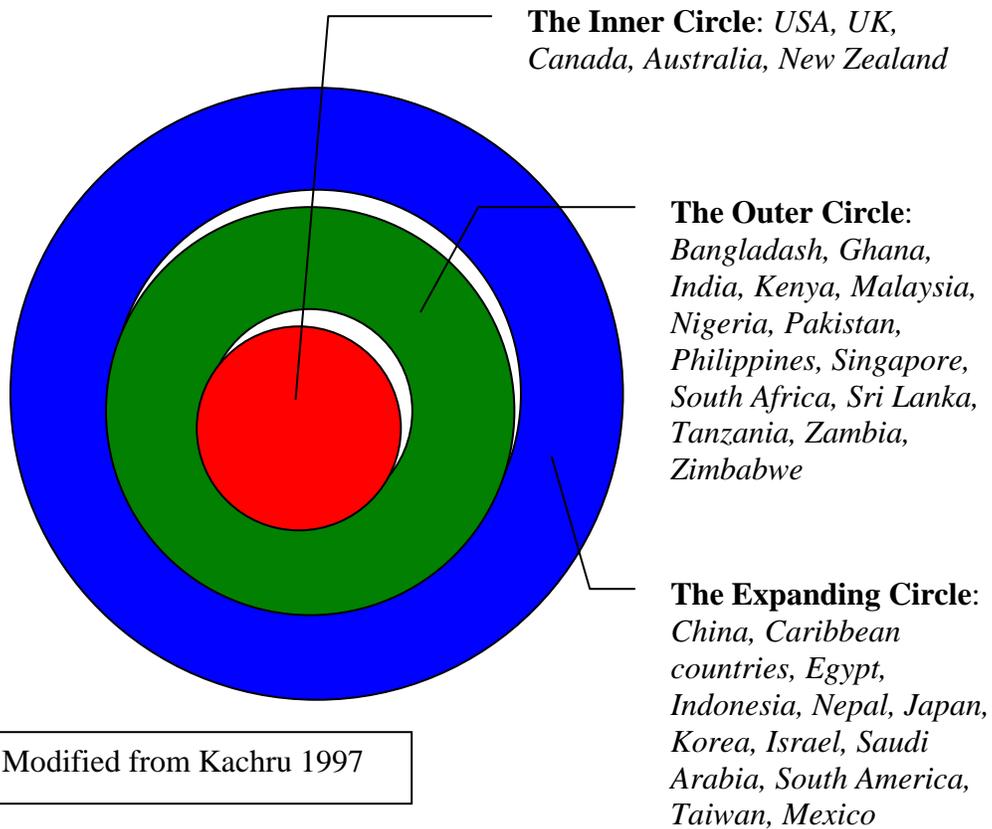
Phillipson (1992:47-50) focuses on how “Anglocentricity” and “professionalism” legitimate English as the dominant language by rationalizing activities and beliefs that contribute to the structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages. Anglocentricity, a variety of ethnocentrism, is “the practice of judging other cultures by the standards of one’s own” (pg. 47). However the amount of understanding we have of other cultures, anglocentricity is inescapable. Phillipson argues that it lies in the forms and functions of English, and in so doing, controls ‘norms’ and simultaneously devalues other languages and cultures. Professionalism refers to “seeing methods, techniques, and procedures followed in ELT, including the theories of language learning and teaching adhered to, as sufficient for understanding and analyzing language learning” (pg. 48).

The professional discourse around ELT disconnects language from the rest of culture by limiting the focus in language pedagogy to technical matters and excluding social, economic, and political matters.

### **English as the Dominant Language**

Kachru (1988) has suggested that we think of the spread of English around the world as three concentric circles (Figure 3.1). The inner circle refers to traditional hubs of English, where it is the primary language, with an estimated 320-380 million speakers (Crystal 1997). The outer circle incorporates earlier phases of English expansion in non-native areas. In these settings, the language has been partially institutionalized and plays an important role as a “second language.” An estimated 150-300 million speakers belong to this circle (Crystal 1997). The expanding circle involves nations recognizing the importance of English as a means for international communication. These nations were not colonized by the British empire, nor is English used for any administrative purpose. This circle steadily increases in size with an estimated 100-1,000 million speakers (Crystal 1997). Although this model does not suit every country’s history and current situation, it helps us to see the “big picture” of English as a global language. Table 3.1 shows a list of countries where English is used as an “official” language. The present distribution throughout the world of the major international languages—Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish is evidence of conquest and occupation, followed by adoption of the invader’s language due to the benefits that accrue to speakers of the language when the dominant language has been imposed (Phillipson 1992:31).

Figure 3.1 English Spread: Three Concentric Circles



**Table 3.1 Countries in which English has official status**

Antigua and Barbuda	Irish Republic	Seychelles
Australia	Jamaica	Sierra Leone
Bahamas	Kenya	Singapore
Barbados	Lesotho	South Africa
Botswana	Liberia	Sri Lanka
Brunei	Malawi	Suriname
Cameroon	Malta	Swaziland
Canada	Mauritius	Tanzania
Dominicana	New Zealand	Trinidad and Tobago
Fiji	Nigeria	Uganda
Gambia	Papua New Guinea	United Kingdom
Ghana	Philippines	United States of America
Grenada	St. Christopher and Nevis	Zambia
Guyana	St. Lucia	Zimbabwe
India	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	

Bhatt 2001

## **Language Schools and Wall Street Institute**

Language schools are community/nationally-oriented, or globally-oriented, depending on their networking success. Global-oriented schools play the biggest role in shaping the patterns of group relationships established in the ELT industry. I will focus on one particular school in order to characterize this part of the industry. Wall Street Institute's (WSI's) mission statement is "to be the world's leading provider of English language instruction and other educational services." Established in 1972 in Italy, the institute quickly expanded to Switzerland and then to Spain, where in 1990, the international headquarters were established (Wall Street 2004). WSI was purchased by Sylvan Learning Systems in 1997.

The 2002 Sylvan Learning Systems' annual report, beginning with a letter from the CEO Douglas L. Becker, reviews the corporation's history, financial reports and global networking up to 2002, along with a section on WSI (Sylvan 2002:1-84). Sylvan's headquarters are in Baltimore, Maryland. Its power network includes Sylvan Learning Centers, Sylvan Educational Solutions, eSylvan, Sylvan International Universities, Sylvan Ventures, and the Canter Group. Overall, Sylvan has more than 3000 centers spread throughout the world. In 2002, Sylvan Learning Systems Inc.'s revenue was \$603,998,000 compared with \$178, 802,000 in 1998 (Sylvan 2002).

WSI owes much of its expansion to enfranchisement. Of the 303 institutes at the end of 2002, 264 are franchised centers (168 in Europe and Asia and 96 in the Americas) (Sylvan 2002).

English is the language of international business and the Company believes that a working knowledge of English has become increasingly important to many professionals throughout the world. Because English is becoming more prevalent around the world, the

Company believes there is growing demand for instruction in English as a second language among both full-time university students and working adults...WSI's method of English language instruction is based on six stages, with a total of 17 levels ranging from beginning to advanced skills, and includes courses for specific purposes, such as business English. WSI's courses use a combination of live, personalized instruction, small group classes and interactive computer-based instruction. Currently, the main product offering is English Online, a proprietary interactive computer-based instruction methodology that is personalized for each student's needs, timetable and goals. All of WSI's courses can be tailored by students to meet their scheduling needs as well as location preferences. Students can elect to take a course at a center, at home or at work. WSI's courses are taught by instructors that speak English as their first language and who have been trained and certified in our comprehensive program...WSI is developing additional courses dedicated to teaching English for other specific purposes, such as tourism, law and medicine. [Sylvan Learning Systems Inc. 2002]

WSI had 102 centers in 8 countries in 1995, 303 in 20 countries at the end of 2002 (Sylvan 2002), and on January 27, 2004, their website (which is still copyrighted 2003) states that they have "over 380 centers in 24 countries" (Wall Street 2003).

Over the last two years, we've opened centers in countries such as China, Turkey, Taiwan, Czech Republic, Saudi Arabia, Panama, Costa Rica and South Korea. We've just opened in Lebanon and will soon be opening in Peru, Thailand and Singapore. [Wall Street Institute 2003]

## CHAPTER FOUR

### MIGRATION, POWER, AND DECISION-MAKING

Migration, the movement of people from one place to another, has long played a major role in shaping the relations and ideation of societies throughout the world. Merchants look for “have-nots” who want. Translators look for communication barriers to bridge. Government officials force in-group ideology onto foreigners. Missionaries travel peripheries persuading foreign souls to believe in their god(s). Tourists go to Cancun, Mexico, to have fun in the sun on a 10 day, all expense included package deal. Ethnographers apply for funds to study other groups of people and processes. This long list of mobile types can go on and on: entertainers, servants, teachers, explorers, spies, pilgrims, brides-to-be, refugees, etc. Spaces have been traversed from time immemorial, and migration needs to be examined as part of this historical matrix of human movements.

Human movement in today’s world needs to be examined through a global, historical perspective. “Global” refers to the earth’s space in which humans routinely interact and secure their existence. “Historical” refers to how the perspective accounts for different understandings about the changing nature of the world as impacted by time and scale changes. To examine migrant English teachers within the context of human movement in today’s world, I need not only to trace historical processes that have given rise to the English language’s position in the world, but also to explore migrants and migration. Powerful forces, like the processes of capitalism, nation-state rivalry, and colonial expansion, play major roles in distributing peoples around the world. Central to this thesis is the assumption that it is misleading to give these processes intrinsic agency.

Rather, people make decisions attempting to gain personal power, and the decision-making of an elite few molds social, political, and economic forces in ways that set the aforementioned processes into motion. We must acknowledge historical forces and elite imperia-building together.

In this chapter, I begin with a brief history of population movement. Then I ask why migration studies have been marginalized over the years. This leads to a discussion of theoretical perspectives of migration, and later, into the nature of migration in today's increasingly 'global' world. From this, I analyze the interplay between migration and power. Examining migration and migration studies throughout time will help me to analyze my micro-level research of METs and explore migratory forms and processes along with the evolving relationships brought about by movement.

### **A History of Movement**

Anthropologists have examined blood types and other genetic markers, and have used linguistic and archaeological methods to reconstruct prehistoric movements of foragers from out of Africa to Eurasia, then to the Pacific islands, Australia, and North and South America (Kearney 1997:322). The development of agriculture some 10 thousand years ago gave rise to larger populations. This made for larger, settled populations that would democratically decide to migrate under conditions of conflict or environmental stresses. Human migrations during the tribal cultural world were calculated upon a group cost/benefit analysis, and enacted when seen to better maintain the group.

We will not understand migration in the present world unless we trace the growth of the world market and the course of commercial development. An understanding of the current distribution of peoples throughout the world rests on a history of migrations, which itself rests on the allocation of power throughout our history and the manner in which it has been used.

Bodley (2003:105-108) explains how personal commercial interests gradually came to dominate political decision making throughout Europe. From 1000 to 1600, violent competition among Western European elites seeking military domination facilitated a gradual transformation that led to capitalist heads of commercial imperia commanding leaders of the old landed political aristocracy and the religious establishment. This power shift, from the “political world” to the “commercial world”, required an increasingly urbanized cultural world with an expandable demand for commercial products and services. As cities grew larger, their inhabitants became more and more dependent on markets and commodities. Villages became towns when particular elites chose them as headquarters, and their growth was proportional to the growing power of the new commercial elite, some of whom had been part of the old, landed aristocracy.

Urbanization attracted and forced laborers into the power networks of rising commercial elites. These migrants were usually rural peasants forced off their land by new farming technology, or to free it for sheep production to provide wool for mills, and for cattle to provide meat for wealthy urbanites (Kearney 1997:323). Not only did cities provide work, but urban migration exposed these migrating peasants to the will of those controlling market monopolies, regulating trades and artisan guilds, collecting urban

rents, holding courts, collecting and spending taxes, conferring citizenship, and forming and directing military forces (Bodley 2003:105). The mass migrations that followed in the 18th and 19th centuries were due to elite decision-making that created conditions favoring and endorsing urban growth, in turn, expanding their personal, family-based, power networks. Propelled by colonialism and economic growth funded by a frenzy of investment by a wealthy few economic elites, the four centuries from 1500 to 1900 were certainly the most rapid and profound cultural transformation humanity has ever experienced (pg. 117).

Bodley (2003) emphasizes that we must recognize the transformative role of individual decision-makers operating through personal networks of social power. It is important to distinguish between elite and non-elite decision-making since the latter is far more constrained and ultimately manipulated by the former. As elites use and enhance cultural material to their benefit, non-elites attempt to do the same. It is the lack of social power that limits non-elite individuals.

Between 1820 and 1915, the U.S. absorbed around 32 million immigrants, mostly of European origin (Rosenblum 1973:70). Many pioneers, merchant capitalists, colonial agents, and slaves had made their way to the Americas by then, but Ireland's potato blight and subsequent famine in the 1840s and 1850s drastically increased the boats and boatloads of immigrants making their way to the New World. Political upheaval in Germany brought more. Later, from 1880 to 1910, due to economic hardship in their homelands, workers left Eastern and Southern Europe. This increase in cheap labor power underwrote the industrial revolution in the U.S.

Beginning early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, contract laborers of diverse origins began migrating to growing mines and plantations in the tropics. South African mines were expanding. More Indian and Chinese contract labor responded to increased trade, and sponsored migration of Italian laborers to the coffee regions of Brazil. With respect to this migratory wave, Wolf notes

These movements not only laid the basis for a large increase in tropical production but also played a major role in creating an infrastructure of transport and communication, prerequisites for a further acceleration of capitalist development. [1982:363]

He does not see a simple model of migratory labor following demand, but “capitalism has generally found laborers when and where it needed them, and migratory movements have carried labor power to market all across the globe”(361). “Capitalism” is not the agent though. Individuals make decisions, and when people get too much power, their decisions constrain and influence the decisions of others. While they grow to specialize in decision-making that expands their personal imperia, the decisions that they make, increasingly affects the populace, which consequently pays the costs. The interplay of power and migration is such that global-oriented elites make decisions that affect groups of people in such a way that they may either be forced or may decide to migrate in search of something better.

### **Marginalization of Migration Studies**

While the study of migration was well established by the end of the 19th century, it remained at the periphery of theoretical developments in the social sciences (Eades 1986). Eades (1986) gives a three-faceted explanation for this marginalization: (1) disciplinary research created intellectual boundaries; (2) funding agencies maintained

much control over which research was conducted; and (3) migration implies change and instability, which is difficult to accommodate into over-specialized models of the social order. It is even more difficult to interlace the models for a broad picture of what is happening.

Part of anthropology's formation required specialization, or the "splitting," of political economy into multiple fields (Wolf 1982:1-6). An obvious consequence was severed lines of communication between these new specialized fields of social science. Wolf (1982) scrutinizes academia's mid-19th century "flaw" of splitting the study of political economy into separate social science disciplines: economic, political, and social (which have continued to "specialize" over the last 150 years). This flaw predisposed "one to think of social relations not merely as autonomous but causal in their own right, apart from their economic, political, or ideological context"(pg. 9). It became "easy to conceive of the nation-state as a structure of social ties informed by moral consensus rather than as a nexus of economic, political, and ideological relationships connected to other nexuses"(pg. 9). Each nation-state was seen to be "driven by its internal social relations...moving in response to its inner clockwork" (pg. 9). Specialization disassembled the social sciences, and, in turn, allowed academics to distort reality by isolating elements of the human world and examining them out of context. Migration has always been researched by multiple disciplines. Human migration is the concern of demographers, sociologists, ecologists, economists, geographers, and anthropologists. The different disciplinary views share overlapping interests, but they emphasize different aspects of migration. For example, demographers are not concerned

with the structure of migration, but the number of individuals moving in and out of the population specified, usually narrowing their focus to nation-states (Fix 1999:7).

Where the demographer's view of migration is reduced by the intrinsic difficulty of defining variables to measure it, human geography is primarily concerned with the spatial aspects of migration (Fix 1999:7). Similarly, economic constraints on and consequences of migration draw the attention of economists. The constant budding of subdisciplines is always giving rise to new, interesting approaches to migration as well. Fix (1999:12) sees anthropological genetics as straddling the disciplinary boundary between social and biological sciences, by relating the socio-economic causes of migration to the evolutionary consequences of gene flow.

Migration is an area of research in which the agenda has been dictated as much by the preoccupations of the governments and other funding agencies as by the intellectual curiosities of the researcher. This poses awkward questions about the relationship of anthropologists to the people who pay them and to the people they study, and ultimately, about how the production of knowledge relates to sources of funds and power. Beardseely Ruml, the first director of the Laura Spellman Rockefeller Memorial, set up in 1918, found Malinowski's functionalism congruent with his hope that social sciences would cease to be "largely deductive and speculative" and would develop objectifying theories and methods (Fisher 1993 31-36, 72-73; in Wolf 2002:71-72). Functionalist anthropology ignored the conjectural past and sought to uncover the attitudes and impulses of different institutions and how they interrelated. Issues of social control and structural relations were conceded to colonial officers who were not trained to question

the ideological premises of colonial rule but to improve upon them in name of “progress” and “modernization.”

The Rockefeller Foundation was also interested in sponsoring field studies on the destabilizing effects of culture contact upon native life in the African colonies. In 1926 it helped found the International African Institute in London, favoring it over American anthropologists, whom it deemed uncooperative (Goody 1995:20). Malinowski seized the day by claiming that the idea of indirect rule, recently advanced by Lord Lugard, accorded entirely with “the functional point of view” and proposed research to ascertain how much migratory labor could be tapped without destabilizing tribal life and values. This yielded him a five-year grant. In contrast, Radcliffe Brown received only meager funds to study intact social systems around the world in order to formulate general laws that could help the administrators of native peoples (Stocking 1995:401). [Quoted from Wolf 2002:72]

Migration studies have also been marginalized within anthropology because they are a subject that implies change and instability, which was thought to be difficult to accommodate into the functionalist model of the social order. This is why migration did not come into its own as a research topic until colonial order was increasingly questioned in Africa in the 1950s (Eades 1986:1). Now, however, overspecialization has led to other different difficulties in accommodating migration studies. As covered in the next section, differing theoretical frameworks, along with their supporters and critics, are resistant to the infusion of new ideas and variables.

### **Migration: Theoretical Foundations**

While the types and scale of migration have certainly changed over the last century, so has the theoretical framework used to examine these migrations. The study of

migration was well charted by the end of the nineteenth century. Both Adam Smith and Karl Marx described the growth of capitalism and the consequence of its search for cheap labor. Smith understood that if capital was mobile but people were not, standards for workers would forever be pushed towards the lowest common denominator. If standards were to progressively improve, however, workers needed the freedom to move to where wages and working conditions were better, thereby forcing capitalists to improve conditions, or risk finding themselves with no one from whom to extract their profits. Geographers, demographers, and statisticians tried to formulate laws of migration and assess general urbanization trends. Ravenstein (1889), a geographer, formulated statistical “laws of migration.” These general theories, which Cohen (1987:34) notes were not based on any actual migratory movement, are ahistorical and individualistic, and regarded as push-pull theories. “Push factors” are demographic growth, low living standards, lack of economic opportunities and political repression, while “pull factors” include demand for labor, availability of land, good economic opportunities and political freedoms (Castles 1998:20). As push-pull theories examine individual migrant decision-making, Borjas (1989) sees an “immigration market” where

...various pieces of information are exchanged and the various options are exchanged and the various options are compared. In a sense, competing host countries make ‘migration offers’ from which individuals compare and choose . . . The immigration market non-randomly sorts these individuals across host countries (1989:461).

Push factors, pull factors, the immigration market, the individual, networks, the household, communities, regions, and nations are just some of the units or dimensions of analysis used by migration researchers. The unit(s) and/or dimension(s) used are an expression of the theoretical lens chosen by the researcher. Neoclassical economic

models present global capitalism as a benevolent, self-organized system, and ignore the role of power-seeking individuals. Bodley's (2003) imperia and scale theory assesses "the roles of individuals rather than social classes and emphasizes the diverse pathways to power, multiple power domains, hierarchies, and networks."

Michael Kearney (1986) reviews three successive orientations in studies of migration and development: modernization, dependency, and articulation. Kearney reminds us that the migration and development processes that anthropologists are examining are historical phenomena, and that we are attempting to apprehend not only basic structural relationships, but equally important trends, tendencies, and rates of change in these relationships (pg. 355). In the next section of this chapter, I examine different theoretical frameworks via description and discussion of research findings within each framework.

### **Modernization Theory in Migration Studies**

Though modernization theory did not emerge as the dominant paradigm of cultural, social, and economic change until the 1950s, expressions of the perspective were applied to migration much earlier. This culminating, most comprehensive and explicit expression of the Victorian sense of history and development is notably Anglo- and Eurocentric, embellishing we-they dichotomies dating back to Greek notions of civilizations versus barbarism (Kearney 1986:333). Thomas and Znaniecki's (1918-1920) *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* focused on the approximately two million Poles who immigrated to America between 1880 and 1910. By explaining the sociology of the immigrants by reference to the breakup of traditional society, they

showed this peasant way of life had been disintegrating long before the mass movement to America. This study, originally published in five volumes from 1918 to 1920, pioneered the effort of tracing the subjective experience of immigrants and other minority groups by printing private letters, a book length autobiography, and life history documents.

This work, largely influenced by Durkheim, Tonnies, and Maine, served as a foundation for the research of Park, Wirth, and the other Chicago sociologists in the 1920s and 30s (Kearney 1982:333). In *Urbanism as a Way of Life* (1938), Wirth described individual alienation, the breakdown of primary relationships, and the increasing significance of the market. These ideas were further developed and imported into anthropology via Redfield's "folk-urban continuum" (Redfield 1947). Redfield's work, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan* (1941), was the point of departure for most of the migration and development research of North American anthropologists up to the mid 1970s (Kearney 1986:333).

Early British research in Southern and Central Africa was also critical of the results of migration (Eades 1986:3). Audrey Richards (1939) linked migration with agricultural decay, and Isaac Schapera (1947) described a situation of "detrribalization." While some migration was necessary to provide labor in the mines, and helped people earn enough money to pay the taxes, too much of it threatened the social and economic structure of the rural areas, as well as leading to processes of urbanization which brought a new set of difficulties (Eades 1986:3). British functionalist anthropology was compatible with how colonial officers were equating migration with "detrribalization" and "demoralization". These administrators, seeing migration as detrimental to the social and

economic structure of the rural areas, tried to keep labor circulating, ignoring those who argued that it was more demoralizing to not let the migrants settle in town with their families (Wilson 1941; Eades 1986).

World War II laid bare the magnitude by which states had failed to develop the infrastructure of scientific research required to participate in modern wars (Wolf 2001:75). From 1943 on, social science organizations and governments in the US and England began to encourage the study of linguistic and regional knowledge necessary to learn the living present (Wolf 2001:75). This, along with an improving economic climate (in the U.S. and England) among other things, created a heightened awareness of the importance of migration, which quickly led anthropologists into the city and away from community studies, where “it became widely realized that such work was suffering from terminal myopia” (Kearney 1986:332). This gave rise to urban anthropology and the analysis of complex societies at both micro and macro levels.

The vast numbers of peasants migrating to cities after World War II were seen as progressive types positively impacting development by bringing innovation and progressive knowledge back to their home communities (Kearney 1986:333). Kearney describes an “urban-centric” modernization theory that postulates “a polar distinction between city and countryside, a distinction that corresponds to developed versus undeveloped:”

The main unit of analysis is the individual migrant, who because of critical factors such as age, gender, marital status, personality, or economic status “decides” to migrate. An associated research task is to see how these individual migrants “adapt,” “assimilate,” and “adjust”—all positive terms that reflect the Victorian notions of progress, another of the presuppositions of modernization theory. (333)

The dualistic nature of modernization theory assumes that “progressiveness” flows from the city to the “backward” countryside, while “traditional” peoples migrate from the “backward,” or “less developed” countryside to the city.

In the early 1950s, the Wirth-Redfieldian model fell under increasing scrutiny. During his village work in Tepoztlan, Mexico, Oscar Lewis tracked Tepoztlan peasants into Mexico City. This project was later elaborated by Lewis’s student, Butterworth (1970, 73, 75, 77). Lewis (1952) is recognized as the first to question the Wirth-Redfield model of urbanization. He talked about peasants in the city and suggested that development did not necessarily follow, or coincide, with urbanization. Migrants were not becoming individualized, alienated, and “deculturized” as much as they were maintaining functional social and kin ties with successive generations of migrants, and with people in their associated community.

British anthropologists working in Africa were reaching similar conclusions throughout the 1950s and 60s. Watson (1958) and Van Velsion (1961) were countering outdated functionalist theories in Central Africa. From their work in towns, they saw migrant labor as sustaining and modernizing, rather than destroying the fabric of tribal society (Eades 1986:3). In West Africa, Hill (1963), perceived migrant farmers as agents of rural capitalism. These critiques to the Wirth-Redfieldian approaches to migration and urbanization fine-tuned the concepts and methods of modernization theory, i.e., paid “more attention to the psychological and cultural complexities of migration and to adaptation and decision-making, plus the need to link the micro to the macro.” (Kearney 1986:337).

## **Dependency Theory and World Systems Theory in Migration Studies**

Where modernization theory viewed history as the movement toward developed urban life, dependency theory called attention to the “development of underdevelopment.” Late in the 1960s, Latin American scholars began to realize that processes of development were inconsistent with the lens of modernization theory. Though earlier work (e.g. Luxemburg 1913 [1951]) had touched on parts of what became known as dependency theory, Frank’s (1966, 1967) analysis of underdevelopment in Latin America as a result of its exchange with Europe and North America had lasting influence on academia. Assisted by rereading Marx, dependency theorists avoided previous dichotomies—modern and traditional—held by modernization theorists, and suggested the widespread existence of a single world system—capitalism. Kearney (1986) compares modernization and dependency theory:

The folk became satellite or periphery and the urban became the metropole or core. Rural and urban are not unconnected dual economies, but are instead linked together by ties of dependency serving the developmental needs not of the periphery but of the core. The Redfieldian variant of the Chicago model had modern traits diffusing from urban to rural; dependency theory called attention to what flows in the opposite direction, namely economic surplus, the transfer of which from satellite to metropole results in the dedevelopment of the former and the growth of the latter. Modernization theory is essentially psychologistic, individualistic, microeconomistic, and ahistoric; dependency theory theorizes historic macroeconomic relationships and processes at national and international levels. [338]

Dependency theory leaked into migration studies with Shoemaker’s (1976) fieldwork on colonization in Eastern Peru. He cast aside the functional model of equilibrium between city and countryside and embraced a modified version of Frank’s

(1966, 1967) “internal colonialism.” Lomnitz (1976), in her “ecological model for migration studies,” described a multilocal social system where migrants cultivated and maintained rural networks while incorporating urban components. Kemper (1977, 1979, 1981) takes dependency theory further and proposes a “historical-structural framework” that involves rural-urban and internal-international dichotomies, focusing on structural and historical causation and consequences of migration rather than on individual migrants.

Although dependency theory does well to critique previous perspectives seated in individual psychology, decision-making, culture and personality, it shifted emphasis to the macroeconomic, and away from the local level (Kearney 1986:341). This did not provide anthropologists with a general theoretical model capable of generating local level research problems on migration emanating from rural communities. Influenced by dependency theory, Immanuel Wallerstein (1974, 1974-1989) elaborated world system theory, arguing that economic history could be understood in terms of uneven relations of exchange and power between core areas, semi-peripheries, and peripheries. World systems theory better enabled anthropologists to theorize migrant labor within circuits of capital and commodities (Kearney 1986:340). This was useful to anthropologists studying colonizing migrations (Portes 1981; Sassen-Koob 1980), but migration studies were still turning too far away from the local level.

### **Articulation Theory in Migration Studies**

Bringing anthropologists back to culture and back into the field, articulation theory suggests that capitalism, rather than replacing noncapitalist modes of production,

may exist with them and even strengthen them (Kearney 1986:342). This new research conceptualized peripheral communities as different cultural systems replicating distinctive forms depending on power relations within it, and structural relations with imperial forces. The articulation approach to migration studies combines qualitative, ethnographic fieldwork with quantitative data describing macro-relations. It sees a unitary global capitalist system, and insists that the analysis of the appropriation of surplus, which is the main interest of dependency theory, must begin in the systems of production that generate the surplus, rather than in the circulating sphere of unequal economic exchange (Kearney 1986:342).

Meillassoux (1981) analyzes the functions of migration in articulating the domestic community with colonial capitalism.

For capitalism to reproduce itself, that is for it to grow according to the logic of its development, its growth must correspond to that of the productive forces upon which it depends, and in particular upon labour-power, which must increase in proportion, both in quality and quantity. European imperialism provides an original solution to this problem by dividing the international proletariat: the stabilized, urban section of the national working class are ensured training and selective education in order to raise their productivity, while all that is expected from people in the colonial zones is a continuous increase in numbers. [Meillassoux 1981:138]

He notes that migrant labor is an essential element of both colonial/imperialist production, and the reproduction of the deteriorating peasant domestic unit. A major advantage of this perspective is that it conceptualizes how communities are embedded historically and economically in the greater world. Kearney (1986:344) reminds us that, more than bringing attention back to communities, articulation theory isolates the household as the primary unit of analysis: “the household occupies a strategic position

because it is in it that production and reproduction co-occur in a macroeconomic sphere that partakes of the two disparate modes or loci of production” (1986:344).

### **Globalization and Migration**

Migration is a global process and research on migrants that neglects to work from a global, historical perspective conditionally ignores processes and relationships that impact the migrant and/or the migrant situation. Anthropology’s interpretation of the migrant’s position has developed alongside its understanding of boundaries. The existence of borders and boundaries is no more in flux than academia’s history of perceiving them. Benedict’s (1934) “totality permeated by a master pattern,” Mead’s (1953) “national character,” and Kroeber’s (1957) “common striving for stylistic unification,” shared the underlying assumption that when one culture comes into contact with another, it responds to that contact in homogeneous ways, as wholes. In reaction to these products of ‘acculturation studies,’ Steward (1955:43-63) increased the measure of complexity with his “sociocultural levels of integration.” These levels—family, community, and nation-state—were Steward’s platforms of cultural integration analysis. Eric Wolf (2001:42) points out that these views blunder by imposing a static frame of reference upon a dynamic, moving situation involving a plethora of variables.

Migrations are not an isolated phenomenon: movements of people are driven by movements of commodities and capital. The commercial world arose as an effort to break away from the limitations of social power accruable in the political world. It thrives on creating endless opportunities for expansion. Global processes are created and directed by commercial elites who concentrate social power by coopting the

humanization and politicization processes to produce and maintain for profit business enterprises (Bodley 2003). Their fortunes are tied to enterprises operating in a medium where national boundaries do not exist.

Money, commodities, and elite imperia are operating globally, while national government, business, and media elite propagandize the idea that “we” are more prosperous than ever. They attach words like “transnational” and “international” to global processes and networks like “migration” and “corporation,” and in doing so, distort reality by manipulating human minds into “not noticing” the massive scale changes that have taken place over the last century, e.g. the number of Wal-Mart’s and their rate of spread, the difference between a billion and a trillion dollars, the fact that political motives are always commercially driven. Terminology has been manipulated by elites since speech began.

Kearney, alluding to globalization’s implications for theory and methods used by cultural anthropologists studying local communities, says

Globalization refers to social, economic, cultural, and demographic processes that take place within nations but also transcend them, such that attention limited to local processes, identities, and units of analysis yields incomplete understanding of the local.

[1995:548]

Globalization implies more abstract, less institutionalized, and less intentional processes occurring without references to nations. It is the unifying effort of elites that establish the nature of border relationships. The same global-oriented elites are interested in expanding their personal power networks across the globe.

Globalization has given rise to many new studies in migration. Wang (2002) examines the Asian cross-border marriage migration market. As more people enter the

market, good quality and delivery on time become necessary conditions for success. Sana and Massay (2000) note that the absence of effective pension systems is generating motivations for international migration as a means of self-financing retirement. Benson-Rea and Rawlinson's (2003) research drew on migration experiences of highly skilled professional and business migrants to New Zealand. Corporations and governments are, more than ever, interested in researching strategies that narrow the gap between migrant expectations of settlement and the reality of the process. The flowering of economic globalization has seen the development of unprecedented interconnection between immigration on the one hand, and increased trade capacity, competitiveness, and employment policy on the other. Corporations and governments alike are being forced to adjust to this new reality, particularly as it relates to labour flows (Keely-2003)

Castles and Miller (1998) compare migration movements around the world, identifying "general tendencies, which are likely to play a major role in the next 20 years" (1998:8-9):

- *The globalization of migration*: the tendency for more and more countries to be affected by migratory movements at the same time. The spectrum of economic, social and cultural backgrounds of migrants is broadening in immigration countries, as the diversity of the areas of origin is increasing.
- *The acceleration of migration*: the fact that migrations are growing in volume in all major regions. This quantitative growth increases both the urgency and difficulties of governmental policies. Governmental policies can prevent or reduce international migration and repatriation.

- *The differentiation of migration:* most countries do not simply have one type of immigration, such as labour migration, refugee or permanent settlement, but a whole range of types at once. Typically, migratory chains that begin with one type of movement often continue with other forms, despite governmental efforts to control the movements.
- *The feminization of migration:* women play an increasing role in all regions and all types of migration. Many labor migrations and refugee movements in the past were male dominated. The role of women in migrations has been increasing since the 1960s.
- *The politicization of migration:* Domestic politics, bilateral and regional relationships and national security policies of states around the world are increasingly affected by international migration.

### **Migration and Power**

Movements take many forms: people migrate as manual workers, highly qualified specialists, entrepreneurs, refugees, or family members of migrants. Whether or not they initially intend to return, many settle. Migratory networks develop, linking origin and destination, and helping to bring about major changes to both. “Migrations can change demographic, economic and social structures, and bring a new cultural diversity, which often brings into question national identity” (Castles 4).

Power relations exist within and between all groups through time and space. Wolf (1982) alludes to “the migrant’s position” in the world. His focus on relational power coincides with his four strategies for assessing a migrant’s position (Wolf

1982:361). First, the size of the social and cultural gap between origin and destination is not determined by physical distance or political boundaries. Second, we should not prejudge the degree of estrangement experienced by the migrant by applying an ahistorical measure of national identity. Third, it is an error to envisage the migrant as the bearer and protagonist of a homogenously integrated culture that he either retains or yields up as a whole. Lastly, a migrant's position is determined not so much by the migrant or his/her culture as by the structure of the situation in which he/she finds himself.

Upon migration, a migrant is embedded and incorporated into a multiplicity of different patterns of group relationships. These relations are constantly changing and as context-dependent as those of his/her previous situation; however, the migrant acquires a new position within this new milieu of power differentials. Where and how they are embedded within these foreign power relations determines their socioeconomic status, potential function in society, and essentially, his/her personal power.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **ELITE PLAY IN MEXICO**

This chapter begins with the Aztecs, jumps into 19<sup>th</sup> century Mexico, and examines major parts of the history of elites and peasants in Mexico. How did Mexican and foreign elites establish their social power networks, and how were the costs of elite gain socialized? The imperia discussed in this chapter will primarily be American and Mexican, with some British, since, throughout the 20th century and into the 21st, these have been the nationalities of most of those seeking power in and from Mexican territory. The chapter focuses on language history, policies of education, the landless peasantry, indigenous working conditions, and the impacts of imperia on the environment. The chapter brings us through NAFTA, recent Zapatista rebellions, and the 2000 presidential election. Since English in Mexico (just like Spanish in the U.S.) cannot be perceived apart from Mexico's commercial history and elite decision-making, this chapter connects them.

Foreign commercial elites have been operating in Mexico to expand their imperia since Cortez. They have directed the spread of their personal power networks to Mexico by positioning their commercial "schemes" in profitable areas—rich in resource, human labor, land, etc.—where locals misperceive this new, alien commercial culture. Most people do not understand the manner in which commercial elites use scale to their advantage—to spread the costs onto a larger population. A few Mexicans benefit lucratively by supporting foreign commercial interests and becoming integrated into foreign elite imperia, while life becomes more difficult for the bulk of the population. This is a recurring theme in Mexico.

The border between Mexico and the United States divides the world's most sophisticated economy from one marked by inefficiency and neediness. The U.S.-Mexican economic relationship is just one strand of the complex web of relations between these two nations. However, in a commercial world, other cultural forces may seem powerless in the face of the "economy." Mexico's financial markets are linked to those of the United States. U.S.-based elites gain social power by extending their multinational enterprises into Mexico. Mexico is heavily reliant upon the U.S. economy. However, the country is not impacted by U.S. firms as much as it is by the people that control them—where they operate, how they operate, and who pays the costs of their operations. These elites are not only U.S.-based, but most sit on the boards of successful corporations in the U.S. that look to profit by spreading south. Their profit is Mexico's cost.

### **Nahuatl and Aztec Sources**

The Nahuatl languages form the southernmost family of the Uto-Aztecan stock. There are more than a million and a half Nahuatl speakers in Mexico today. Classical Nahuatl was the language spoken by the Aztecs (Mexica) of Tenochtitlan during the Aztec empire. The empire only endured about a century. Its power networks—social, political, militaristic, and ideological—stretched throughout central Mexico and down into much of Central America. Thus, the language influenced all Nahuatl dialects as it became a *lingua franca* for non-Classical Nahuatl speakers. Classical Nahuatl has an ideographic writing system, which can be seen in many saved documents. Once the

Spanish arrived, linguists, many of them priests, translated the language into the Roman alphabet which is commonly studied and taught today.

Our knowledge of the Aztecs relies on sources. A few pre-hispanic or early colonial manuscripts from Central Mexico dealing with ritual, divination, and the Mesoamerican calendar survived the conquest. These include the *Codex Borbonicus and the Tonalamatl Aubin*; the *Anales de Tlatelolco* transcribed into European script in 1528; and the historical-economic *Codex Mendoza* (an Aztec scribe prepared this for Emperor Charles V). The Franciscan Friar Bernardino de Sahagun (1499-1590) worked with Mexican nobles, in both Nahuatl and Spanish, to record their knowledge on many topics in an encyclopedic *General History of the Things of New Spain*. A Dominican friar by the name of Diego Duran (1537-1588) who grew up in and near Mexico City, wrote *Book of the Gods and the Rites and the Ancient Calendar* and *Historia de las Indias de Nueva Espana y Islas de Tierra Firme*. While these works aimed at representing an indigenous Mexican perspective of the conquest, they almost entirely reflect the perspectives of Aztec elites (Wolf 1999:135).

### **Caudillos, Criollos, and Chaos**

Between Mexican independence in 1821 and 1875, the Mexican presidency had changed hands 75 times (Meyer & Sherman 1987:432). One man, Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, held the presidency 11 different times (Callcott 1936). Communication between Mexico City and distant rural areas was infrequent to non-existent. *Caudillos*, or military leaders, ruled regions and enforced their will via violence and oppressive tactics. *Caudillos* also forged relationships with foreign elites (Brady 1955). Elites

concentrate power by manipulating personal networks of kin, allies, and associates, many of whom may themselves have more than average power (Bodley 2003:5). In this sense, *Caudillos* coopted the land and people of their power domain in order to position themselves favorably in the hierarchy of foreign elite imperia. They essentially hand over control of their personal power network for the security and benefits of placement within a larger one.

By the mid-19th century, the growing middle class of criollos (Spanish born in Mexico) was challenging conservative, Spanish-born, colonial ideology. For the liberal criollos, political reform was not a matter of profound social restructuring, but of access to the power structure: they felt they lacked access to positions of wealth and power (Perry 1996:63). This tension played an important role in limiting foreign investment opportunity in Mexico throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Although some foreign elites were investing in Mexico in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, instability and chaos repelled many power-seekers and prevented Mexican elites from participating in their neighbors' technological, scientific and industrial "progress" during the 19th century. While Mexico was caught in inner conflict, its northern neighbor was setting new standards for economic growth. Giant business corporations were spawning in the U.S., largely due to what Bodley refers to as "The Rail Empires" (2003: 152). Between 1830 and 1859 some \$1.1 billion was invested in railroads (Chandler 1977:90). Markets expanded wherever railroads were constructed—thus having a profound growth impact on the total American economy (Bodley 2003:153). As the economy grew, power concentrated into few hands. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, railroads were the principal companies traded on the stock market, and owners and directors of railroads constituted

the most powerful economic elite (Bodley 2003:153). Upon saturating large railroad necessity in the U.S., these elites began negotiating with President Porfirio Diaz in Mexico, not only to make economic gains and expand their power, but to ship Mexico's resources north.

### **Porfirio's Imperium: 1876-1911**

In 1876, President Porfirio Diaz set out to pacify and bring order to the countryside, and to develop a modern economy with help from foreign investors. Over the next 35 years, Porfirio Diaz was able to construct an enormous personal power network stretching into all domains—political, economic, ideological, and military—so that only a revolution could overcome his seemingly limitless power in Mexico. An imperium can benefit society at large, but unlimited power is always potentially dangerous (Bodley 2003:5). At the end of the 19th century, novelist Frederico Gamboa wrote in his diary:

Every solution in public and private life has been left in the hands of Don Porfirio: from the learning of Greek and Latin to the uniform of the municipal coachmen; from the granting of divorces in cases of broken marriages to the matching of rich widows with foreigners sufficiently noble or royal; from border disputes between states to relations between neighbors and relatives; from the total figures of the harvest to the menus in each house; everything from the transcendental to the utterly trivial (Gamboa 1971:77).

A few Mexican elites benefited from the stability brought by a strong dictator. Porfirio Diaz and a few business men continued concentrating their wealth in Mexico City and socializing the costs in the rural area: the indigenous peoples bore the heaviest burden.

A new law, established by Benito Juarez (before the Porfirian era) put an end to landholding by ecclesiastical and communal corporations. This fragmented indigenous communal landholdings—*ejidos*. During the Porfirian era, *hacendados*—owners of *haciendas*, or private land companies—acquired almost all of the broken ejido lands. Diaz encouraged foreign colonization by contracting private companies to survey public lands for redistribution, and awarding the firm-owners one third or more of the land they surveyed. Lands given away in this manner ultimately amounted to one-fifth of Mexico's territory (Wolf 1969). Very few rural households could prove legal title. In a country with a population of roughly 15 million in 1910, 99 percent of the rural family heads were landless (Meyer & Sherman 1987:552).

The landless peasantry (largely indigenous) was left to choose between working cash-crops on their old land as tenant farmers (debt peons); migrating to mines; migrating to cities for other work; or finding employment on the growing railroads. Usually these choices placed them in unskilled positions ultimately subordinate to foreigners. Nevertheless, good wages from foreign enterprises temporarily pacified a growing antiforeign sentiment. Molina Enriquez writes:

The construction of railways . . . involved the employment of laborers who . . . for the first time received real [i.e. cash] wages, wages which radically improved their economic condition. Along the whole length of the railway lines which traversed the country gathered laborers, peons who had escaped the yoke of our great haciendas . . . The temporary bonanza, produced by the millions invested in our railways, constituted for a few years the true secret of the Porfirian peace, at the same time that the profound changes which they brought on in the conditions of production within the country, already laid the bases of the future Revolution. [1932:292; quoted in Wolf 1969:20-21]

The large *haciendas*—plantations for commercial operations—produced more goods for international export than food for domestic consumption (Perry 1996:67). In the Yucatan sisal plantations became more important when the invention of the McCormick reaper created a large U.S. market for baling twine. By the end of the Porfirian era, between one-half and one-third of the Maya population worked these Yucatan sisal plantations as debt peons (Wolf 1969:41).

### **Hacendados, Rurales, and Cientificos**

Mexican elites were *hacendados* and *cientificos*. *Hacendados* such as Don Luis Terraza did very well:

By the early twentieth century Terrazas owned some fifty haciendas and smaller ranches totaling a fantastic seven million acres. Don Luis was the largest hacendado in Mexico and perhaps in all of Latin America; his holdings were eight times the size of the legendary King Ranch in Texas. He owned 500,000 head of cattle, 225,000 sheep, 25,000 horses, 5,000 mules, and some of the best fighting bulls in the western hemisphere. Encinillas, northwest of Chihuahua City, was the largest of his haciendas, extending to some 1,300,000 acres and employing some 2,000 peones. [Meyer & Sherman 1987:459]

Diaz established a militia in the countryside. The “*rurales*”—well mounted and well-paid rural police—helped him “pacify” and organize rural Mexico by shooting opponents to the regime on sight and securing property against seizure or destruction (Baklanoff 1975:35). After pacifying the once lawless countryside, Diaz and his government lowered import duties, modernized harbors, and directed foreign investors toward railroads, mining, petroleum, and agriculture.

The economy came to be dominated by a small group of businessmen and financiers whose decisions affected the welfare of the entire country. Thus, in 1908, out of sixty-six corporations involved in finance and industry, thirty-six had common directorates drawn from a group of thirteen men; nineteen of the corporations had more than one of the thirteen. During the final decade of the nineteenth century, the leaders of this new controlling group formed a clique, which soon came to be known as the *Científicos*. Claiming to be scientific positivists, they saw the future of Mexico in the reduction and obliteration of the Indian element, which they regarded as inferior and hence incapable of development, and in the furtherance of “white” control, national or international. [Wolf 1969:13-14]

Díaz strategically placed científicos within his imperium for manipulation of a variety of corporate groups and institutions. From 1876 to 1910, railroad tracks throughout the nation grew from a total of 666 kilometers to 19,280 kilometers (Wolf 1969:20)—while approximately 80 percent of the capital outlay for the railroads came from the United States (Meyer & Sherman 1987:444). Resources became easier for American elites to extract from Mexico.

### **U.S. and British Investment in Mexico**

Although there were large British investments in mining, capital from the United States was dominant. By 1911 U.S. interests accounted for at least 60 percent of the total investments in mining (Wright 1971:55). The Guggenheim family profited enormously throughout Mexico in mining related activities.

They [the Guggenheims] owned the American Smelting and Refining Company, based in Monterrey but with large plants in Chihuahua, Durango, and San Luis Potosi as well. The Aguascalientes Metal Company, the Guggenheim Exploration Company, and the Mexican Exploration Company were either partially or totally owned and controlled by

Daniel Guggenheim and his six brothers. In addition, the Guggenheims acquired many already proven mines, such as Tecolote silver mines and the Esperanza gold mine, as well as new mines in Durango, Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Zacatecas. By 1902 Guggenheim investments in northern Mexico totaled some \$12 million. [Meyer & Sherman 1987:447-8]

At the time of Meyer Guggenheim's death in 1905, his estate was estimated to value \$2,256,280, and his seven sons' holdings amounted to no less than \$75 million (Davis 1978:90-1). By crossing borders, this U.S.-based imperium was able to take advantage of economic asymmetry and exploit land and labor to great extents. In *The Guggenheims and the American Dream*, Edwin P. Hoyt Jr. describes this impact.

A common laborer in Monterrey in 1890 received 25 centavos a day. The Guggenheims needed a great number of laborers, so they raised the wage and soon they were paying a peso a day. Other employers complained, but not the workers. Yet the Guggenheims were not happy, because they had as much trouble with labor as ever. The Mexican laborers discovered that by working for the Guggenheims at a peso a day, they only had to work a quarter as many days as they would have for anyone else, and that is what they did. Finally, the Guggenheims were driven to offer free housing and special prices at the company store to any man that would work 25 days a month. [Hoyt 1967: 91]

As this certainly demonstrates the Guggenheim's wealth and power in a poor nation, it also conveys the difficulties presented in manipulating a labor force that, perhaps, viewed their time to be more valuable than the extra centavos. This suggests that the gap between the workers and the elites was too great, or the barriers to advance were too high for the workers to want to earn the extra centavos. It also demonstrates how profoundly alien the imperia-oriented, social reality of commercial culture was to Mexican laborers.

In 1898 Colonel William Green, the "copper king of Sonora", obtained an option on a Sonora copper mine for 47,000 pesos from the widow of Ignacio Pesqueira. Within

a few years his Cananea Consolidated Copper Company was one of the largest copper companies in the world, operating eight large smelting furnaces and employing 3500 men. Colonel Greene's copper town of Cananea hardly existed at the beginning of the Porfiriato. From a population of about 100 in 1876, it expanded to almost 15,000 in 1910 (Meyer & Sherman 1987:448).

In his *Colonel Greene and the Copper Skyrocket*, C.L. Sonnichsen (1974) describes Greene:

It is possible to maintain that Colonel Greene's greatest talent was for entertaining. He made something of a specialty of the care and feeding of millionaires, and he loved to bring them to Mexico for special treatment. He knew from the start that one visit was worth a million words when he had something to sell, and he brought his directors, stockholders, and friends to Cananea quite frequently. At first he brought them in his private car or sent them Pullman tickets on regular trains, but as his enterprises multiplied, his hospitality expanded proportionately. [1974:166]

Meanwhile, in 1906 his Mexican workers organized a strike. They wanted five pesos a day instead of three, their 10 hour day reduced to eight, and that promotion be offered to Mexicans too (Sonnichsen 1974:178). Fearing increased frequency of riots that were already beginning, Colonel Greene organized help from 275 Arizona Rangers. They crossed the border and violently suppressed the workers. Soon, the Mexican rurales arrived to help the rangers break the strike. The strike, however, focused attention on the Diaz policy of protecting foreigners at the expense of Mexicans: U.S. troops were allowed to cross into Mexican territory and kill Mexicans to guard the interests of an American mining magnate (Meyer & Sherman 1987:490).

American and British elites competed for rights to exploit Mexican oil. Edward L. Doheny, an American who had successfully developed oil fields in California,

purchased over 600,000 acres of potentially rich oil lands around Tampico and Tuxpan. Within a short time his Mexican Petroleum Company established Mexico's first commercially feasible gusher, El Ebano. (Meyer & Sherman 1987:448). Sir Weetman Dickinson Pearson (later named Lord Cowdray), who had worked on the drainage of Mexico City, the modernization of the Veracruz Harbor, the reconstruction of the Tehuantepec Railroad, and the building of the terminal facilities at Puerto Mexico and Salina Cruz, was granted drilling concessions in Veracruz, San Luis Potosi, Tamaulipas, and Tabasco (Meyer & Sherman 1987:449). His Compañia Mexicana de Petróleo "El Aguila," S.A. brought forth Portrero del Llano, Number 4—a gusher that produced more than a 100,000,000 barrels in eight years. To cement the friendly relations with the regime, Pearson appointed the dictator's son, Porfirio Díaz Jr. to the board of directors of El Aguila. As Doheny and Lord Cowdray's imperia grew barrel upon barrel, Mexico became one of the world's largest petroleum producers.

Porfirio Díaz's imperium grew at the expense of his countrymen. He sold Mexican resources, land, and labor to strengthen his network of power. He set a trend of imperia-building by favoring foreign elites. This trend characterized Mexican foreign economic policy for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Díaz is credited with creating an economic infrastructure, developing an incipient national market for manufactured goods, and integrating Mexico with the international economy, including the 10-fold expansion of real exports (Baklanoff 1975:35). It has been estimated that by the end of the Díaz era foreigners owned over half the total wealth of the country, and that foreign capital dominated every area of productive enterprise except agriculture and the handicrafts (Meyer & Sherman 1987)

The ideals that emerged with the Mexican Revolution—emancipation of the rural and laboring classes, and economic self-determination—have been basic to the public ideology of every administration since that time. Despite the growing anti-foreign sentiment at this time, different factions accepted what aid they could get from foreign business during this 10-year struggle for power. A Mexican scholar, Bertha Ulloa (1969), characterizes the Mexican revolution as “an intervened civil war” because the U.S. government and business repeatedly meddled in Mexican national affairs during that time.

The oil controversy between American and British elites repeatedly pressed both governments to negotiate and back different Mexican factions during a very complex revolution. In *Dark Side of Fortune*, Margaret Davies documents the British and American intervention in Mexico on behalf of elite oil interests (1998:90-6). President Wilson and American elites initially supported Huerta. Edward Brown, president of the Mexican National Railways, James Speyer, chairman of the board of Speyer and Company, a New York banking firm with large Mexican bond investments, and Edward Doheny urged President Woodrow Wilson to formally recognize Huerta as the Mexican President (Davies 1998:91). In May of 1913, Edward Doheny (Mexican Petroleum), concerned that Pearson’s El Aguila operations would soon dwarf Doheny’s Mexican imperium, united with Julius Kruttschnitt (chairman of the Southern Pacific Company), and leaders of Phelps-Dodge Company and the Greene Cananea Copper Company to sign a letter to President Wilson pleading with him to take action in support of Huerta. But it was too late: Huerta was ready to deal with Pearson and receive gifts from the British government. Eventually American opposition to Huerta led to Wilson supporting

Carranza's Constitutionalist forces, then a U.S. blockade of Veracruz. British and American governments intervened in the Mexican Revolution in order to expand the power of their most prominent investors. Elites often control government personnel by temporarily placing them high in their own personal power networks, via stock, money or land.

### **The New Constitution Waits for Cardenas**

Despite social tensions and civil warfare, the total value of U.S. investments in Mexico continued to grow (Baklanof 1975: 38). However, not long after Venustiano Carranza (with U.S. assistance) won control of major parts of the country, a new national constitution was adopted. To create the constitution, Carranza did not invite anyone who he thought would impose upon his power—this allowed a radical faction to form and write it. The Mexican constitution of 1917 was designed to assert greater national sovereignty in the creation of economic and social programs “and curtail the clout that had hitherto been exercised by foreign investments” (Dominguez 2001:9).

The Constitution promised extensive, progressive reforms including land redistribution, the end of debt peonage, the right to unionize and strike, an eight-hour workday, and a minimum wage. It also promised compensation to landowners for their losses through redistribution. It bowed to the old principle of the right to private property, but it also gave the state the right to determine what the acceptable form of that property might be. In short, it gave the centralized government tremendous power. The Constitution also limited the president's term of office, but essentially it allowed the president to be the government while in office. [Perry 1996:71]

Until Lazaro Cardenas became president in 1934, Mexico was locked into the rule of a partnership of elites that neglected the goals of the new constitution in order to

maintain their personal imperia. During his remaining time in office, Carranza fueled the military and avoided land redistribution. Obregon was the logical successor to Carranza. When Carranza tried to pick a proxy-successor, Obregon raised an army and eventually assassinated Carranza. For guaranteeing the security of U.S. property interests in Mexico, the U.S. finally recognized Obregon as president of Mexico in 1923. Obregon then named Plutarco Elias Calles as president who, after his term, renamed Obregon for a second term. Obregon was assassinated within the first year of his second term. Then, Calles appointed Emilio Portes Gil, then Pascual Ortiz Rubio, then Abelardo Rodriguez—three puppet presidents through whom he could rule from behind the scenes for the remainder of the term. As each tried to carry out some reforms consistent with the 1917 Constitution, Calles would oppose reform and get rid of them. In 1934 Calles selected Lazaro Cardenas.

Obregon, Calles, and Calles' proxy-presidents redistributed very little land. When Calles tried to eliminate clerical privileges and redistribute Church lands, he caused the Cristero Rebellion of 1926. He used harsh and bloody measures to put an end to the rebellion, but indio and mestizo Zapatistas continued guerrilla warfare in the south long after the death of Zapata (Perry 1996:73).

Cardenas was the first Mexican president to aggressively implement the constitution of 1917. Cardenas, after sending Calles into exile, began returning land to indigenous peoples and promoted communal landholdings—*ejidos*. By 1940 one and a half million *ejidatarios* (*ejido* owners) possessed 47 percent of the arable land in Mexico—a major peak in peasant landholding—and accounted for 42 percent of agricultural production (Ruiz 1992:399).

In 1936 he established a Department of Indian Affairs, which devoted many of its resources to addressing problems as indigenous communities perceived them (Perry 1996:75). He also started vocational schools for indigenous people that placed priority on practical strategies for addressing local and regional problems. Cardenas integrated the peasantry into the national economy and gave them a voice through labor unions.

During the 1930s the U.S. was struggling to find its way out of the Great Depression that began in 1929. The expropriatory measures of President Lazaro Cardenas (see Table 1) against U.S.-owned agricultural properties (1936), railways (1937), and petroleum fields, wells and refineries (1938) account for most of the dramatic decline of U.S. outstanding investments in Mexico from 1929-46 (Baklanoff 1975: 38). The unretaliated expropriation of the foreign-owned oil companies “was hailed by Mexicans as the beginning of their “economic independence”” (Wright 1971:68). Although nationalizing the oil industry received popular applause, Mexican special interest groups and multinational corporations were strongly opposed to this action. US and Britain elites began supporting the opposition.

### **Education, Vasconcelos and the Mexican Cultural Revolution**

Article 3 of the Constitution of 1917 says “The education imparted by the Federal State shall be designed to develop harmoniously all the faculties of the human being and shall foster in him at the same time a love of country and a consciousness of international solidarity, in independence and justice.” The drafting of this article was assigned to a radical committee led by Francisco Mugica. While most agreed that primary education

should be free and obligatory in the Mexican republic, Mugica and his “radical cohorts” thought that education should be secular as well (Meyers & Sherman 1987:543).

In a diary of congress debates from 1916-17, Mugica is quoted as follows:

I am an enemy of the clergy because I consider it the most baneful and perverse enemy of our country. . . . What ideas can the clergy bring to the soul of the Mexican masses, or to the middle class, or to the wealthy? Only the most absurd ideas—tremendous hate for democratic institutions, the deepest hate for the principles of equity, equality, and fraternity. . . . Are we going to turn over to the clergy the formation of our future? . . . Fellow deputies, what morality can the clergy transmit as learning to our children? We have ample testimony: only the most corrupting and terrible morality. [Quoted in *Diario de los debates del Congreso Constituyente, 1916-1917* (Mexico, 1960), p. 642]

To implement Article 3 Obregon looked to Jose Vasconcelos, and named him minister of education in 1920. With plenty of federal funds, he sent teachers into hundreds of hamlets with lessons in reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and Mexican history. Vasconcelos’ plan was not to segregate the indigenous peoples, but by educating them, to incorporate them into a mainstream Mexican society.

Deliberately, I insisted that the Indian department should have no other purpose than to prepare the native to enter the common school by giving him the fundamental tools in Spanish, since I proposed to go contrary to the North American Protestant practice of approaching the problem of teaching the native as something special and separate from the rest of the population. [Vasconcelos 1963:152]

Cultural nationalism was inspired by attempts to break the European intellectual hold on Latin America. It was designed to portray a vision of Latin America absent in earlier representations where only the powerful elite were seen worthy of portrayal. Latin America's indigenous populations, meztizos and other groups were the central theme of this new vision. Mexican Muralist painters like Diego Rivera, Clemente Orozco, and

Daniel Siquieros, became important in communicating this new Mexican identity to a largely illiterate nation. Muralism as a way to portray a more balanced vision of Mexican society came about through the efforts of Jose Vasconcelos. During the period in which Vasconcelos was Minister of Education in Mexico he made great efforts to reform education and to begin a type of cultural creation that fostered a more positive image of Mexico's multi-ethnic population.

### **“Lo Mexicano”—Gamio, Ramos, and Paz**

Manuel Gamio was one of the great intellectual and political figures of Mexico's immediate, post-revolutionary period. Studying at Columbia University beginning in 1909, he received his M.A. in anthropology under Franz Boas in 1911, and his Ph.D. in 1922. He dedicated himself to ethnographic research among Mexico's indigenous peoples while pursuing a “nation-building” project for what he saw as an enlightened, progressive Mexico—a project he termed *forjando patria*, forging the nation, and for which he provided a book by that title in 1916. In 1922, he expanded *Forjando Patria* into a two volume *La Poblacion del Valle de Teotihuacan* (this 1600 page work served as his doctoral dissertation). These works advocated the interests of Mexico's indigenous peoples. Gamio did not believe in the racial inferiority of the Indian (Gamio 1982:5). He believed that Indian cultures had value and recognized the cultural diversity in Mexico, but at the same time “he postulated the unavoidable necessity of creating a homogenous society in order to “forge a true nation” (Limon 1998:44). He is often referred to as the “father of Indigenismo in Mexico.”

Like Gamio, Samuel Ramos and later, Octavio Paz, continued to be concerned with the question of national identity—the meaning of “*lo Mexicano*” or Mexican-ness. In *Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico* (1934), Ramos views the central Mexican psycho-cultural condition as stemming from an inferiority complex generated by history. For Ramos, inferiority manifested itself differently at different class levels of society. For example, the middle class individual masks his sense of inferiority through dissimulation and exaggerated courtesy. His favorite model for study is the Mexican *pelado* (plucked)—the kind of person who continually lays bare his soul, so that its most intimate confines are visible (pg. 58).

The *pelado* belongs to a most vile category of social fauna; he is a form of human rubbish from the great city. He is less than a proletarian in the economic hierarchy, and a primitive man in the intellectual one. Life from every quarter has been hostile to him and his reaction has been black resentment. His is an explosive being with whom relationship is dangerous, for the slightest friction causes him to blow up. His explosions are verbal and reiterate his theme of self-affirmation in crude and suggestive language. He has created a dialectic of his own, a diction which abounds in ordinary words, but he gives these words a new meaning. . . . The *pelado*'s terminology abounds in sexual allusions which reveal his phallic obsession; the sexual organ becomes symbolic of masculine force. In verbal combat he attributes to his adversary an imaginary femininity, reserving for himself the masculine role. [Ramos 1934:60]

Octavio Paz follows Ramos in turning toward the language of the low-class Mexican:

It is . . . significant that masculine homosexuality is regarded with a certain indulgence insofar as the active agent is concerned. The passive agent is an abject, degraded being. This ambiguous conception is made very clear in the word games or battles—full of obscene allusions and double meanings—that are so popular in Mexico City. Each of the speakers tries to humiliate his adversary with verbal traps and ingenious linguistic

combinations, and the loser is the person who cannot think of a comeback, who has to swallow his opponent's jibes. These jibes are full of aggressive sexual allusions; the loser is possessed, is violated, by the winner, and the spectators laugh and sneer at him. [Paz 1951:31]

### **Erasing Cardenas and Shifting to the Right**

In 1940 President Manuel Avila Camacho resumed the Porfirian trend of promoting foreign elite investment in Mexico. This was a major shift to the right. Labor unions lost power, the ejido movement was reversed, and foreign investors were invited back to Mexico. Elite interest acquired many of the ejido lands that Cardenas had distributed and the old ways and old problems continued to beset the countryside (Perry 1996:76).

After 1940, there was a profound shift of U.S. investments away from traditional fields of economic activity (petroleum, mining, agriculture, etc.) to manufacturing and commerce (See Table 5.1). From 1950 to 1970, four industries accounted for most of manufacturing investments: chemicals, food and beverages, transportation equipment (including automobiles), and electrical machinery (Whiting 1992:67). According to Whiting,

As foreign investment moved out of extractive industries and utilities and increasingly into manufacturing in the decades following the war, foreign-owned firms accounted for important shares of capital and production, concentrated in large firms, in the most important and dynamic sectors of Mexican manufacturing industry. This was not accidental; it reflected not only the international push and domestic pull of economic factors but also state policy. [1992:69-70]

By 1970 over two thirds of all U.S. investment in Mexico was in manufacturing, rising to three quarters by the mid 1970s (Whiting 1992:67).

**Table 5.1**

**Total U.S. Direct Investment in Mexico, Selected Years, 1929-1967**

*(In millions of U.S. dollars at year end)*

	1929	1936	1943	1950	1958	1962	1967
Mining and Smelting	230	213	108	121	139	121	100
Petroleum	206	69	5	13	32	73	43
Manufacturing	6	8	22	133	336	442	890

*Source:* Wright 1971:77

**Bracero, Maquila, & Depending on Oil**

The bracero and maquila programs also merit mention. The most popular use of the term bracero (from the Spanish *brazo* "arm") applies to the temporary agricultural and railroad workers brought into the United States as an emergency measure to meet the labor shortage of World War II. The bracero agreements were a series of guest worker agreements from 1942 to 1964. A U.S. agency—the Administration of the Agricultural Insurance—hired Mexicans to work in agricultural and railroad industries in the U.S. (Dominquez 2001:13). Over 4.5 million Mexicans entered the U.S. as braceros.

Maquila" or "maquiladora" is derived from a Spanish word - *maquilar* - which means "to mill." Historically, a wheat farmer would hire a miller to grind crops and then the payment to the miller would be a proportion of the milled grain. This relationship of sharing the production between the producer and manufacturer was labeled "maquilar." The maquila program was established in 1965. Machinery, vehicles, parts and anything

else needed for manufacturing were imported into Northern Mexico duty free for transformation, assembly, or other processing (Kopinak 1996:7). Then the product returned to the U.S. with Mexico taxing only the value added to the finished product. In 1971, the program was expanded to non-border areas as well.

Unlike slavery, the maquiladora system had the advantage of using a self-reproducing and inexhaustible supply of labor at minimal cost. While the workers' paltry wages contributed dribbles to the Mexican economy, corporate profits flowed over the border. Many of the consumer goods the Mexican workers were able to buy, moreover, were imported. [Perry 1996:78]

By 1990, thousands of maquiladoras, owned by the U.S., Japanese, and other foreign investors, lined the US border.

At the beginning of the Cold War in the late 1940s, Mexico and the U.S. tacitly agreed that if Mexico refrained from supporting the Soviet Union or adopting communist practices in its political system, then the U.S. would not intervene in Mexican affairs (Dominguez 2001:10). Mexico took advantage of the American non-interventionist policy and "developed" rapidly using the import substitution industrialization model, an inward-oriented industrial development strategy based on barriers against imports. This ultimately led to the government subsidizing national business, which led to growing foreign loans for "development," which, in turn, increased the national debt. Perry describes Mexico's increased dependence on oil:

Mexico came to depend on oil sales as transnationals welcomed it back into the "world economic community," and it enjoyed a flush of prosperity as oil prices rose in the 1970s. This set the stage for disaster when the world oil prices dropped in the early 1980s and the government had to declare bankruptcy. Mexico's powerful creditors could demand austerity measures to accommodate burdensome interest payments. Generally this meant

decreasing social spending in favor of industrial development, further depriving the poor in favor of transnational corporations and a small Mexican elite. [1996:77]

Until the 1980s, Mexico had monitored foreign direct investment closely, prohibiting it from some economic sectors. However, the financial crisis of 1982-83 persuaded de la Madrid's administration to significantly liberalize foreign investment regulations. Changes adopted from this point on have increasingly opened the entire economy to foreign direct investment (Lustig 1998).

### **Meeting of the Minds and Free Trade**

By the end of the 1980s, the worldview of the Mexican elites and their power to shape policy had changed dramatically. According to Dominguez and Fernandez de Castro:

This intellectual change was itself the product of a quiet revolution in the training of prospective Mexican economic policy-making elites who, as young graduate students, studied in U.S. universities, especially in departments of economics. The decisions to study abroad were, of course, individual, but some institutions—especially the Bank of Mexico and the U.S. Fulbright Commission—played decisive roles in identifying bright young Mexicans, supporting them during their time of graduate study in the U.S., and in some cases helping them find good jobs upon their return to Mexico. [2001:30]

Individual connections and shared modes of thinking impacted U.S.-Mexican relations considerably through the 1980s and onward. Carlos Salinas won the 1988 presidential election widely accused of election fraud. His economic cabinet highlights this increased U.S.-Mexican connection of the minds (See Table 5.2).

**Table 5.2**

**Carlos Salinas' Economic Cabinet: 1988-1993**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Political Post</i>	<i>U.S. University</i>	<i>Subject</i>
Carlos Salinas	President	Harvard, Ph.D.	Political Economy
Pedro Aspe	Treasury Minister	M.I.T., Ph.D.	Economics
Jaime Sierra	Commerce Minister	Yale	Economics
Ernesto Zedillo	Planning Minister	Yale	Economics
Herminio Blanco	Chief NAFTA Negotiator	U. of Chicago	Economics

*Source:* Dominguez & Fernandez de Castro 2001

The Salinas administration opened Mexico's resources even more to foreign investment than had Porfirio Diaz, while the gap between the wealthy few and the impoverished masses grew more extreme.

In 1992 the Salinas government pushed an amendment to the Constitution enabling the breakup of ejido holdings. Many of these displaced indios formed communities of people who spoke different dialects and who previously had felt little in common with one another. Their similar problems, however, led to the development of a broader sense of identity. [Perry 1996:79]

Salinas concluded one of the most corrupt administrations ever in Mexican history by signing NAFTA.

Bruce Campbell of the Canadian Labor Congress declined NAFTA succinctly:

The FTA [Free Trade Agreement] is fundamentally about power. It shifts power from governments (federal and provincial) to the corporate sector. It entrenches that power beyond the reach of future governments. And it limits governmental capacity to define and preserve national developmental goals. [cited in Perry 1996:80]

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was a response to corporate pressure. Foreign policy had been coopted by elite corporate interests for years before NAFTA, so the primary appeal of NAFTA was to “lock in” neoliberal reforms (Chomsky 1995:178). In 1987 General Motors had closed down 11 plants in the U.S. and opened up 12 in Mexico (Barry 1992:144). The Ford Motor Company in Mexico fired its entire work force at one plant in 1987, eliminating the union contract and rehiring workers at far lower salaries (Chomsky 1995:179). In 1992, Volkswagon, with the backing of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) fired 14,000 Mexican workers and rehired only those who renounced independent union leaders (Chomsky 1995:179). Not only do foreign elites casually crush protests and take advantage of low wages in Mexico, they also like the lax enforcement of environmental regulations and general orientation of the social policy to the desires of the privileged minority. The forces of global capitalism give no support to, and have little tolerance for, nationalist and populist approaches to economic development (Barry 1992:xvii). According to Chomsky, these are central components of the “economic miracle” that was “locked in” by NAFTA. NAFTA benefits elites and oppresses non-elites throughout North America by allowing elites to interlock and expand their personal power networks—corporations and corporate ideology—and socialize the costs of their gains onto a larger number of people. Elites can avoid environmental regulations, search internationally for cheaper labor without paying attention to who loses what jobs and where, and they continue to limit competition, increasing the their “elite-hood security.”

## **Rebellion and Resistance**

The Zapatista army called NAFTA a “death sentence” to Indians—a gift to the rich that will destroy the remains of indigenous society. This is one reason why, on New Year’s Day 1994 (coinciding with the enactment of NAFTA), some 2,000 peasants calling themselves the Zapatista National Liberation Army rose in arms against the Mexican government in highland Chiapas. The nature of this rebellion brought fear to elites exploiting Mexico for many reasons. The movement had a far broader base than a single indigenous populace—perhaps due to massive indigenous dislocation in the area (Collier 1994). The process suggested the development of a broad perception of common interest that led to a more encompassing strategy than had characterized past revolts (Perry 1996:81). Also, the adoption of Emiliano Zapata as a central symbol is significant:

The numerous earlier movements referring to themselves as Zapatistas long after Zapata’s death attest to the power of the image. Zapata was not Maya, nor was he from Chiapas. Zapata was a criollo from Morelos whose indigenous followers, for the most part, spoke Nahuatl. The Chiapas rebels’ identification with Zapata suggests an appeal to principles and issues that transcend local concerns. There is, no doubt, good reason for the state to fear that such development might not be containable. [Perry 1996:81]

The Zapatistas called for justice, liberty, and democracy. They called for the overthrow of the ruling elite and proposed a truly democratic system. Most importantly, they sent this message via the internet not to particular indigenous communities, not only to campesinos, but to all who suffer while elite gain.

Despite the rebellion, Mexican elites successfully re-opened their country to foreign exploitation by means of NAFTA—largely because their own fortunes tie into international interests.

Following World Bank—International Monetary Fund (IMF) prescriptions, agricultural production was shifted to export and animal feeds—a policy that benefited agribusiness, foreign consumers, and affluent sectors in Mexico at the expense of the general population. Malnutrition became a major health problem, agricultural employment declined, productive lands were abandoned, and Mexico began to import massive amounts of food. [Chomsky 1995:177]

January of 2003 opened with NAFTA tariff eliminations to enforce the free trade model, and the month closed with 100,000 people in the streets calling for immediate renegotiation of NAFTA, food sovereignty, and a national rural development pact. This Mexican campesino movement reflects not only the serious crisis in the country's rural sector but also a crisis of faith in free trade itself. With the slogan "El campo no aguanta más" (The countryside can't take it any more), a wide range of rural organizations have challenged the fundamental myths of NAFTA. "Free-trade" does not exist when subsidies, financing, and oligopolies create distorted market conditions in favor of the world's most powerful U.S.-based transnational corporations.

The problems of rural Mexicans are echoed around the world as countries lower their import barriers required by free trade treaties and the rules of the World Trade Organization. When markets are open, agricultural products flood in from wealthy nations, which subsidize agriculture and allow agribusiness to export crops cheaply. When subsidized imports undercut their products, Mexican *campesinos* starve. Agricultural subsidies rob developing countries of the ability to export crops.

Many intensive studies point to the contradictions brought about by globalization and to the local people's struggles to resist its consequences. Donna L. Chollet (1999:19-47) shows us how ideologies associated with globalization tend to underrate the power of local cultures by taking us to Puruaran, Michoacan, Mexico.

The closing of the Puruaran, Michoacan, sugar mill not only illustrates the daunting impact of corporate consolidation and free market neoliberalism on a rural community, but also reveals how the globalization of local space may foment a counter-hegemonic response in opposition to the logic of globalized capitalism and generate new forms of social organization to counter the consequences of social exclusion. [45]

Roberto J. Gonzalez (1998:239-266) compares the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic use of coffee crops in Talea de Castro, a Zapotec village located in the Sierra Juarez of Oaxaca. He discusses the emergence of indigenous people's organic coffee cooperatives. His conclusion focuses on the counter-hegemonic uses of the cooperatives, their ties to new global markets for organic coffee, and their role in the transformation of indigenous identity (Gonzalez 1998).

From academia to activist organizations and the Zapatistas, discourse of, around, and against the hegemonic commercial cultural system is growing. In 1999, Subcomandante Marcos, the masked leader of the Zapatistas, issued the following statement in response to a road being built to "develop" Chiapas:

We know well that the highways the government has built have not brought one single benefit to the indigenous [people]. Doctors have not come in with the highways, nor have hospitals been built, nor have teachers come, nor have schools been made, nor have materials arrived to improve the housing of the indigenous, the prices of the products the campesinos sell have not improved nor are the goods that the indigenous must buy less expensive . . . with the highways have come the war tanks, the cannons, soldiers,

prostitution, venereal diseases, alcoholism, rapes of indigenous women and children, death and misery. Every highway that the government has made has shown that it has not brought any benefit, other than for those who enrich themselves at our cost, or who come to kill us, to imprison us and to humiliate us . . . We want the highways to serve so that the wealth that is in the Chiapaneco soil will be for the benefit of all Mexicans, and not for it to be sold to foreign money, we want the highways to be for Mexico's independence and sovereignty, and not for the great and powerful to order us about as if we were their slaves and to buy this country as if it were cheap goods. [Chapel:1999]

### **President Vicente Fox**

On July 2, 2000, Vicente Fox, the candidate of the conservative National Action Party (PAN), became the first non-PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) president in seven decades. His PRI predecessors have been revolutionary generals, and technocrat-economists trained at illustrious U.S. Ivy League universities. The son of a wealthy vegetable exporter, Vicente had an elite education before working his way from route driver, to marketing executive, to the president of Coca Cola in Mexico, where he stayed from 1974 to 1979. After managing the family hacienda in Guanajuato for the next decade he took to politics. Losing the governor race to the PRI candidate in 1991 (it was widely rumored that the PRI manipulated the election), Fox won the governorship of Guanajuato in 1995.

As governor of Guanajuato, Fox gained popularity as he concentrated wealth. He made contracts with U.S. elites seeking very mobile, low wage employees (Ross 2001:2). This helped poor, unskilled workers migrate to Michigan. Public services and archaeological sites were privatized, and Fox successfully lured 72 maquiladoras (foreign-owned assembly plants) to the state (Ross 2001:2). When he ran for President in

2000, his elite college friends and Coca Cola connections helped to pay the enormous bills. After Fox's victory, Federico Sada and Alfonso Romo, both among the Forbes list of global billionaires, declined Fox's offer of government positions (see Ross 2001).

Fox and four U.S. corporate head-hunters coordinated by Korn-Ferry & Hazzard (Ross 2001) picked his new cabinet. The neoliberal Fox administration promotes free trade. Foreign elites all over the world appreciate Fox's foreign policy because their corporations and investments profit at Mexico's expense. The gulf between Mexican rich and poor will undoubtedly grow through Fox's presidency. Fox's policies will benefit Mexican elites and those willing to work their way up the corporate ladders of foreign corporations—most of them English speaking and with headquarters outside of Mexico. The Zapatistas and other indigenous and *campesino* organizations will continue to fight free trade and road-building policies until a radical redistribution of land and wealth promises the basic human needs of the Mexican poor.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **MIGRANTS IN GUADALAJARA AND THEIR STORIES**

This chapter narrows its focus to the ELT industry in Mexico, and then in Guadalajara, in order to provide context to introduce four METs and relate their “stories” through their own words. In so doing, it represents a jump in the thesis from macro into microanalysis of METs.

#### **ELT in Mexico**

Many Mexicans believe that the ability to communicate in English is key to increasing one’s status and position. This becomes particularly evident when observing the first day of any English language class (whether it be a beginning, advanced, or Business English class), which usually involves the teacher asking the students why they want to learn English. Common answers include the following:

- To get a better job
- To make more money
- To work at a U.S. or Canadian company in Mexico
- To go to the U.S. or Canada to study
- Because their degree program requires it
- For vacation and visiting relatives
- To understand their boyfriend or girlfriend better

Because of this desire to learn English, and because both schools and learners wanting “native English speakers” to teach, foreign English teachers are quickly respected by many Mexicans.

English teachers find themselves with a variety of employment options in Mexico. There are many bilingual programs in Mexico that attempt to immerse their students in English by requiring English language classes each semester, and assigning English as the medium of instruction for all math and science classes. These programs range from *kinder* (typically ages 3-5) to *preparatoria* (typically ages 15-18) and *preparatoria tecnicas* (*preparatorias* that train students for careers in technical fields). They look for teachers who can handle English classes and those subjects taught in English. Other teachers work at for-profit language schools. They usually pay teachers by the hour for teaching English classes. Every language school prescribes a different style of learning and a different amount of time before students will be “fluent English-speakers.” In addition, colleges and universities hire native English speakers to teach English regardless of their specialization, only requiring the future MET to have an undergraduate degree.

An interesting new avenue for English teachers is Business English. Companies in Mexico are increasingly providing English language classes for their employees. These companies either make contracts with language schools that supply them with teachers or they hire English language teachers directly. In both circumstances learners are looking for the vocabulary necessary to communicate in English in their particular field. It is essentially the same as what other teachers refer to as ESP—English for Special Purposes.

## **Language Schools in Guadalajara**

Established as part of the conquest of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Guadalajara is Mexico's second largest metropolis with more than 6 million people. After Mexico's financial crisis of 1994-95, Guadalajara, capital of the state of Jalisco, began luring foreign investors to the region, targeting not just manufacturing companies (like most Mexican states) but also high technology plants. According to Claudia Grossi, Executive Director of the Guadalajara branch of the American Chamber, high technology plants have been attracted to Guadalajara for some time: "Guadalajara attracted the main OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers) in the electronics sector about 20 years ago, such as Kodak, IBM, Hewlett Packard (HP) and Motorola, now known as ON Semiconductor here" (The Washington Times). Seven of the 10 largest OEM's in the world are based in Guadalajara (The Washington Times). The tremendous growth in Guadalajara's high-tech sector has earned it the title, "the Silicon Valley of Mexico."

The growth in language schools parallels the growth in Guadalajara's commercial sector. From 1994 to 1999, language schools in Guadalajara and Zapopan (Guadalajara's neighboring municipality that is part of the same metropolitan area) together jumped from 52 to 89 and their employees nearly doubled in number (INEGI). Since the signing of NAFTA, many Mexicans feel a growing need to learn the language in order to compete for jobs at one of the increasing number of foreign companies operating in Guadalajara.

The success of different language school methods is common conversation among Mexican language learners. Rodrigo, a 48 year old Mexican man learning English for promotion at Penafiel (a water and soda corporation with headquarters in Dallas, Texas)

says “Quick Learning is the best, . . . there you learn like a baby as a language should be learned.” Quick Learning does not allow their teachers to teach reading or writing skills in the beginning levels. Whether or not this method is an efficient use of time for adult learners or not, the idea is persuasive enough for Quick Learning to do well within Guadalajara’s language industry. Other schools promise English fluency in eight or 12 months. Stephen, a 28 year old MET from England, says

It is ludicrous how a student will consider himself fluent if he passes all eight levels...the school gives him a certificate of fluency, then tries to sell their English teacher training program to him. They push him through that. Give him a certificate, and you end up with a Mexican that speaks an intermediate English teaching English at some language school or a high school.

Learners correlate the success of a method with the school that employs it. Since students aim to complete language study programs, they grow loyal to their method and school. Therefore, the success of a method is directly proportional to the success of school marketing.

Many marketing strategies involve the school “showing off” their METs, especially the ones that look like native English speakers. In this way, METs are instantly allotted social power for their ability to speak their mother tongue, essentially entering a different society at an advantageous position. Are METs conscious of this advantage when they migrate? What circumstance(s) motivate the migration of METs?

Where the next chapter analyzes these questions in more detail, the rest of this chapter explores “life stories” of four METs because, like decisions made and perceptions held of all humans that I have encountered, they are influenced and motivated by more forces than social scientists are capable of determining. It is my belief that their

“stories” cast light on this multiplicity. Before I subject my fieldwork to analysis, classification, and theoretical imposition, here are some stories about “real people doing real things” (Ortner 1984:144). The selection process was as follows. I wanted to pick two males and two females. After that, my decision was based on story-telling ability, all around openness, and loquaciousness of the MET during a recorded interview.

### **Steve Stimps**

When asked about the people he had seen migrating to Guadalajara to teach English, Steve Stimps said:

You have people who have either just finished school or people who have finished school and worked for quite a while in the field. So you don't get people like, I mean, you know I was 30 and never finished my degree, I think I'm really outside of the norm... You get people who want to live a different life before you go back and live in the real world, before you go back and do what you got your degree in... They wanted a broader cultural experience than just living in the States, maybe to be able to say later down the line with whatever they do 'oh I taught English in this place,' for example, I have an uncle who taught English in China years ago. He's a banker now. So it was never his intention to live in China forever, or be an English teacher forever. I think that the percentage of people who are even focused on Mexico are not really focused on the country itself necessarily. It's a place that's close. It's a place that might be familiar to them because there are a lot of Mexicans in the United States... In Guadalajara there is a lot of Americanization so its not so out of your realm of understanding... Even for me, with a lot of experience in Mexicans and Mexican culture, Guadalajara was still out of my world. [Steve Stimps]

Born in 1971, Steve came to Mexico in December of 1999. He grew up in the Sacramento Valley. He was born in the city of Sacramento and lived there until he was

seven years old, when he moved to the nearby countryside to a small community called Gault. “You go into Gault and you see on the highways ‘Gault—an agricultural community with industrial facilities,’ ...so it gives you an idea of what a charming place it is...there’s like 9,000 people.” It has since then been taken up by its neighboring community Welton. It is basically an agricultural area with “a turkey farm nearby, some chickens, but mostly big dairy cows. Steve said that there are a bunch of dairy cows because:

There’s a lot of Portuguese there...Portuguese tend to be really into either fishing or dairy in California. In that part, since we’re far away from the water, there’s a lot of dairy farmers. Like the old joke goes: What’s the difference between a Portuguese and a portagee? The Portuguese own the cows and the portagees milk’em.

Steve’s parents have similar genetic/national histories—“my parents are equal. My parents are both half Portuguese and half Irish.” His mother was born in Watsonville—“somewhat in the area of Santa Cruz” and his father was born in Half Moon Bay—“also kinda in the same area.” But they did not meet until much later. Since they are both from seaside towns their “Portuguese heritage goes back to fishermen.” On his father’s side, his grandfather worked as a splicer for the phone company and his father went the same route. On his mother’s side, he does not know what his grandfather did because he was gone from the family before he was born. His grandmother became a bookkeeper from a correspondence course, and that was how she took care of the kids until she met his step-grandfather who was a lawyer.

Steve has one brother three and a half years older than him (born in 1968) who lives in Sacramento. Like Steve, his brother moved away from home in the country to the city of Sacramento at 18 years of age.

His parents were married for almost 33 years—“dad passed away in 99 right before their 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary.” They did not have a funeral for his father, they had a “celebration of life. We had a big party, which is what he always wanted.”

He said no funerals...We did not have anything involving religion, nothing of the church. My grandparents actually wanted to do something like that, or at least have a friend of the family who was a preacher speak a little at the, at the wake. We said no, my father would not want anything like that, cause we were, umm, my mother has gotten some religion in recent years. My father is very, very anti, anti-church...agnostic, not atheist, so we were definitely raised with the idea that yes there is a god and there are certain moral rules that you have follow but the idea of church, was, not really, not really in keeping with my parents belief for us growing up.

With respect to education:

I was, I was, I think a very bright kid. When I was a kid I was very eager to learn according to my parents who were very much into, very supportive parents, who read to me a lot when I was a kid so when I started reading I was really excited about it and everybody always remember that whenever my mom would take me shopping when I was starting to learn to read that on the way back to the car I would stop and read the tires on cars and it was the most exciting thing that I could pronounce firestone. I was so excited about my first day of school that my mom was pulling into the parking lot and I thought oh the cars going slow enough I can just jump out right now. So I jump out of a moving car, do roll, hit the curb. Before I even walked into my first day of school, so eager to be there.

He remembers orange.

I remember orange from my first day of school...first day of kindergarten, for three reasons. They patched me up and gave me lots of orange juice. And my kindergarten teacher was Mrs. Manion...red hair, orange hair. And then one of the first lessons was the mixing of colors and she was showing us the colors

“...and if you mix the red and yellow what do you get?” I said “oh yeah orange”  
real quick. I answered before everybody else. So orange was the theme running  
throughout.

Very soon after he had a difficult time at school. He had a very hard time socializing  
with other children and thinks he “was the victim of a lot of cruel words, cruel jokes.”

I remember like in the first grade some kids jumping up and down on my Charlie Brown  
lunch box a traumatic memory for me, but I remember these two kids...Raymond and  
Susan, and I always felt bad that I never properly thanked them because they stood up for  
me and stopped the kids...Raymond was a Chinese kid umm...and it's one thing you  
remember from school, the first time you start to interact with kids from different  
backgrounds.

They moved to Gault in the country when he was a seven year old second grader.  
He then had to go to a new school, “just as I was getting used to one school, I was thrown  
into a different one. It was very tough for me to acclimate again.” He quickly made a lot  
of friends, but they were all girls: “Catherine, Nicole, Jenny, Dotie, Mary, Shannon and  
these five girls that were my friends for, until all through high school, we're still great  
friend whenever we see each other.”

Steve summed up his education as “got picked on a lot and didn't take it well.”  
He began to have a lot of problems in school with his studies starting around the 4<sup>th</sup>  
grade. “Teachers and parents were on top of me and I just had no interest in school.”  
These problems lasted until high school.

I barely graduated high school. I finished high school but I was not at my graduation  
cause I hadn't graduated. I had to finish up in the summer. I hated it. It was a miserable  
situation. There was more focus on cliques and popularity. My friends and I were not  
doing well in that respect...

He was a punk rocker, an angry young man. He said “I started to smoke a lot of dope, doing acid during my senior year of high school...staying out drinking, partying with friends.

I was working the night of graduation, at a restaurant. We were doing a banquet and I went outside for a cigarette break you could see the fireworks from the backdoor of the restaurant. Watching the fireworks and talking to the waiter and saying ‘yeah that’s my graduation and I’m not there, ask me if I give a fuck.’ Anyway I got my diploma for my mom.

When Steve was 19 he moved in with his grandmother and decided to start community college in South Sacramento. He took business administration classes, interested in going into music administration. Not wanting to change majors over and over again, he began by working on the electives for an AA.

I took an American History class and really liked that so decided that I was going to major in American History [laugh]. I had the most excellent teacher for American History, kind of a hero. She was just this itty-bitty little thing probably less than 5 feet tall, long hair, really skinny, big glasses, so she looks really meek and mild. The place was packed, people were standing all over the place and she said I will scare half of you away. Then starts to lay down the rules, this is serious, there’s a lot of writing in this. You have to do the writing or you will not pass this class. I expect you to respect whoever has the floor. I do not tolerate tardiness. I understand that sometimes things happen but if I have problems with people showing up late, I’ll just lock the door after five minutes.

What I liked about her more than anything about that class is that it wasn’t reduced down to facts, it was interesting stories, but way she’d tell a story, we’d just left going woohh, like you walk out of a really good movie, or when you put down a really good book, that kinda thing, and it would happen a lot, and that’s what attracted it to me and made me think I want to teach history.

Despite this enthusiastic beginning, he never earned his associate's degree. He started cooking when he was 18, and it was becoming his career at this time. After meeting and beginning a relationship with Stan in 1994, he moved in with him in Berkeley pursuing restaurant jobs as a cook. In and out of restaurant kitchens, he was interacting a lot with Mexicans, and was learning Spanish. In 1996 he went back to school to take a Spanish class. In 1997, he took a Spanish immersion class in Mexico. He loved it. At the end of 1998, his relationship with Stan "went bad." There were many reasons for this, but a big one was the consistent consumption of cocaine.

So amidst the demise of a five year relationship and the death of his father, one of Steve's best friends, Roberto—"the kind of friend that everybody needs, that can tell you you're full of shit when you need to hear it"—said "why don't you go to Mexico. You love Spanish, you love Mexican music, you love Mexico. Go!"

So I started looking for the means to do that, so, how was I going to go to Mexico? Was I going to come to Mexico and be a cook? You know, maybe I could, but was that I what I really wanted to do? I always wanted to teach, even when I was young, even though I did very badly in school...I always admired my teachers and wanted to be a teacher when I grew up. So I started looking around on the web for a teaching program and I found a couple, I don't even remember what the other ones were, but the one that I liked the most and appealed to me was Worldwide Teachers, for the price, for the stay in the posada, for the time involved...then in September of 2002 I went and took this TEFL course in Guadalajara.

I liked it though it was terribly unnerving to me. I managed to do OK. I managed to hide my terror from the director because I was really horrified. I had actually just the year before taken a speech class because speaking in front of people had always been a real problem, a fear for me.

The idea of the course was that it's practical. The idea is that you do not need all this education. All you need is your basic grammar rules, you need to work on that, and if you don't have them, you need to learn how to find the information. . .you need to have presence in a classroom...how to draw on your own strengths.

After taking the TEFL course in Guadalajara, he went back home, packed everything into a truck, and moved to Mexico. "My goal in coming here was to become Mexican."

Arriving once more, Steve went straight to Worldwide Teachers hoping that they could set him up with a job since the course package came with "job placement assistance." He eventually got a job with Iris—who had a small school that taught English to business people, usually at their place. Soon after this, Worldwide Teachers gave him a job at the posada [a hostel] as the posada manager for the school. His job was to live and take care of the guest house that intern teachers stayed in while they were taking a three week TEFL program and a one week Business English class. Within five months he began teaching classes within the teacher training courses as well.

At Worldwide Teachers, he taught teaching interns how to teach grammar via the communicative approach which "almost disallowed any language outside of English in the classroom." He picked up new teaching interns at the airport every week, showed them around the city, and helped them get along for their stay. During this time, he was also working at Iris's school—teaching classes at businesses. When Worldwide Teachers decided to shut down their institute in Guadalajara (their main office is in Boston) in February 2002, Steve moved out of the posada and got an apartment with another English teacher, Jennifer, from Iowa, who was working at the UNIVA (Universidad del Valle de Atemajac) and was two years into a relationship with a Mexican man. He continued working with Iris until he and Luis, the Mexican man he "unofficially married in June

2002, decided to move out of the city to Mascuala where Luis had family. There, he and Luis have opened a bakery and share the workload. During difficult financial beginnings, Steve has occasionally gone back to Guadalajara to work at Iris's school, but, as of June 2003, he planned to be a full time baker and resident of Mascuala.

### **Cindy Martin**

Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Cindy Martin and her parents moved to North County, San Diego when she was three. She is "almost native Californian,...and grew up by the beach, went there every afternoon." She grew up with both of her parents and has two older sisters, one eight years older and the other 11 years older than she is. Before starting high school in San Diego, Cindy went with her family to Germany.

My dad was an electrical engineer, so when I was 13, his work sent him over to Germany. That sent the whole family over there, and, umm, the nearest American school was really far away, so they just basically stuck me in a German junior high, and I didn't know a word, but I think that actually trained my ear to listen to language, because I picked it up pretty quickly and I could speak pretty well. It kind of fueled the interest in other cultures, traveling, languages, that kind of thing.

Upon returning to San Diego, Cindy completed high school, then moved north to go to UC-Santa Barbara where she studied political science and international relations. During her time at UCSB, she went to Germany for a year on an exchange program.

And that was OK, Germany,...it's OK, it's just not, you know, when you find your place, you find your place and Germany wasn't my place but it was really good traveling. It was a good experience

I picked Germany because, first of all, I spoke German. I knew the place, it was familiar so it wasn't that scary. I went with the educational abroad program, you know

they have specific universities. I actually picked Vienna. I wanted to go to Austria, you know, because it was kind of the same kind of cultural background, but it was a big city. I'm a big city girl.

Germany just wasn't my place to be in both instances. I kind of did it to break out of the monotony of staying in the same place for four years at university. But I got to travel and went to Italy several times, and I just liked the Latin culture was just more, it just fit more with who I am...the warmth, and you know, Germans are very reserved and I'm a frick'n nutball. My travels discovered this love for the Latins so I actually when I got back started to study some Italian.

She graduated in 1993 "and the economy was in the toilet at the time." Without any jobs to be found, Cindy reflected that "when you're in the university, you have these illusions of grandeur, like, at that time I thought I was going to make \$40,000 right out of college."

My dad wanted me to move home to look for a job. I would've preferred to have gone to New York City or San Francisco from there but, you know. I've always been a person that likes to change my environment cause, that's, that's, what I get off on. You know, removing yourself totally from one environment to find the newness and excitement of something else. Its really scary but its really fun.

Cindy talked passionately about enjoying the fears involved with traveling. "I live to enlighten my senses." Nevertheless, she followed her father's advice, moved home, and got a job.

A friend of mine was working for a securities firm, a stock broking firm, umm, so I got a job like filing there, doing stuff like that. It's a really small operation. And then the securities trainer there saw that I actually had a brain so they started training me as a trading assistant. I took my broker's license and got it, and worked in that. I fell into that

career. Didn't really like it, wasn't really thrilled about it, but you know I was following the formula of that's what you're supposed to do, you got a job, you go with it, until you buy a house, get married and all that stuff.

At 24, Cindy moved to San Francisco. Her boyfriend decided to go with her "so it made the transition easier." He was a chef, "so he went to work at three in the afternoon and I got home at three in the afternoon." Throughout this part of the interview she repeatedly reflected on the tension within their relationship. In San Francisco, Cindy continued in the same line of work.

I stayed at the security job for a total of seven years. I went from working at the small one to a broker's assistant at Smith Barney's,...hated it. So then I found myself in a firm that did corporate cash investing, and it was really good. I worked there for like three to four years, working with like 20 million dollar accounts. It was exciting at first, but I spent my 20s getting up at five in the morning to be at work by six, never went out, and, and, was a home-body, and, you know, I started to feel that itch again, you know, I hadn't traveled at all. I felt like a veal, sitting in an office everyday, you know....you go home, go to the gym, watch TV and go to bed.

This feeling, what she liked to continually refer to as "vealy," means that "things need to change."

So my boyfriend and I had broken up....we had been together six years, lived together for three years. So it was one of those moments you wake up and I'm like 'if I marry you, it's going to be miserable.' Shit or get off the pot. So I kicked him out the house, and then, you know, the next thing was 'I'm really not actually happy at my job either.' So I actually went to work for a night club. Started off waiting tables and stuff like that, you know. Then got behind the bar. It was a pretty well known night club in San Francisco, lot of famous people would come in. At that time you made, you know, this was the dot com era, you made a lot of money working in a bar.

I went from having not any social life to, you know, going out all the time, I was meeting a ton of people, having a great time. Especially working for that club, you know, I'd walk up to any restaurant or any bar in the club, just start talking about work and you'd get free drinks or free this, never waited in line to go to the club, you know that kind of thing,...VIP Lounge!

After two years of “working at the night club and clubbing every night,” Cindy began to question how long she could keep up with this lifestyle. “I was 30 at the time ‘can I do,...do I wanna be forty doing this?’ No way! Plus my liver was dropping out.”

So at that time, one of the bartenders that worked there, he was Mexican, really really great guy, still one of my best friends, we would talk about Mexico and all these great places. And we would talk about this one place called San Miguel de Allende...and so I was like, I'm going to go for three weeks, I hadn't traveled in a long time. I went to Hawaii and things like that but its not like the same stimulus.

So, she found a Spanish program online and took a couple of weeks of Spanish in San Miguel de Allende.

And then a woman that I worked with in finance, she was Mexican and her family was from Acapulco. So she arranged for me to go down and stay with them in Acapulco which was really sweet because they own restaurants in Acapulco and it was like, I had my own bungalow in front of a swimming pool kinda thing. I was rough'n it. Just absolutely loved it and just felt it. In those three weeks it awakened in me again. Just that travel, new experiences, new language...so I was like hmmm, maybe I'll go and do a six month thing.

I asked her to try to explain this feeling. She said, “Yeah, it just kind of ommm, yeah, I remember this feeling, I remember this feeling, this good feeling that...I'm alive again, everything's not the same.”

So Cindy quickly came back to San Miguel de Allende and took a six week course with the plan to travel for the rest of six months. During the time, she said “I was doing some research about what maybe I was going to do with myself, and I found the TEFL program. And I thought, umm, let’s take the TEFL and see what’s up.”

In going to Guadalajara for the TEFL program at Vancouver Language Institute (VLC), Cindy never abandoned her plan to go back to live in San Miguel de Allende. I asked her why:

Because it’s, San Miguel’s a very interesting town,...there’s a very pouring community there of artists and things like that. So for a small Mexican town, its actually extremely liberal. I think the town is like 60 to 80 thousand people but I’m not sure. It’s gorgeous and that’s why the big foreign community is there...a community of retirees who still don’t know any Spanish, you know, they’ve just gone there to live cheaply in this charming little town, you know, and then there’s the artists, the foreign artists that come down there, and then there’s the young Mexican artists, cause they have a pretty good art school there.

However, upon receiving her TEFL certificate, she inquired about a job at VLC “and they needed someone for the kindergarten program. Soon she began teaching different levels of English to adults. “Eventually [I] got on the adult side and just stayed.” Cindy began at VLC in June 2002 and became the school’s director of studies in February 2003.

What’s nice about working at the school is that I have all the teachers at the school, there native English speakers, so I don’t miss home. You know I’ve got them...just little things like sense of humor, like growing up in a similar cultural background the sense of humor is similar. so and just the language, joking in English, I get that, but I also get this wonderful new experience in Mexican culture with Mexican friends. A lot of my Mexican friends I’ve made through the school.

Near the end of the interview, Cindy was feeling emotionally drained. “You’ve jogged lots of emotions that really make me feel great about my decisions over the last year. I guess that’s good.” In reflection:

The night before I left for Mexico I had a party, you know,...a hundred people I knew, and the next day I was crying going ‘What am I doing, I’m leaving my little comfort zone, and, and how scary this is, and I don’t know the language. I don’t know anybody. I’m all alone for six months. I have a bag with me and that’s it.’ The minute I got off that plane, ‘it smells different, looks different. I can hear different sounds,’ you know and it was like, ‘I was alive once again.’ I still feel like that. It’s becoming a little bit more routine to a degree. But still, I find something new everyday. A new word I learn in Spanish, or a new something. This job, whether it’s teaching or being the director, it’s just I found something highly social that you have to use your brain. A great combination between my whole, the bartending and the finance. A perfect combination. I love it!

There are two types that come down here: the temporary and the people who really get into it and are still comfortable. I don’t know, I like it. I’m here. I always say ‘soy Mexicana de Corazon’

You can’t map things out in Mexican culture...I think to really live comfortably down here, you have to have a little bit of “alright, that just happened, we’ll go with that.”

### **Silvia Whittaker**

Silvia was born in Chatumal, Mexico in 1978 on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February. “It’s on the border with Belize, so I guess I could have been born in Belize. I’m right on the border

of Aquarius and Pisces too...on the border, story of my life.” The family stayed there “for about two years.

My parents traveled a lot because of my father’s job. My father was a scientist in animal nutrition. So he was employed by governments or the U.N. or political things like that. My mom worked in a diplomatic post.

When I was born I must have been here at least two years. Then we moved,...I can never remember where we moved to next. I think we moved then to Venezuela. And then from Venezuela we move to Australia. And then from Australia we moved back to Mexico and then I was in school here because I must have been eight by then. Then I went to school here for two or three years. Then we moved again to Colombia. Then we moved again to England, and that’s where I stayed.

When I was a teenager my mom decided that I should have a more stable education because my education was a little bit all over the place. So I really didn’t know English that well cause my friends’ language was Spanish. Well technically it was Mayan because that was where we first lived and the person who was looking after me was Mayan and she always used to speak to me in Mayan apparently. I don’t remember any of it.

Reflecting on her time in these different countries, Silvia expressed a great dislike for one situation:

In Australia, we lived in Townsville, like, when we were there it was a horrible little town, no culture. It was a university town. I was about five or six. My mom couldn’t deal with it. We lived in suburbia. My mom’s never lived in suburbia before, you know the nice little neat lawns, and the nice houses, sweet suburbia,...it was horrible.

She has one older sister. She enjoyed telling me about her, perhaps because, according to Silvia, “she’s like the opposite of me.”

She’s a scientist and she has that way about her. Her research is all into toxicology and soils and stuff like that. She’s in Scotland working in a university. She’s teaching, and

now she has, well, she's changed now actually. She was in the umm, she was doing research, but, it wasn't for my sister because there you have to publish, publish, publish all the time and you get behind and my sister's not into that so much. You have to be very cut-throat and think about yourself, and she's not like that...She's not that well organized.

So she's now changed, and she's in this sort of, she's not in the university, and she still teaches statistics, but she also works for the umm, what's it called now, like for students who go to university, cause there's such a high drop-out rate, they're trying to know why so many students are dropping out, how they can help them stay on, studying for exams, that sort of thing. It's more to do with the students now.

Due to frequently packing up and moving to different nations, Silvia spent her elementary and junior high school years “between Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, and Australia.”

But high school, when I was 16, was in England. Like what we have in England. Like you get to age 16 and you can do what we call GCSEs. It's like a basic exam on everything. It's a general certificate in secondary education. It's like, for example, you take 10, what we call subjects: biology, chemistry, mathematics, English, French, Spanish, History, Geography, what else did I take, I think that's it. It's like a basic certificate so you can then leave school 'cause you've done your 16 years. And then you can get a job, or you can carry on with further education. But in England you have to specialize in three levels...I did Spanish, Politics and Geography.

But in college I was in Scotland, Edinburgh, and I did Business Studies. I decided to change. I wish I'd never done that. I wish I'd done Spanish, but I think I was going through that rebellious stage. I didn't want to do anything my mom said I should do. I should've listened to her though. [laugh] She was right. But anyway, I did my stead in 4 years.

Scotland is different than England. In England you can do four years of a degree and you get your licenciada. In Scotland you can do 3 years or you can do four

years and you specialize your fourth year. You have to write a thesis. I decided I wanted to specialize in tourism and the effects of tourism in politically unstable countries.

After college, Silvia worked for a year and “quickly got bored.” She decided to come back to Mexico because her mother was there, and because she was interested in discovering what “it was like since it had been so much time” since her and her family were there. Upon arrival, she took the TEFL at Vancouver Language Center. She thought that the four week TEFL program “covered all the basics of what you need. So you’re not like out there with nothing. At least you have something.”

I wanted the certificate so then I didn’t feel that, like I don’t want to be employed without having some sort of education, I don’t want to be viewed as just another person speaking English, you know. But I’ve seen people that have come through the teaching course and they will never get a job ever...I’ll explain one example, “[my friend], she had a TEFL student, and she was explaining something about ahhh, talking about definitions or I can’t remember what it was, but she was saying about the base verb and the infinitive like ‘to study’...and this guy puts his hand in the air and says ‘does that mean that the base verb of study is stud?’ And he was serious. I mean, even my basic 101 students know more than that.

Silvia was very happy with her job as an English teacher. She said “I couldn’t think of a better job really. I can’t think of another job that I can do that I can go to another country and get paid well just because I know English.”

And she has worked many different jobs. “I have been a cleaning lady in Scotland, waitressing, bar work, receptionist, cook, hotel accounts. I worked in a school with kids who had cerebral palsy. I always got a job or two. I got a kick out of saving and putting my money away and counting it [laugh].”

Silvia’s also traveled extensively through most all of Europe.

You really need the experience of sleeping on a bench with your backpacks. You really have to experience that. And then I will always be thankful for McDonalds. We got into Germany once at the crack of dawn, nothing's open, except for McDonalds. I was so happy. I will never say anything bad about McDonalds.

She lives in a “teachers’ house” with three other METs. Two of them also teach at Vancouver and the other teaches at Proulex (see Chapter 8). Reflecting on her recent move to Mexico, she said:

I was bored at home and the weather's horrible at home. I didn't think I was going to be here for this long though. I thought it was going to be rather brief, four weeks. It wasn't like I was coming to a completely new country. It was just like coming back home. Cause I am part, you know, when I'm at home in Britain, it's not like I'm completely British.

### **Charlie Preston**

I was a Dallas policeman for 35 years, retired in July of 1998. I lost my first wife of 36 years to cancer in May of 2000. And then, after I got my grief under control, she and I had visited the Lake Chapala area for a number of years with a plan once we retire to live part of each year in the Lake Chapala area, between four and six months a year, and the other six months in East Texas at our home there. And we had lived here for up to two months at a time prior to our retirement. Unfortunately, the plan went away, broke when she got sick with something that we didn't know.

Charlie told me that “none of the doctors in Texas could find out what was wrong with her.”

But I convinced her to come to Mexico for that summer. She didn't want to come because she was feeling very tired. She eventually said ok. I wanted her to come and try my doctor here. Because you know, maybe he could find out. He's a holistic doctor. Best I know is his only medical license is as a chiropractor, but he's been trained in the

orient for acupuncture and some others, trying hypnotism and so forth. He has a large and very devoted following of Gringos in the area.

So she came. The doctor in Chapala interviewed her for over an hour and “had her take him through her medical history, any problem she ever had medically. Then he said, ‘I think I know what you have.’ And she says ‘really’ and he says ‘yes’.” Before telling her what he thought she had, he did some blood tests and then called them and they came back to his office.

He was very stern looking, cause usually he’s very happy and jovial and I knew something was wrong and so did she. He said, he speaks fluent English by the way, ‘unfortunatley, my prediction of what you have is right. You have leukemia.’ And ‘course about that time her mind shut and she didn’t listen too good after that. She said ‘well, what do I do? That’s fatal isn’t it?’ He said ‘yes it is, normally, but I have some other patients that I’m treating for leukemia-like symptoms and I think that, if you do what I say do, with the kind of holistic approaches I would want to use, lots of vitamins, various supplements that I would prescribe for you,’ he said ‘I think, I think we can beat it.’ She said “well, I think I want to get a second opinion” and he says “of course, I understand.” He says, “If you go to a regular oncologist...here’s what they’re going to do. They’re going to confirm my diagnosis. And then they’re going to start you on a treatment of chemotherapy, and eventually when it goes into your lymphatic system, they’ll probably start radiation cause the cancer will hide from the chemo and go into the lymph system, cause the two systems the blood and the lymph are together, and then you’ll start getting tumors and they’ll start using radiation. They’ll continue. The chemo in your life isn’t going to be very pleasant. She said “well, if I do that, and use the traditional treatment or don’t do anything, how long do I have...He didn’t want to tell her, but she pressed him, and he said “well, the latest information, if you’re in the stage that I think you’re in, based on your symptoms and the blood analysis,” he said “you’re at the start of the third phase or at the end of the second phase, and that means you got about

nine months, more or less.” Of course I tried to convince her to do the treatment that he wanted to do because I believe in the guy...but she didn’t convince, she said “I want to go home.”

Charlie and his wife spent the next eight months driving back and forth from home to the hospital in Dallas.

We’d get there sometimes at eight or nine o’clock in the morning and not leave until midnight. We’d spend all of days at the hospital getting various blood transfusions. Sometimes they wouldn’t think that she’d make it through the weekend so we’d have to spend the weekend there...Anyways, the doctors did their best but eventually had to give up because it was so advanced.

Upon discontinuing treatment, Charlie brought his wife home where she lived a month longer. “She lived 8 months and 28 days from when he saw her in Chapala.”

Charlie continued for nearly 10 more minutes, delivering details of what they had gone through together and how “she finally came to peace with death in the last month.”

So many people wanted to come and see her at our house that last month that I set up a notebook and started scheduling times, and I’d give her a couple-three hours of visitation every day. And, you know, she made a lifetime of friends and they all started coming just about every day...they’d sit there and look at pictures and everybody was positive and she just enjoyed it and was ready at some point to meet her maker.

Three or four days before she died, one night she was talking in her sleep...and you could understand some of what she said. The words I remember was “no, I’m not ready yet, no I’m not going, I’m not ready yet.” I think she was visited by the angel saying it’s time to go and she said “no, I don’t want to go.”

Charlie gave a very detailed account of his wife’s last 24 hours, how his best friend stopped by and decided to stay the night, and how her best friend felt it and called him at the moment of her death. Drying his tears he said “so that was that episode.”

Now we were planning on retiring here and I had friends here, was familiar with the area and so forth, and I wanted, I had been married for 36 years and I wanted to stay married, or I wanted to find another wife if that's what the lord had for me. You know, "it's not good for a man to be alone," or so the lord says, "he who has found a wife has found a good thing," and I wanted to find a good thing. And I was very lonely, because we had a very good marriage for many years...you're with someone for 36 years, being alone is not fun.

I've always been attracted to the Latin look. My first wife was half Filipino and she looked Mexican. People in Mexican restaurants in Dallas would talk Spanish to her and she'd have to explain that she wasn't a Mexican. So knowing, and I did some research on the internet and found out that the average age of the Mexican people was 20. The median age was 20 and since women get married here at least as young as in the United States, you know, by 23, 25 they're married, and there's not that many women my age, I thought, at least in Mexico, to link up with a potential mate very soon. So I was wanting to come here to get my teaching certificate with the plan to go to Colombia. My internet research showed that there were lots of single, widowed ladies in Colombia, many more per capita near my age, because of the civil war for 30 some odd years and the narco-trafficking deaths and the police, you know, having shoot-outs with one another—a lot of men died. So that meant there were lots of widows.

So Charlie went to match-maker services online. He began corresponding with multiple women in Colombia, preparing to meet them once he got his teacher's certificate and got a teaching job in Colombia. However, during his practice teaching sessions with a Teacher training institute in Guadalajara, Charlie met Iris, a 42 year old English student that, up to June of 2003, has not surpassed an intermediate ability of speaking English. They were married in 2001 and are now happily living in Chapala, where Charlie works in real estate and Iris works around their home. Charlie understands more Spanish than Iris does English, but they communicate in a code-switching, blend of both languages.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### IN HINDSIGHT: WHY GO TO GUADALAJARA?

One focus of my observations and interviews was the question of why METs decide to go to Guadalajara, Mexico to teach English. They were happy to answer this question. But “it remains important to distinguish between what people say and what people do, if only because the world is not shaped by words alone” (Wolf 2001:54). There is an additional contrast: what people believe they do (or why they do it), and what another person assesses as their motivation. Even though anthropologists should “give voice to people” and seek to understand the forces—individual/personal, familial, community, national, global, cosmological, etc.—that give rise to these voices; however, my primary purpose is to examine social relations and meaningful practices of METs in Guadalajara, and the cultural forms through which relationships are mediated.

Beyond the need to listen around, through, and between the lines, it is important to note that MET responses to “Why did you come to Guadalajara, Mexico, to teach English?” were informed by hindsight. Undoubtedly, their responses, equipped with post-migratory reflection and justification, may resemble but surely differ from their feelings a day prior to migrating. Experience talking with recent arrivals to Guadalajara helped me to police and organize these responses.

Global demands for English language teachers allow English speakers to migrate to any one of the majority of nations to teach English. Prevailing neoclassical approaches to migration generally agree that the following factors are important in the decision to migrate:

1. Human capital investments include characteristics such as education, work history, and prior migration experiences that influence an individual's migration decisions (Borjas 1990; Taylor 1987).
2. Socioeconomic status is included in most research on labor migration because, typically, wealthier individuals are less apt to migrate (Arizpe 1981; Piore 1979).
3. Familial considerations (Harbison 1981; Massay et al. 1987)—kin-based demands over an individual's life cycle also impact the timing and frequency of migration, e.g., marriage, childbirth, children beginning school.
4. Social networks—migrant community ties become a source of social capital that decreases the risks involved in migrating (Massay 1990; Massay & Espinoza 1997).
5. Local opportunities in places of origin relative to opportunities abroad (Arizpe 1982; Bisborrow 1984; Chant 1991; Grindle 1988; Massay et al 1987).

While studies of the cost/benefit analyses of migration should include these five forces, they should also note that these forces impact each migrant differently, depending on his/her age, sex, and life history.

The unit of analysis in most migration studies is the household since scholars usually look at households migrating as a unit from poorer economic conditions to richer economic conditions (Harbison 1981; Massay et al. 1987; Piore 1979; Massay & Espinosa 1997). However, as also seen in the migration of retirees to Lake Chapala (Stokes 1981), METs typically migrate from better economic conditions to worse economic conditions in order to exploit the economic asymmetry between nations. Moreover, they typically make the move alone and have other strategies in mind, e.g.,

dating, mating, resume-enhancing, retiring to the “good life,” creating new “travel” stories, dodging current pressures, escaping seemingly fossilized routines, and altogether fleeing from crises. A MET’s decision to migrate, while impacted by many different forces in each given case, ultimately rests in age and life history, so this is where I will begin.

### **Age and Sex**

I divided the METs into three age groups (Tables 7.1 & 7.2). As mentioned, the interviews revealed that many different and often competing forces were at work in each case. However, for the purpose of simplifying my discussion of why people migrate to Mexico to teach the English language, I have broken down my data set to demonstrate the similar cost/benefit analyses communicated by migrants at similar moments of their life cycle; and organize them into life stages, representative of what I saw to be “the norm”: Group A is usually just out of college; Group B is looking for a career change or moving from a relational/occupational crisis; Group C is retiring with the desire to do something in a community where their pension makes them wealthier than back home. These groups, which I describe in greater detail below, will be referred to throughout the remainder of this thesis.

**Table 7.1. 105 Interviews grouped by age, gender and nationality.**

	<b>A: 18-29</b>		<b>B: 30-54</b>		<b>C: 55 ↑</b>		<b>Totals</b>	
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Australia				1	1	1	1	2
Canada	3	3	3		1	1	7	4
Chile			1				1	
England	2	1	2		3	1	7	2
Mexican	2	3	2	1			4	4
Peru	1						1	
Scotland		1						1
S. Africa		1						1
U. S.	19	25	8	6	8	4	35	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>49</b>

Group A migrants (18-29 years old) are just out of high school, just out of undergraduate or graduate school, or have worked the same job for usually less than three or four years. They have usually allotted six months to two years to live abroad and learn Mexico’s language and culture. They may be between degrees, just out of school and in need of a break before starting a “real job,” or were jaded by their experience in the corporate world and fled from their old life in search of something better.

Group B METs (31-54 years old) usually move as a result of a crisis. They have also been dulled by their past reality, and “had been thinking of doing something like this for years.” Retirement savings, the many economic contracts and bills, and the fear of “giving everything up” had prevented them. They are single, sometimes divorced, and either have committed to short-term dating strategies, or are seeking a Mexican spouse.

Group C METs (55 years old and up) often move with a pension on which to rely. They do not necessarily need extra money but fear “not having anything to do.” Most of them have retired from a job they held for 10-30 years. They equate English teaching

with “volunteer work” and use it as a means to interact with Mexicans. This group, while also interested in “language” and “culture,” are often interested in exploiting economic asymmetries between their home nation and Mexico in order to “live the good life” and have better late-in-life dating and/or mating opportunities.

Obviously, some circumstances transcend all three groups. I could not easily fit all MET situations into an age group. For example, gay men of all ages are attracted to Guadalajara. There were young to old gay male METs who chose to teach English and live in Guadalajara because of the increase in opportunity to meet, date, and enjoy company with people of their sexual orientation.

### **Nationality and Origin**

METs, especially first-timers who have not before dealt with visa acquisition, share stories of how “difficult and time-consuming” it was to either get tourist visa extensions or FM-3s (*forma migratorias*—work visas). The cost of an FM-3, after fees and the necessary tips, is near 2000 pesos (the peso has been fluctuating above and below 10 pesos: 1 U. S. dollar). Some English teaching institutes helped teachers to obtain their FM-3s, and some would even pay half or all of it at the end of a year’s time with the institute. However, most METs complained that the school in which they work was not helpful, often not knowing, or at least claiming to be unfamiliar with the process of obtaining the work visa. “There aren’t many schools down here that claim us as legal migrant employees because it will cost them more and it’s a hassle for them” said Cindy who, for over two and a half years, worked at four language schools in Guadalajara, the last one finally helping her get an FM-3. Another primary reason for migrants teaching

without papers is that they are often on the move. It is a long process to get a work visa in Mexico, and the language schools know that some foreign English teachers only plan to stay for a few months before moving to different cities/countries, or finding a better job.

Migration distance and the level of commercial integration of the MET's home country also factored into interviews. All of them with kin in their home country expressed plans to make it home for a holiday, sibling marriage, or other special event; and referred to Mexico's distance from home by the price of a roundtrip flight. In this view geographical distance gives way to average flight prices. Flight prices tend to be lower between countries as they become more commercially integrated; more financial transactions and commodity movement between nations tends to correlate with increased movements of people.

Aside from these occasional remarks on different migration laws and the distance of migration, MET nationality is important because members of the same nation are more likely to both recognize and share similar ethnic markers. Since Mexico is primarily mestizo, very fair-skinned and very dark-skinned folk draw more attention than those shades more similar to mestizos. Able to migrate and find work in many different nations, some METs consciously compare/contrast their ethnic markers with the common markers and traits of the nation. Many METs select a nation based on how attractive they think they will be:

Man . . . I have blue eyes, blonde hair . . . and man I'm six feet tall and can speak Spanish . . . I'm five times more beautiful here . . . I mean, . . . the señoritas and the easy job, man, . . . I'm staying for a while. (24-year-old male from Alabama)

While comments like these were very common, it is worth noting that even though “blonde hair,” “fair skin”, and “blue eyes” may be considered “exotic” in Mexico, those traits often accompany the English language and citizenship within a better economy than Mexico.

This idea conflicts to some extent with the suggestion that “people preferentially interact with people with whom they share easily observable traits” (McElreath et al. 2003). “Preferentially” because similar ethnic markers often coincide with shared behavior. However, as the METs demonstrate, existing cultural and national stereotypes may favor interactions with people who are differently marked. National markers, with respect to dating and mating potential, are often seen under an economic lens:

Everyone knows that I’m an American, so they think I’m wealthy because I can travel down here, just work a few hours a day, go to beaches every other weekend and. . . you know. . . it’s just that the dollar goes so far. I saved \$2,000 before I came down and I’m rich in pesos. (31 year old male from Chicago)

MET attractiveness in Mexico can improve if: (1) the migrant’s ethnic markers coincide with ethnic markers deemed beautiful (usually reliant upon horizontal cultural transmissions, i.e. the U.S. media, global commercial culture); or (2) they are recognized as being a citizen from a country with better economic conditions. My fieldwork demonstrated that dating and mating strategies interplay with other forces of migration (to be discussed later in this chapter).

### **MET Social networks**

Table 7.2 points to levels of education attained by METs in each group. Of particular interest is the percentage of METs who took a teacher training course. Over

the last decade, many language institutes in Guadalajara have begun teacher training programs. This has effectively institutionalized MET migration to Guadalajara. Granted, TEFL programs spot the globe, and many METs, once certified, go somewhere else in the world to teach. However, many of the METs whom I interviewed took a teacher training program in Guadalajara prior to teaching there. Vicky, a 44 year old high school math teacher taking a year off “to get to know Mexico” says, “taking the Vancouver TEFL program before working gave me time to get to know the area, the schools, find an apartment...you know the whole thing cost a couple grand but it was well worth it.”

**Table 7.2. MET Education: High school, College, and TEFL programs.**

*Percentages are read as e.g., 70.37% of A-males went to college.*

	# METs	High Sch.	%	College	%	TEFL	%	College & TEFL	%
A-male	27	27	100	19	70.37	25	92.59	18	66.67
A-female	34	34	100	27	79.41	32	94.12	26	76.47
B-male	16	13	81.25	7	43.75	16	100	7	43.75
B-female	8	8	100	7	87.5	8	100	7	87.5
C-male	13	11	84.62	6	46.15	12	92.31	5	38.46
C-female	7	7	100	2	28.57	6	85.71	1	14.29
<b>Totals</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>95.24</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>64.76</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>94.29</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>60.95</b>

The evolution of a MET social network in Guadalajara has minimized the risks of migrating via the ELT industry. Massay (1987, 1990) contends that migration is ultimately a social process that gains its own momentum, outstripping its economic origins. Human networks develop between origin and destination—institutionalizing migration patterns. Migrant community ties become a source of social capital that decreases the risks involved in migrating (Massay 1990; Massay & Espinoza 1997).

Whereas English language instruction has presumably been in Guadalajara for over a century, a social network of English teachers formed with the increase in language schools (described at the end of chapter 4) and the use of the Internet. However, it was most intensified by the expansion of global-oriented TEFL programs to Mexico's second largest city.

The life span of language schools and teacher training programs in Guadalajara characterizes the MET network within time and space. A complete history of each school and program would further aid analysis. For example, Worldwide Teachers began in Boston, Massachusetts, in the mid 1990s and opened its second institute in Guadalajara in July 1998, ending Guadalajara operations in March 2002. The International Teacher Training Organization (ITTO) began in Guadalajara in September 2001. It is a branch of Via Lingua, which is a global network of TEFL/TESL teacher training centers, consisting of 13 locations in 11 countries across four continents. What a teacher training program essentially does is recruit native English speakers from all parts to spend roughly a month in Guadalajara learning how to teach English. Not only does this month give trainees time to explore teaching options in Guadalajara, but it becomes convenient to stay. They create contacts and get offers from local schools. ELT networking, with respect to language schools and teacher training schools, and the creation of MET networks in different settings like Guadalajara, Prague, and Baghdad, Puerto Vallarta, San Francisco and Barcelona, could provide insight into the different forms the ELT industry takes in different societies, and the resulting relationships established.

Veteran METs show new METs how to operate in this new place, severely decreasing shock, mistakes, and difficulties in learning a new system of symbols. Rick, a

22 year old male from Seattle, graduated with an English degree and is taking a year off before graduate school:

I was planning on teaching on a Mexican beach but I guess I stayed here because over the first month in classes (a TEFL program) I made some friends, some that have done the same thing that I'm doing, and they helped me find a place, a school to work at...I'd rather live on a beach, but it was just easier here...more jobs in the big city too.

The MET network took time to develop in Guadalajara and its growth accelerated upon the arrival of special “internationally recognized” teacher training programs.

As the MET network in Guadalajara continues to increase, inter-group relations seem to become more patterned and institutionalized as well. This means that both Mexican English students and the growing MET colony use the ELT institution to pattern their group relationships, and, in turn, each group becomes more cognizant of the other's goals and strategies. Dating and mating strategies, language and cultural differences, food preferences, notions of right and wrong, opinions of good and bad, clean and dirty, fashion preferences, and gender knowledge is learned from and shared with the “other,” cementing “norms” of relations between METs and the surrounding community. These norms reflect national histories and economies, corporate power, the spread of English, the spread of Wal-Mart and McDonalds, military might, laws of migration, and more. Group relationships are constantly changing. They change with the constant change of all local, national, and global forces.

Table 2 also alludes to the general popularity of teacher training programs as well. I found that while most schools look for teachers with certificates or some language teaching experience, they will hire METs without either. Donald, a 21 year old from England, began traveling North America after high school.

Yeah, I just went in there and told them that I could teach whenever. So they gave me a course the next week, and ever since I have been teaching three courses a months. Sara (the school's director) told me that she doesn't employ teachers without certificates now, but I imagine they would.

One must question how teacher training programs are “internationally recognized” and are required by some schools. Certificate programs claim “certified by the International Association of Continued Education and Training,” “licensed by Via Lingua,” or “receive certificate from Cambridge University.” Jeff Mohamed, a well known promoter of CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) courses, maintains English International's website. English International offers a Cambridge CELTA certificate. Mohamed describes the certificate:

Originally known as the "RSA Certificate," the program became the "RSA/Cambridge CTEFLA" in 1985. The name changed to "RSA/Cambridge CELTA" in 1996 and to "Cambridge CELTA" in 2001. The Cambridge CELTA is an international TEFL training and certification program. Over 8,000 people a year participate in CELTA courses in 200 approved centers in 40 countries around the world. All successful participants receive certification from Cambridge University.

Regardless of the acronym used, the buzz words attached, and the organizations that “recognize” the different certificate programs, competitors in the teacher training part of the ELT industry ridicule other programs based on similar fictitious claims that they themselves make about their institute. The power, in the international arena, of any one of these certificate programs is measured by the number of institutes that offer their certificate and the number of METs who have earned their certificate. With time, small competitors are dissolved while a few massive networks remain. In this case, a few people are making the education decisions for English teachers around the world.

## **Travel, Retiring, and a Change of Pace**

My interviews revealed some of the many different contexts in which “travel” is used. Some METs were interested in teaching in Mexico because it looked good on the resume. Karesh, a 23 year old, first generation Indian-American was looking to do something “both adventurous and good for the resume for a year.” He figured that “seeing the world a little more,” would help his chances of getting into law school. Others spoke of traveling to Mayan and Aztec ruins in Mexico, of “searching” for different ways to live life, and one young woman even said, “all of my friends had done study abroad programs, or had seen other parts of the world. I didn’t have any travel stories to share. So here I am.”

METs see travel as fun and adventurous, as a means to build their resume, as a prestigious asset in social circles, and as a way to “get away from things.” Group A METS were primarily interested in an “experience to beef up the resume.” They were interested in traveling in Mexico and learning Spanish not merely to have fun but to retain knowledge that would be useful to them in their future. One MET wrote about her experience in an application to a graduate program in International Relations.

A couple of months ago, after reading disheartening news about the state of affairs in Iraq, one of my students said to me, “Too bad we can’t extend this utopia beyond the walls of the classroom.” He was referring to our ESL classroom where students from various religious, economic, and cultural backgrounds work together towards a common goal. The goal of course is to learn English, not exactly a hotbed of controversy compared to topics like globalization, poverty alleviation, or U.S. foreign policy. Nonetheless, his sentiment is admirable.

Since I began teaching ESL four years ago, I have often thought about the misconceptions that exist in the world today. While teaching at a prestigious high school in Mexico, I saw the division between social classes. The contrast between my privileged students and the vast majority of other Mexicans was striking. Racism and classism were extremely prevalent and poverty was often attributed to laziness, rather than lack of opportunity. The absurdity of this notion was deeply underscored when I volunteered for an organization that catered to underprivileged families.

As a teacher in a multi-national classroom of my peers in California, I have witnessed dialogue eradicating mistaken beliefs. I have listened to a Turkish Muslim and a Portuguese Catholic debate religion, a group of Asians discuss Taiwanese sovereignty, and a 58 year old Japanese man speak with an 18 year old Japanese woman about changing values in Japan. The experience has proven to be one of the highlights of my career and on a daily basis my desire to work in an international setting is reinforced. Watching my students I am convinced that cultural understanding, or lack thereof, is integral to sustaining peace in the world.

My teaching experiences at home and abroad have also made me acutely aware of the power wielded by the United States. As a graduate student in [your] program, I hope to learn how to use our influence and resources to help the developing world. [12-4-2003]

Decorating resumes with travel experience and beginning stories with “When I was in *(any foreign nation)*” is seen by METs to demand respect in all social circles—academic, familial, the corporate world, etc. More than this, METs associate travel experience with high status within the MET community.

Group B migrants tended to be more interested in “getting away” from their job, from their self-destructing social circle, or from “the madness and massive stress, and workaholicness of corporate America.” Many of these METs were often impelled to migrate by a personal crisis. Of the 24 group B migrants whom I interviewed, 10 of them

had just finished a “tough break-up” or divorce, six were, as Chuck put it, “driven crazy by my job and needed something new.” Whereas I heard the most criticisms of the U.S. (and one of Canada) from group B migrants, most METs in general associated life in the U.S., Canada, and England as “neurotic,” “stressful,” “psychotic,” “fast-paced,” and “caffeinated.” Common life style descriptions of Mexico were “manana-like,” “don’t worry, be happy,” “little by little,” and “relaxing.”

There has been a growing retired expatriate (primarily American and Canadian) population in and around Guadalajara for many years now (Holder 1976, Stokes 1981 Truly, 2000). All group C METs were retired and receiving pensions. Half of them were recently retired and “looking for something to keep the mind occupied.” James, a 58 year old retired real estate agent said

I’m a firm believer in, that if you don’t have anything to do, you’re going to forget what you can do. Now I know English, spoken it for almost 60 years, I reckon I can teach it...An old Navy buddy of mine’s retired in Ajijic, so I thought one day, heck, I’m divorced, kids are all grown up, why not go and, go and check out Mexico...teaching English I can handle, the students are great, but I don’t need the money, I’m just keeping active and investing, and vacationing, god I love spicy food too, and these senioritas are enough to break a man’s neck I tell ya.

None of these METs worked very much, but they were often passionate about teaching English to “Mexican kids that just don’t have as many opportunities as we do up north.” Most of them considered their teaching job as volunteer-like.

Six males and one female in this category used the teacher training certificate program as a means to check into the retirement colonies in Guadalajara and around Lake Chapala. Only two of them are still teaching at a language school (both in Guadalajara)

as of August 2003. The others are in the Lake Chapala region. The English-speaking retiree network and the MET network are joined by Group Cs intergroup mobility.

### **Socioeconomic Status and Dating/Mating Strategies**

Midway through my fieldwork in the summer of 2003, I began to notice that the majority of METs seriously discussed dating and/or mating strategies in Guadalajara. Some remarked on coming to Mexico for the purpose of “hook’n up” and others were set on “settling down” with a Latina or a Latino. My pre-fieldwork research neglected this consideration, so upon returning from the field I began to analyze how dating and mating strategies interpose other forces of migration. I use “dating and mating” together because although most METs mentioned moving to Guadalajara with the intention to date rather than mate; seven cases resulted in mating. Ultimately, migrants who increase their socioeconomic status, successively increase their dating and mating opportunities.

If a male MET is of average or below-average socioeconomic status before he migrates, he will often choose to migrate to a nation with a poorer economy than home. Upon migration he not only moves up in socio-economic status, but he is a ‘mentor’ of a global-oriented language that is locally equated with ‘success.’ In choosing to teach English in Mexico, most male METs are able to display more resources than local competitors.

With respect to females, it is important to note that because they are also raising their socioeconomic status upon migration, most female METs do not express as much interest in dating Mexican males as male METs do for dating Mexican females because female hypogamy is generally undesirable. However, since many female METs exhibit

characteristics that are desired by Mexican men (e.g., blonde hair, non-brown eyes, fair skin), increased male-male competition over an “attractive” female often uncovers wealthier Mexican men.

Males in Group A are almost always interested in short-term sexual/romantic relationships, exemplified by serial dating. Of the 27 male METs in this group, three were in “serious relationships” back home, and one was engaged. None of these men was planning to stay in Mexico for longer than eight months and one admitted to cheating on his girlfriend. Sam said, “We talk once a week and messenger just about every day,...I feel kinda bad, but she knows that this is an important experience for me and,... she’ll never find out up there.”

Four of these men were homosexual. “Guadalajara is basically the San Francisco of Mexico with a smaller gay parade.” The downtown area has many homosexual-oriented bars (it is rare to see homosexual females at these bars), where these METs spend their evenings. All four of them practiced short-term dating strategies, three of them claiming to routinely sleep with two or more different men a week. When asked how long he had been there and how long he plans to stay, Thom said:

I was planning on staying for no more than a year. I’m going on my third year. I want to go back and start my Ph.D. but there are just way more gay men in Guadalajara . . . it’s more fun for me here and I have nothing except for my mother back home.

Of the other twenty men, only three had established a long-term relationship with Mexican women. Since many METs of this age group live together (I visited four houses: three had four METs and one had three METs), they were often dating each other. Three were dating female METs, and seven mentioned that they had “hooked up”

with some female METs. One man lived in a house with three women and claimed to have had sex with all three of them. The remaining men of this group were either dating Mexican women (with short-term relationships in mind) to learn Spanish, and were planning to return to undergraduate, graduate, or law school at the end of the year, or had no plans and were considering long-term relationships and a long stay in Guadalajara.

Women in group A were less likely to get involved with Mexican men, and if they did, it always seemed to fall under the context of short-term dating and learning Spanish from them. They were more interested in long-term dating with male METs. In the male MET, they see someone who “is interested in traveling, learning new languages and about new places,” just like themselves. Despite this trend, two group A women married Mexican men. One of them, Sara, was a vocalist who married a guitar player and they would do duets at parties.

Female METs in their 30s were looking for a lover, a spouse, someone with whom to have children. Erin, 34, commented on “her biological clock ticking” and how “she is looking to settle down with a man that wants to have fun and have a family.” Older women in this group, though less focused on wanting to have children, were just as interested in settling down. When asked what type of man she is looking for, Bethany responded:

I would love to meet a nice Mexican man, but it would take a long time for me to fall in love with someone that I really won't understand very well for at least a couple more years or so . . . when my Spanish gets better . . . but even then, we wouldn't get each other's jokes and stuff. Ideally, I'll fall for a teacher from the States who wants to split our life between the U. S. and here.

Males in Group B are more likely to be looking for younger, early to mid 20s, Mexican women. They are often fixed on “finding a woman.” In all but four of the cases, these men were interested in getting married and starting a family. The others were short-term daters and said that they planned never to marry.

Group C men are looking for younger women, or in some cases, younger men. Group C women, of whom there are fewer of in this category, are often interested in the arts and are planning to move to Lake Chapala or San Miguel de Allende. Both locations well established English-speaking, retirement colonies.

Male and female METs demonstrated appreciation and liking of Mexico’s *machismo*; this is yet another force that led METs to choose Mexico. Gary, 57-year-old retired firefighter, said:

It’s the product of machismo that I love most. Women want to be women here and take care of their man. They like to nurture and want to stay home with the kids. That’s how it should be. They may be a little too possessive, but hey, that’s part of the package.

Not surprisingly, all male METs in my sample showed interest in dating younger Mexicans. Sixty-six-year-old John proposed to 31 year old Luz, while 60 year old Barry was living with his 28 year old male lover. Ron, a 64-year-old, married a 48 year old Mexican. A 31-year-old man was in Guadalajara for less than a month before he proposed to a 19-year-old Mexican woman.

This chapter has revealed and examined MET cost/benefit decisions to migrate. My interviews and observation concluded that the forces primarily impacting each MET’s decision to migrate, i.e., socioeconomic status, the existence and size of a migrant social network, opportunities in place of destination as opposed to those in origin, and

personal crises, were interposed by dating/mating strategies, which in turn were dependent upon each MET's age, sex, and nationality. Ultimately, METs in Guadalajara are not interested in making lots of money and they are rarely interested in investing in Mexico. However, whether conscious prior to migration or not, they soon discover how to use their new socioeconomic position (as an English teacher [usually] coming from a nation with a better economy than Mexico) to their advantage in the dating and mating arena—where their attraction to and attractiveness to “latinos(as),” while also largely associated with national and economic perspectives and the access to the global code, makes them more physically attractive. Moreover, the relaxed “manana attitude,” the opportunity to travel and “learn Spanish and Mexican culture” makes Mexico a nice destination for “some time off from the real world,” to retire and take advantage of economic asymmetries, or to do something different while bettering one's resume in a world where “travel” and “experience” is evermore prestigious in both the workplace and other social circles.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

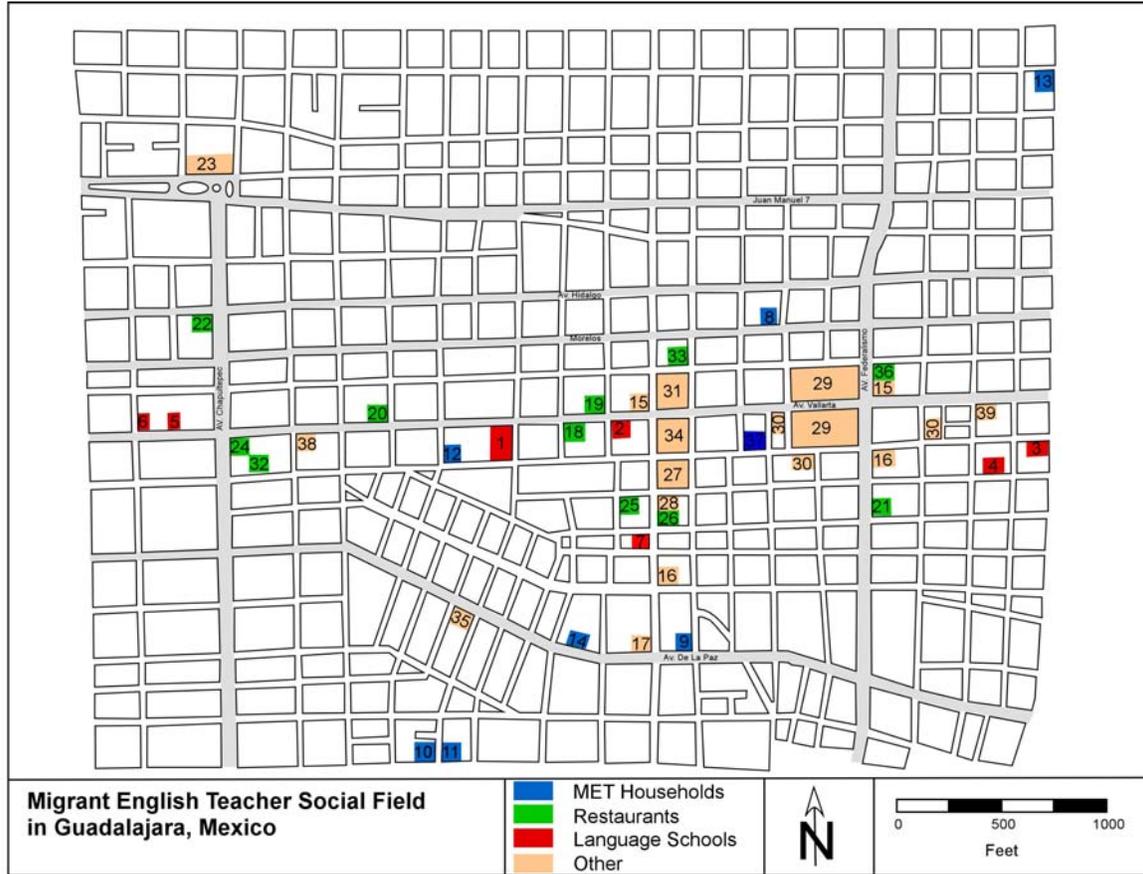
### THE SOCIAL FIELD AND RHYTHMS OF MIGRANT LIFE

In addition to gaining an understanding of “their stories” and why they decide to migrate to Guadalajara, Mexico to teach English, the position in which METs are embedded in this new society needs to be examined at the level of communicative acts. The important questions are: whom do METs interact with daily, weekly, and monthly? Where do these interactions take place? What are the rhythms and routines of MET daily life? A micro-level analysis of the interactions and different behaviors of the interacting parties will offer insight into how global-oriented forms like the ELT institution interacts with the existing forms of local societies.

#### **The Social Field**

In order to acquire a good anthropological sense of the lives that METs lead, I narrowed my focus to a particular region within Guadalajara (as shown in Figure 8.1). This is not to say that my participation or observations were limited to this region. The map’s boundaries delimit nothing more than the majority of MET activity that I observed during the time that I was there.

**Figure 8.1: The MET Social Field in Guadalajara, Mexico**



Language Schools	MET Households	Other
1. Vancouver Language Center	8. Casa Morelos—"Casa de Cora"	15. Seven Eleven
2. Proulex	9. Casa Escorza	16. Oxxo
3. IMAC	10. Casa Robles Gil I	17. Cinema
4. ITTO	11. Casa Robles Gil II	23. Aurrera (owned by Wal-Mart)
5. Wall Street Institute	12. Casa Lopez Cotilla	27. Expiatorio
6. Berlitz	13. Casa Garibaldi	28. Cement Plaza
7. Instituto Norte	14. Casa La Paz	29. Parque Revolucion
<b>Restaurants</b>	37. Casa Lopez Cotilla-Australia	30. Internet café
18. La Charla		31. University of Guadalajara/Independent Cinema
19. Potros		34. University of Guadalajara Museum
20. McDonalds		35. Blockbuster
21. Joau—"the Brazilians"		38. Telmex
22. Café Mondo		39. Gigante
24. Dominos		
25. "Yummy Tacos"		
26. El Fenix		
32. Café Lulios		
33. Belgium Waffle Place		
36. Orange Yawning Tortas		

Of the 105 METs whom I interviewed, 59 of them had worked or were working in one of the language schools within this social field. Thirty-seven of the 59 had worked at VLC, varying from Stan, a 57 year old male, who had recently earned his teacher training certificate at ITTO (International Teacher Training Organization), and had just begun teaching beginning conversation classes, to Timothy who has worked at VLC on and off for over three years. In comparison to the rest of Guadalajara's metropolitan area, this social field represents the highest density of MET occupation. Living in this area enabled me to contact multiple METs daily and nightly.

Figure 8.1 labels restaurants, language schools, Internet cafés, teachers' housing and more. Labeled entities are marked on the block in which they reside and are not concerned with exact addresses. The map's purpose is to acknowledge spatial relationships within the given social field and to expose areas where one or more METs repeatedly "hung out," "visited," "dined," etc. It will aid in understanding the relationships, routines, and events discussed in this chapter and the next.

### **Schools, Accommodations, and Homes**

ITTO (International Teacher Training Organization) began its branch in Guadalajara in 2002. Of the language schools within the social field, ITTO is the only one that only offers a teacher training course. Their webpage says

The International Teacher Training Organization is a part of a global network of TEFL/TESL teacher training centers, licensed by Via Lingua and dedicated to providing first class TEFL/TESL Certificate Courses. This global network consists of 11 training centers spread across Europe and North America. These Training Centers form one of the largest TEFL training groups in the world.

ITTO is the only course provider in the Americas validated and licensed by Via Lingua.

ITTO began operating as Worldwide Teachers was closing. Worldwide Teachers, born and still operating in Boston, closed operations in Guadalajara in March 2002.

Besides ITTO, which does not offer English lessons to language learners, the language schools in this region can be broken down into two categories based on the company's origin. Vancouver Language Center, Wall Street Institute, Berlitz, Worldwide Teachers (closed in March 2002), and ITTO are all globally-oriented. That is, they began operations in a country other than Mexico, maintained their headquarters, and expanded into other countries. These institutes play more powerful roles in the global ELT industry than do national institutes. In fact, non-globally operating language institutes adopt the techniques of global institutes in all realms—marketing, teaching, and learning.

Proulex, IMAC (Instituto Mexicano Americano de Cultura), and Instituto Cultural (the full name is Instituto Cultural Mexicano Norteamericano de Jalisco) are based in Mexico and do not stretch outside the country. Proulex describes itself as a program created by the University of Guadalajara whose objective is to teach languages, especially English and French. They have eight schools dispersed throughout Guadalajara and six, soon to be seven, schools throughout the state of Jalisco and into Michoacan. IMAC, whose marketing slogan “Habla Ingles o Calla Para Siempre,” crudely translates as “Speak English or Shut Up Forever,” has two schools in Guadalajara. Instituto Cultural only operates in one location. Both IMAC and Instituto Cultural promote their Spanish “immersion-like” courses to foreigners via their English

webpage. Foreigners, mostly Americans and Canadians, a few Europeans, and a few Koreans were taking these classes during the summer of 2003.

Schools hosting foreign students provide different types of accommodation. For example, IMAC offers their Spanish students a homestay with a Mexican family, discounts at nearby hotels, a guest house option for students who would like a more private lodging in a small semi-private apartment, and apartments. ITTO offers their TEFL trainees three options: a homestay with a Mexican family; an en-suite room in a Mexican Posada; and discounts at hotels. Since foreign students at IMAC are learning Spanish and not teaching English, they are often there on vacation or with plans for extended travel, though I met three who immediately enrolled in the Vancouver or ITTO TEFL program so that they could afford staying in Guadalajara for a longer period of time. Despite the accommodations selected by incoming trainees at ITTO, and Worldwide Teachers before ITTO, incoming trainees will often meet and learn from recently graduated METs who chose to stay in Guadalajara. The accommodation selected by TEFL trainees may greatly impact how and if they are incorporated into Guadalajara society. Although, in general, METs who take their TEFL in Guadalajara are quickly introduced to METs in the area. Most METs in the area are graduates or friends of graduates of the school (VLC, Worldwide Teachers, ITTO) that the trainees are attending.

Despite ITTO and Worldwide Teachers attracting more TEFL trainees due to their supposed specialization in teacher training, the migrant social network in this social field seems to radiate from Vancouver Language Center. Many VLC teachers are ITTO and Worldwide Teachers graduates. VLC has around 20 METs employed at any given

time, though some only last for a month or two. When I asked the VLC director of studies about the high turnover rate of teachers, she responded “We’ve hired people for two months, three months, but we’re stopping that, because I had to lay down the law, if someone says I’ll be here for two months I say no. Teachers have to stay for a minimum of six months or the paperwork isn’t worth it for us.”

This is a difficult policy to maintain when the school only hires “native English teachers.” The directors and English teachers at Vancouver all agree that their school is superior to other language schools because “all their teachers are native speakers of English.” Their brochures and flyers begin in big, bold print:

**Aprende Ingles Con Los Que Saben...**

**Todos Nuestros Maestros Son Extranjeros**

[Learn English with Those Who Know...

All of Our Teachers are Foreigners]

VLC’s high turnover rate made it the center of my observations. METs would work there for a few months and then travel to a different city. They would work there until they found a job at a school that pays them better and offers better hours. They would work there for a month or two after their TEFL program, then return home.

VLC’s mother company is in Vancouver, Canada. Their school in Guadalajara successfully operates three study programs. First, they offer Spanish language courses. These courses do not fill up, but the students who do attend are usually METs working at the school (Spanish classes are free for their English teachers) and retired, expatriates from Canada or the U.S. Secondly, their English program offers 14 levels of grammar and eight levels of conversation. Each level is 40 hours of instruction—10 hours a week for four weeks. They also offer TOEFL courses and business English courses as well as

organize English instruction at companies. Thirdly, they offer a four week, 140 hour TEFL certification course. It is quite common for trainees to begin teaching classes at Vancouver upon certification.

It is also common for trainees to find accommodation in one of the teacher houses nearby. Vancouver used to own a house a block away from the school, but sold it late in 2002. This house, as well as the others labeled in Figure 8.1, are houses with two to eight rooms. Rent is different at each place, ranging from 1,200 to 3,500 pesos a month, often depending on the size of the room. Bathrooms and kitchens are often shared and there are METs moving in and out of these rooms monthly. Since VLC sold their accommodation rentals, they offer their trainees hotel, bed & breakfast, and homestay prices on the web. If METs decide to stay and teach in Guadalajara, they usually find an empty room in one of these teacher houses. Certified METs from VLC, ITTO, and previously Worldwide Teachers, would often find work at Vancouver or Proulex, and occasionally at Instituto Cultural, IMAC, and Wall Street Institute, and fill a room at one of these teacher houses.

Cindy (chapter 5) said “It was fun living in a teachers’ house, though it’s like living in a dorm, always someone around that wants to do something.” The teachers often became each other’s best friends. They share the same profession, the same drive to migrate to Mexico to teach English, (some refer to it as the same “travel bug”), and they are sharing the same house. Great friendships are made in teacher houses, and the history of these relationships, or perhaps I should say the evolving myths and legends of these relationships, can be heard through their stories and conversations. This is covered in greater detail in the next chapter.

## **A Notion of Superiority and a Few Routines**

Whereas some language schools provide a very international, or American business-like environment, others present a national ambience. In fact, the ambience of the institute seemed defined by the ratio of Mexican to foreign employees at the school. Of the roughly 40 employees at VLC, half are Mexican and half are “native English speakers.” One teacher described the English speaking staff as “11 gringo, four Canadian, two Scottish, and four Brit teachers.” Save for the general director, director of studies, and director of their kindergarten, the rest of the administrative staff is Mexican. When asked about the interaction between the English-speaking teachers and the Mexican administration, one teacher commented:

I think that it's a feeling of inferiority more than superiority. On the teachers' behalf it's more of our culture to not....we just don't do that,...we don't walk in to work and say “hello Brad, hello Mary, good morning, good morning, good morning” you know, it's part of our culture. You know, ours is more of a business-like attitude.

IMAC, Instituto Cultural and Proulex hire Mexican, non-native English-speaking teachers; therefore, Mexicans fill most jobs at these schools. This also meant that English teacher turnover rates were much lower since METs have different career plans than Mexican English teachers, who have often chosen this job as a life-long profession. Different school environments condition different relationships between METs and Mexicans employees and language learners.

Most Mexican language learners take English classes in the morning or in the evening, working the classes around their work or school day. Harvey is a 22 year old born and raised in San Jose, California. He teaches English at Proulex, plays the guitar

for about three to four hours every day, practices a vegan dietary regimen, and eventually began dating his Spanish tutor and renting a house with her.

I really came down here to get into a different music industry. I'm working more than I would like, but the extra money is nice...I'm teaching four (two hour long) classes a day right now. One at 6:30, then 8:30, then I have a big mid-day break and start up again at six and finish at 10. It's too much, I'd rather just have three classes. Vancouver teachers may not have to work as much, but they don't get to leave the city either. Last month the school sent me to Tepetitlan to teach. It was busy, but a lot of fun meeting small town people.

Sheryl, a 29 year old from Michigan, came down to learn Spanish and try to figure out what she wanted to do in graduate school. She also worked at Proulex. Living with three Vancouver teachers brought to her attention that

they make a few pesos less an hour over there, and don't get as many hours a week, but you know, I really didn't come to Mexico to teach English, I came to learn Spanish and it frustrates me when work makes me too tired to study it.

METs at Proulex, VLC, IMAC, and Instituto Cultural spend between four and eight hours a day teaching and typically work a split shift. Since VLC and Proulex paid more (over 50 pesos an hour and 10 to 35 more pesos an hour for business English classes) I was unable to find many METs who were teaching or had taught at IMAC and Instituto Cultural.

There were two, almost three, Wall Street Institutes in Guadalajara at the time I was there. Each one had a director of studies and one teacher. They share the Conversation club activities and small/individual classes that students must take, in addition to computer-based, audiovisual learning, in order to complete a level. The director of studies typically works from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 to 12 p.m.

while the teacher often works a split shift from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. These schedules fluctuate from day to day and between institutes. Overall, METs working at language schools teach early in the morning, in the evening, and a long class on Saturday.

“I only planned for classes the first two months, until I got a hang of them, and knew what games worked and what didn’t,” said Al, a 26 year old man from Milwaukee. I interviewed a few teachers who took class preparation very seriously, but most teachers agreed with Al.

Shannon is a 24 year old from Colorado who has been teaching at Vancouver for almost a year and a half.

I’m up ‘til around 1 either at a bar, talking with the teachers I live with, or, shit, doing whatever—I’m a night owl. So it’s always a fuck’n struggle to get outta bed at six, get ready and make it to 7 a.m. class. They know mornings are tough for me though. It’s so cute, they usually bring me coffee because I told them, I said “you know, I’m a zombie,” and of course I had to explain what zombie was, you know, like this [she shows me her interpretation of a zombie walking, arms forward and locked knees], “so I’m a zombie until I get through my first cup of coffee.” I’m a cafetera, you know...I come home at nine and sleep for a couple hours. Then I used to plan but now I pretty much know all the levels and what works and doesn’t, so I just go in there and give them me. I don’t have class again until seven at night. Lately I have been going with some students and the other teachers to La Charla or Los Potros for some beers after classes. You know, wind down, and that’s,...that’s my life. I love it.

In contrast, Maria grew up in Guadalajara until the age of nine, moved to Fresno to live with her uncle until she graduated from high school and decided that she wanted to

live in Mexico with her mother and the rest of her family for a while. She justified her lack of preparation by summarizing her normal work day.

Ok, I go to sleep near midnight and wake up at 5:30 in the morning, drink a glass of milk and some fruit. Papaya is my favorite. Then I speed in my car to Proulex, teach two classes, then I'm starving so I go home to eat or go with the teachers to a restaurant for lunch. This is when I get lazy, I like to walk around or go work out before I prepare my evening classes. Last month was wonderful...I had level 2s and two level 5s, planning was really easier and I could be lazy longer. But this semester I teach beginners, level 3, advanced grammar and business English. English grammar is tough for me to teach because, it's like, I know it and speak it but I don't like to think about it as much as this class makes me. Ugghhh. Like countable nouns, how do you teach them that you can't say broccolis or shrimps, most of them never get it...and never will.

I only talked with three METs who were in a similar position to Maria. But seven METs spent their childhood in Mexico with their families and later moved to the U.S. or England for at least eight years, deciding to return to Mexico to teach English. Of the other four, one was married, two rented apartments near their families (it is unusual for unmarried Mexicans to live apart from their families), and Rodrigo bought a "flat" in Guadalajara when he returned from England. He went to England in 1991, fell in love with a man, married his lover's sister for citizenship, returned to Guadalajara 10 years later and "thought that English would be an easy profession to pursue." Rodrigo taught at Worldwide Teachers and is currently teaching at Instituto Cultural.

you know what it's like matey, you never feel as prepared for class as you would like to be. Now I had to formally study English so I know grammar and phonetics quite well so I really feel confident that I know English better than anyone in my classes...What is great about teaching a language you know quite well is that you really do not need to prepare much. Of course I look at the lesson plan they give me, five minutes before class

[laugh], and I just do it. So I work for six hours, and what's five times three, six hours and 15 minutes a day.

### **The Despedida Party**

I had not been in Guadalajara for more than a day before a MET invited me to her “despedida party.” I accepted thinking of how, in Spanish, *una despedida* translates as a farewell party. Even though I found her English-Spanish usage of “despedida party” redundant, I was later to hear this two-code word pairing multiple times from METs. I also found myself at despedida parties multiple times: I went to 11 despedida parties within two months.

This party symbolizes the social life of the MET colony in Guadalajara. Granted, some METs do not let themselves be incorporated into the social structure of this particular MET colony, and others enter the ELT industry outside this particular social network, but within the MET colony of the social field (figure 8.1) of Guadalajara, MET social life is a blend of Mexican elements and foreign, English-speaking, predominantly American/Canadian elements.

While six of the 11 despedida parties I attended were at the same house (the oldest MET home), they all were quite similar in character. At any one of these fiestas, it was common to find most of the following: Mexican beers with limes, tequila and squirt drinks, chips and salsa, peanuts with chile spice, a majority of the METs teaching at Vancouver Language Center, and a few from the other schools in the social field, and Mexicans that are, or once were, students of the METs and have established friendships within the MET colony.

The despedida party is also where “newcomer” METs are incorporated or excluded. I estimate that the MET colony in my social field consisted of 50-60 METs. At the despedida parties that I attended there ranged between 21 to 36 METs. While these parties celebrate the stay and departure of one to two METs they welcome one to two more on the average. Due to its high turnover rate and the “similar mindset of METs” the colony is very inclusive to newcomers.

## CHAPTER NINE

### ARENAS AND POWER

#### **Language and Power**

Wolf (1999:5; 2001:384) finds it useful to distinguish among “four modes of power.” Seeing power as an aspect of many different kinds of relations, he notes that it is woven into social relations differently in interpersonal relations, in institutional arenas, and on the level of whole societies. Wolf’s four modalities are:

1. The power of potency or capability that is seen to inhere in an individual, the basic Nietzschean idea of power. It draws attention to how persons enter into a play of power, but tells us nothing about the form or direction of that play.
2. The power manifested in interactions and transactions among people. This refers to the ability of an ego to impose its will in social action upon an alter (the Weberian view). Left in question is the nature of the arena in which these actions go forward.
3. Tactical or organizational power controls the contexts in which people exhibit their potentialities and interact with others. This calls attention to the instrumentalities through which individuals or groups circumscribe the actions of others within determinate settings.
4. Structural power not only operates within settings or domains but also organizes and orchestrates the settings themselves, and specifies the distribution and direction of energy flows. Wolf says

I think that this is the kind of power that Marx addressed in speaking about the power of capital to harness and allocate labor power, and it forms the background of Michel Foucault’s notion of power as the ability “to structure the possible field of action of others” (1984:428). Foucault called this “to govern,” in the sixteen century sense of

governance, an exercise of “action upon action” (pp. 427-28). Foucault himself was primarily interested in this as the power to govern consciousness, but I want to use it as power that structures the political economy...Structural power shapes the social field of action in such a way as to render some kinds of behavior possible, while making others less possible or impossible. As Georg W. F. Hegel argued, what occurs in reality has first to be possible. [Wolf 2001:385]

I find these different modes of power useful in examining relationships among METs, between METs and their students, and between METs and Guadalajara society. Where I predicted that the first two modalities would present a wide range of relationships due to each MET having very different life stories, I found this not to be the case. It seems that similar opportunities attract similar people. Nevertheless, it was Wolf’s tactical and structural power that primarily interested me. The ELT institutions and materials control the context in which METs interact with each other and with their students. These institutions, as a cultural form, have grown from ideologies regarding English as a global language.

When asked about their preparation time, many METs associated not needing to prepare much with the “confidence” of teaching a language that is their mother tongue, or in some instances, a language that they know very well due to functioning within it for a long period of time. One teacher said, “I know the subject matter better than they ever will.” This justified more confidence in the classroom. In contrast, more than 15 METs confessed paradoxical feelings about their profession—wanting to teach people but fearful of talking in front of people. My interview with Steve (chapter 5) describes this paradox well:

Steve: You know, have you like, ever wanted to be a sky diver or a, well you said you rock climb, have you ever been scared of heights?

Troy: Yeah, definitely, and quite scared at that. I remember going to a basketball game with my dad when I was, man, hmmm, I must have been around nine or 10, and we sat at the top of the bleachers which were spaced about 20 feet from the wall. There was a bar preventing people from catapulting from the top bleacher of course, but I remember the feeling of looking over the edge and almost getting scared to the, I just started to feel sick. Uggghh [a full body shiver]. So yeah.

Steve: But you rock climb, do you think that your drive to rock climb was sort of a not-backing-down, or giving in to fear type of drive? I mean, rock climbing requires you to function and think, well hopefully [laugh] while at high elevations no?

Troy: I'd agree that the more I noticed myself dealing with heights better, the more I wanted to push my handle on heights in general.

Steve: Well, I have always been scared shitless of speaking in front of people, and I have always hated it. It just pisses the hell out of me. I consider myself a rather articulate person, you know that, I like words and stories and,...so I get in front of people and I freeze. Anyway, I wanted to teach, but was scared to death of talking in front of people. I guess my point is that I, and I've observed that there are a lot of people like me, I liked the idea of teaching English because I know it. Born with it, inside and out. [slow giggle] And to think I still struggled at first. But I do think that all in all, I have overcome my public speaking fears and this has been what's basically done it.

This paradoxical drive is further helped when the MET moves to a country where he/she does not know anyone: there are no friends around to see him/her fail.

Some METs were not as concerned about speaking in front of people; they just wanted to see if teaching fit them. In these cases, teaching English in Mexico was seen as “practice,” before having to go back to the real world. Mexico was a place where they could refine their language skills in both English and Spanish while learning how to teach and deciding whether they like teaching or not.

Unfortunately, not many METs really get a grasp of the Spanish language. Debra, a 42 year-old woman from Cincinnati said, “everyone speaks English to me around town, in restaurants, corner shops, wherever. It used to irritate me, but since I’m satisfied with just the basics of Spanish, I find myself talking to people in English before I know if they speak it.” Many Mexicans practice their English with METs, but the majority of METs within my social field certainly could not hold a conversation in English.

Steve (see chapter 5) comments on the state of the English language in Mexico and the social position of the MET.

English is becoming so necessary in Urban areas in Mexico. Because it is necessary, you have something they need. A certain power comes along with that, and respect, you have something that you can offer...and because the Mexican people tend to be very nice to Americans,...there isn’t the impatience if you don’t understand the language.

METs spoke of their endeavors with a lot of pride. Tessa, a 20 year old from Saskatchewan, took a TEFL course at Worldwide Teachers in the summer of 2000. She stayed and taught until the end of that summer, and returned to teach during the summers of 2001 and 2003.

If you are going to go to another culture where they speak another language and be odd man out, you have to have courage...you are putting yourself out there in the open. You are kind of under a microscope. I feel that people pay more attention to me here. You have the bull’s eye on you all the time. You don’t even want to say anything so they don’t catch your accent and know you are aren’t Mexican.

Despite entering Guadalajara at an advantageous social position, METs often spoke of their fears at the beginning. These fears ranged from not knowing any Spanish to getting mugged at night. Sheryl (from earlier in this chapter) described what was going on in her mind since she arrived:

One of the fears that I had since the beginning is that I am some sort of missionary. Is this just as damaging as maybe bringing Christianity to native peoples? Am I doing the same thing? Am I robbing them of their culture by imposing another one on them? Giving them English is it damaging their Spanish? Giving them American ideas, is that damaging there what it is to be Mexican? That does concern me a lot. I've found a way around it at least through the cultural sense. As far as the language, I think that would always be of concern, umm, because I see that the Spanish language as being corrupted and I'm sure this is happening in other languages. So far as culturally, since I'm interested in other cultures, I can understand that other people are as well. So if they want to know about me, it doesn't necessarily change them if I give them kind of my point of view, and you can also avoid certain points of view in conversation like if this is going to be too wild, too weird, or if its really going to offend them.

These cases exemplify how most METs view their job as an English teacher in Guadalajara as “laid back” and not very stressful. This feeling seems to come from a combination of the ideas that “people are more laid back in Mexico” and that “they will always know their subject matter better than their students.”

### **Arenas of Interaction**

Since METs primarily interact with their students in the classroom, I taught, observed, and talked about classes with METs and their students. Outside of the classroom, observations revealed many different arenas where METs interact with each other, with students, and with other members of society. This chapter now turns to arenas of interaction and how power weaves its way into the relationships characterized by the arena.

#### *The Classroom*

MET classrooms range from language school classrooms, cafés, and restaurants to an office or lounge at a company. While the topic of study is the English language, learners in Mexico often seek knowledge of American culture. The impetus for learning English lies in its connection to the commercial world, and the increase in opportunity in the local, national, and global job market. It is important to note that students wish to learn about American business customs, about Los Angeles, about London, and all cultural aspects that they feel are related to the language. The teachers also want to teach aspects that they feel students should or want to know. They sometimes just want to tell stories or talk about something because it is on their mind. Whatever the particular scenario, cultural and linguistic knowledge is transmitted from the teacher to the student.

One teacher commented on how there is a greater respect for teachers in Mexico. He told a story of his TEFL class that had one Mexican, one Canadian, and six Americans in it. Luis was the Mexican trainee.

There was this time where Luiz was astonished with our class. It was the end of the day and a few of us had our heads on the table and he said you would never see a Mexican behaving so disrespectfully in the classroom. Mexicans sit upright paying attention to the teacher.

Mexican students are very respectful and courteous, especially older students. But there are exceptions. Dan taught at a private high school where he “struggled for control all day.” His students, 14 and 15 year olds, “were forced to take the class and had no idea why it would be a good idea to learn English.”

A lot of METs complained about other MET behavior in the classroom. Cindy (chapter 5) said

It amazes me when teachers try to practice their Spanish with their students during English class. Some just want to show off. It's great when the translation they give is wrong.

Some teachers used class time to learn Spanish and about Mexican culture. After Dan quit his job at the high school and returned to Proulex, he picked up this approach.

Let's say you're teaching them directions. Think of four or five places that you have heard of in Guadalajara and have them tell you how to get there...I really want to learn Spanish-English cognates for my sake, but it helps them, too.

Most METs are so focused on learning Spanish grammar and vocabulary, and teaching English grammar and vocabulary, that the cultural implications and ramifications of their daily routine escape them.

Business-oriented classes, on the other hand, held the presumption that sequential grammar learning was not necessary. While most METs described business English to me as being a course that focuses on the business terminology related to the students' profession, and that it was less grammar intensive, few were able to step out of the ELT industry's marketing mindset and state what was happening in these classes.

At CEMEX, we could not give courses to beginners. So you have executives wanting to learn specialized business English. Eventually the student wasn't satisfied with their progress, but you couldn't teach them a beginning course in English,...well of course they aren't going to improve their English without learning basic grammar. [Steve Stimps]

The classroom ambience is first and foremost a place of technical language transmission. METs often tell stories of home, try to learn some Spanish, all the time keeping the topic of conversation in their comfort zone, whether it be movies, their college experiences, or how to behave or do business in English. This coupled with the fact that they are the

only people in the rooms who speak English as a mother tongue demonstrates how their feelings of confidence really come from a structural position of superiority.

As discussed throughout this thesis, the ELT industry in Guadalajara, and in the entire country of Mexico, has dramatically grown over the past 50 years, with the greatest growth coming post-NAFTA (1994-present). This post-NAFTA growth gave rise to a “Business English” focus in the Mexican ELT industry. Due to proximity to the U.S. and the U.S.’s commercial dominance in the world, Mexican ELT departments and institutes have equated this new concentration with “American Business English.” Advertisements reflect this with slogans such as “we only have American English teachers,” or “American businessman teaches Business English.”

Because of this turn to Business English classes, METs often acquire contracts with corporations. Alyssa worked for IBM in Guadalajara for 25 hours a week earning the equivalent of \$1,000 U.S. dollars per month. When asked about her daily routine:

I have a little cubicle and a small classroom...it fits nine students comfortably, but I had nearly 20 jammed in there after during the first week when everyone was excited about the new classes. Since then, my two classes have dwindled down to two and three students. Most of my job is translating documents and offering advice to people going to meetings in the U.S. or wanting to talk on the phone with an English speaker...The best part is that the high-up guys have me teaching their kids a couple days a week outside of my IBM job. That hooks me up with more money...and they invite me to their parties and stuff. (Alyssa is 28 years old and from Texas)

Rick, on the other hand, sees his success in Mexico as a MET from Cleveland as deriving from other features:

They have me teach all of the business classes at the school because I am an older grey-haired man. In Mexico, men are business smart and older men are smarter than younger

ones...also because I'm American. They put Robert in my place when I was visiting Veracruz...and the students complained because one, they couldn't understand him, and two; they don't plan to go to England or talk with English businessmen.

Rick made most of his money developing consulting relationships with his ex-English students: "some don't care about learning to speak, they just want to express themselves accurately on paper...others want to learn small-talk English for monthly trips to Dallas or L.A...they want functional stuff." Only a few METs go about "networking" like Rick. Rick is essentially using the structural power gains of his new situation to build more power for himself—in the form of more money, and more businesses and business-oriented people relying on him.

### *Outside the Classroom*

The common English teacher spends more time speaking English than Spanish in Guadalajara. Mostly English teachers hang out with English teachers and more often than not speak English with the Mexican friends that they make. [Steve Stimps]

Best exemplified by behavior and interaction at one of the many despedida parties, most METs "hang out" with other METs, whether it be meeting for morning coffees, shopping in Guadalajara's historic district (downtown), going to the beach for the weekend, or just grabbing a cocktail in the evening. It is often the Mexican students that initiate the friendship by asking their teacher to come to a party, to play soccer on a weekend, etc. These relationships usually developed in English. Even when METs began to date a Mexican (often an English learner that they met through the institute) they would most often speak English. There were eight METs that admitted to primarily speaking Spanish with their Mexican girlfriend/boyfriend. I observed this to be the case in 5 of these relationships.

Another interesting paradox lay in how METs view other English speakers in and around Guadalajara. They tend to blame “gringos” especially, and other “foreigners” for the cultural change that they see in Mexico. They are “sick of Wal-Marts and Burger Kings.” They “wish the gringo retirees would stay out of Mexico.” Many METs insult other English speakers for “not having the courtesy to at least try to speak in Spanish” instead of presumptuously blurting out English phrases. Other METs would casually convey an irritation with other English speakers, often as if they wanted to be one of few foreigners brave enough to live in Mexico.

When I was teaching, we work Saturdays and I didn't get out of Guadalajara much...but the beach that I have gone to most often is called Boca de Naranjo, and that is in Nayarit, and it's a beach, there's a dirt road, there's nothing there, there's red palapa restaurants there, you know, bus doesn't stop there, you have to actually ask to get off and it's a five kilometer walk, and you have to camp, they have showers and bathrooms....Having been to Hawaii and growing up in San Diego, it's one of the most beautiful beaches I've seen, and don't tell anyone this I don't want all the frick'n gringos going down there. [Cindy Martin]

METs are not wealthy elites. They are usually working class opportunists. While many forces and circumstance(s) motivate them to teach English abroad, and others make them decide on Mexico, they arrive and assume a different position in a new society. Whereas the social power of each MET varies, depending on many different variables, e.g., personal wealth, family wealth, appearance, their behavior and experience is mostly guided and controlled by the structure of the language institute and the ELT industry's power in both the world and Guadalajara.

## CHAPTER 10

### CONCLUSION

In analyzing the position of METs in today's ever-increasingly interconnected world, I began this thesis by employing Wolf's perspective of "power-brokers." I hoped that by emphasizing the economic and political aspects of relationships between community-oriented groups (which includes nation-oriented groups in today's "globalized" world) and global-oriented elites, and by stressing the historical dimension of these relationships, I could position METs as brokers mediating between a global-oriented code and community-oriented groups.

So I followed Wolf's definition of "power-brokers," and viewed METs as agents of a brokering-oriented cultural form—the ELT industry—that shapes relationships based on its primary function to teach a global-oriented code. This function "relates" community-oriented individuals who want to stabilize or improve their life chances but who lack economic security and/or political connections, with global-oriented individuals who operate primarily through corporations but whose success in these operations depends on the size and strength of their personal following (Bodley 2003; Wolf 2001:124-138). Since ELT departments and institutions are ultimately patterns for group relationships, the position of METs with respect to personal power in any community depends on two related aspects: (1) how the community-oriented individuals perceive and value the English language; and (2) the importance perceived by globally-oriented elites to relate, or in this case, "teach" the English language.

I then tested these presuppositions by submitting them, with their relevant questions, to macro-level analysis and micro-level ethnography in Guadalajara Mexico. I

will note that in using this “power-broker” paradigm, I have had two major theoretical concerns. First, I was not only perplexed by the many different uses of “power” in academia, but continually questioned my use of the term. Moreover, I realized that I was ignoring conventional uses of “culture” to pursue power relations. Nevertheless, I somewhat blindly agreed with Wolf (1999:19) in that while “cleaving to a notion of “culture” as a self-generating and self-propelled mental apparatus of norms and rules for behavior, the discipline has tended to disregard the role of power in how culture is built up, maintained, modified, dismantled or destroyed.” I thereby justified the security I found in Wolf and Bodley’s use of power and used their views extensively through the macro-level section of this thesis, but struggled to relate their macro theories to my micro-level analysis.

Macro-level theories of “structural power” and “elite imperia-building” did not easily articulate with the interviews and observations constituting my fieldwork. As a matter of fact, “elite imperia-building” downsized into “elevating one’s socioeconomic status.” Whereas power, in Wolf and Bodley’s sense, depends on the size and the strength of one’s personal following, the power of METs lay in raising their socioeconomic status by becoming teachers of a code that “everyone wants/needs to learn.” In this sense, the MET play of power is using their ability to speak English to improve their “exchange value.” They are less interested in creating personal imperia.

My second concern is related to this “exchange value”. Although noticeable throughout the thesis, this concern gradually presented itself (and was eventually pointed out to me by my committee). It deals with the related phenomena on which a MET’s position in a host community relies: (1) how the community-oriented individuals perceive

and value the English language; and (2) the importance perceived by globally-oriented elites of teaching the English language to non-English speakers. Through my fieldwork it has become obvious to me that perceptions of the English language—how learning it can improve one’s socio-economic status; how it is necessary to learn if you want to work for foreign corporations, i.e. Wal-Mart, Hewlett Packard, Microsoft, etc.—are an “idea” that more often than not fails to be supported in concrete terms.

I have observed that learning English does not bring the predicted economic gains. Moreover, language schools often push students through levels, eventually awarding them certificates of English fluency (when they still speak at an intermediate level of English). Furthermore, their employer will often not reward them for earning the certificate. Ironically, most Mexicans revealed to me that they lose their English skills quickly because they never use them.

Most importantly, it is this “idea” that motivates Mexicans in Guadalajara to take English classes. My concern is that the nature of this “idea” undoubtedly plays a role in assessing the position of METs in host communities. By not finding the means to put it to theoretical examination, my explanations may be slightly misleading. Nevertheless, my point is that “ideas” surrounding the English language have content and are instrumental in human relationships, whether viewed as culture-dependent units of transmission or imitation (Dawkins 1976, 1982; Drexler 1987; Lumsden and Wilson 1981, 1983), as scale-free avalanches of events in time (Bentley and Maschner 2003), or as simulacra—having no relation to any reality whatsoever (Baudrillard 1994).

These “ideas,” or mind-dependent constructs, that drive people to engage in activities, take on forms of their own that are not directly deducible from material or

social facts, but they are implicated in material production and social organization and thus need to be understood in such contexts (Wolf 1999:18-19). It is this context, at both the macro- and micro-level, that this thesis has attempted to address in order to locate METs in time and space, in a stream of their own development.

Beginning with the macro-level analysis, chapter three explores why and how English has become the dominant international language and how the ELT industry has contributed to its hegemony. I argue that theoretical perspectives of the “spread” of the English language should not only incorporate commercial ties to the English language and the promotion of English through the ELT industry, but also need to understand elite imperia-building and how they have historically benefited by promoting scale increases (Bodley 2003). Chapter four examines migration and theories of migration, taking the position that movements of individuals around the world must be seen as individual decision-making that responds to cultural contexts manipulated by power-seeking elites. Upon migration, the migrant is embedded and incorporated into a new milieu of power differentials, acquiring a new position within them. In picking and choosing pieces of Mexico’s history, chapter five analyzes foreign and Mexican elite behavior in Mexico while stressing asymmetric relationships between an English-speaking commercial giant—the U.S.—and a much poorer, Spanish-speaking Mexico.

Then I described and examined my ethnographic work with migrant English teachers (METs) in Guadalajara, Mexico, attempting to articulate my micro-level fieldwork with a global, historical perspective when and where I could. Chapter 6 introduces the ELT industry in Mexico, language schools in Guadalajara, and presents the stories of four METs through their own words. These stories aimed to ground the reader

in reality prior to categorizing, reducing, and examining my fieldwork in the following chapters. Examining the cost/benefit analysis of migration on an individual basis, chapter seven looks into the formation of a MET social network, the mating/dating strategies involved in their decision-making, and explains why METs migrate to Mexico. The MET routines and the arenas in which they interact while in Guadalajara help me see how global-oriented forms—the ELT institutions—interact with existing forms in local communities. Chapter 8 narrows examination to a social field where I interacted with METs on a daily basis. This allowed me not only to observe daily interactions, but the rhythms and routines of MET life in Guadalajara. Dividing my analysis of MET interaction into two categories, in the classroom and outside of the classroom, further allowed me to assess variation in behavior within each arena, and ultimately understand how relationships are governed by the patterns of the ELT industry in Mexico.

More than providing a context from which to view migrant English teachers in Guadalajara, this thesis has demonstrated that, whether operating in global or local arenas, people use the cultural material available to them to do what they believe to be best for them. The cultural material that is “available” to each individual depends on the amount of social power that he/she has, which, according to Mann (1986), is obtained in political, ideological, military, and economic arenas. Whereas globally-oriented elites sit on multiple corporate boards and seek power via decision-making that ultimately impacts global to local forms such as the ELT industry, METs are opportunists, elite migrants in a working class world. METs rarely migrate out of economic or political necessity, but out of personal inclination. Compared to most international migrants, they are elites, with enough personal power—primarily due to their mother tongue and the economic status of

their native nations—to consider multiple variables in cost/benefit analyses prior to migration as well as during their migratory experience. They are migrants with the luxury of choice that can usually go to one of many different nations, stay as long as they want, and make a living teaching the global code—their mother tongue.

In choosing to teach English in Mexico METs are vectors not only of English language transmission, but also of cultural transmission. As conduits of the English language and an English-speaking culture METs are often highly regarded and quickly befriended in Guadalajara, Mexico. The power allotted to them by their students and the local populace in general is that of socio-economic prestige, one that emerges from their role as mentors in general, and more specifically, one that comes with having knowledge of the English language—a global code. Therein, in a micro-level sense, METs are power brokers in that they mediate between local learners and a global society operating in a global code—English. They are often passive conduits of language rather than active brokers of power like the institutes for which they work. However, the potency and capability of each MET and their ability to interact with others varies. Some believe or grow to believe in their institution's ideology while others merely acknowledge it for the purpose of getting their next paycheck and being able to live comfortably in Mexico.

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