NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF SANTA MARÍA ZOOGOCHI, OAXACA, MEXICO: EVERY DAY VIOLENCE, INEQUITIES IN HEALTH CARE, AND KNOWLEDGE CREATION/DISTRIBUTION

By

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ABSTRACT

NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF SANTA MARÍA ZOOGOCHI, OAXACA, MEXICO: EVERY DAY VIOLENCE, INEQUITIES IN HEALTH CARE, AND KNOWLEDGE CREATION/DISTRIBUTION

Natasha O'Loughlin

The purpose of this research was to conduct a needs assessment of a remote indigenous community, Santa María Zoogochi, Oaxaca, Mexico. The focus of the needs assessment was on the community's concerns and suggested solutions to problems they identified. The focus on general community concerns allowed participants to identify immediate needs they found of importance. This research was conducted using the Concerns Report Method (CRM), which is a strategy associated with Participatory Action Research (PAR). This method facilitated community conversations and engaged the community in the research process by incorporating their concerns and potential solutions into a community plan of action. Using the PAR method and the CRM strategy I was able to help the community identify concerns and solutions through interviews, community forums, and observations.

This research project focused on the following set of questions. What are the geographical, cultural, and societal barriers that hinder reaching higher education in rural indigenous communities of the Sierra Juárez region in Oaxaca, Mexico? What role does "*usos y costumbres*" have in the development of community identity/individual identities

and how are these identities affected when people migrate to pursue higher education and work? What is being done to help students/community members set and achieve higher educational goals, community enrichment, and cultural preservation while simultaneously advocating for communal identity through indigenous customary laws?

The assessment process sought information about participant access to education, resources, cultural preservation, and community enrichment opportunities. Results from the general concerns portion of the assessment brought the most significant community concerns; the community unanimously agreed their indigenous community schools are systematically underfunded. Underfunded schools perpetuate inequalities and the education attainment gap for indigenous youth. Another key result includes the numerous reports of negligence in access to quality health care. Responses were so detailed that I have a list of basic equipment and materials needed by the community clinic. The community also denounced the constant lack of medications in the clinic that is reflects the needs of the patients in the community. The needs of indigenous communities are not being met with the current *Seguro Popular* system. Indigenous patients in remote areas have expressed their inability to access health care that is relevant to their needs.

The findings from this research in the Ixtlán Sierra Juárez Region of Oaxaca, Mexico will be used to inform the development of community projects. The community needs a resource center or library where they can promote cultural preservation and access to education. This research was an attempt to decolonize the research process by uplifting indigenous autonomy. I feel this research project has helped Zoogochi identify what they want and need in their communities. Their stories need to be taken into

consideration during policy building, education reform, and the future expansion of *Seguro Popular*. Indigenous voices should be what drives the future expansion of *Seguro Popular* and education reform in remote areas of Mexico.

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First, I would like to acknowledge my husband, Jose Uriel Morales Hernandez, who has been so supportive in my personal and professional life. Uriel was my sounding board, had key knowledge about the inner working of the community, and continually offered ideas. He interpreted and helped facilitate interviews in ways that only someone with a personal background in the Zapotec language could have. It was due to the bilingual interviews that participants were able to participate to the extent they did. He truly was my research partner and should have an honorary minor in sociology by now! 😊 Rhenda lii', Uriel.

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very timely with feedback. Your suggestions and organizational tips were instrumental to the completion of this product.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

What shaped my decision to have a focus on education was a friend of my daughters, a small boy in elementary school named Carlos. He would come by our house to play with our daughter and it was through our conversations of his goals that I got to know Carlos. He wanted to go to school, learn, and find a career. I encouraged him to continue with his education and find something he enjoyed doing. His response to me was, “you have to have money to go to school.” I froze and thought for a moment about his response; I knew he was right. I knew money was the deciding factor. Knowing this, did not prepare me to hear an elementary student tell me his life's path was set because he was born to an impoverished family. I told Carlos that he was right, and that money is required. I also assured him there were people who would support his decision to get an education. This experience shaped my decision to focus on access to education, cultural preservation, and community concerns. It was my community ties and my husband’s expertise in the Zapotec language that provoked me to conduct research in Santa María Zoogochi.

The needs assessment primarily focused on access to education, cultural preservation, and general community concerns. I utilized Participatory Action Research (PAR) with the Concerns Report Method (CRM) to conduct 16 in-depth interviews and report back to the community with a preliminary report. The CRM was the most useful method, considering my close connections with the community and objectives of the research. The primary objective was to conduct an analysis of the community to see what

obstacles they face and their suggestions in addressing them. The second objective was to analyze the community needs regarding the preservation of cultural knowledge, the role of the community indigenous schools in Zoogochi, and access to education. The third objective was to identify the general concerns of the community and provide an opportunity to reveal any important matters they felt were pressing issues.

In the literature review, I outline broader literature on indigenous communities focusing on gender roles, indigenous rights, and policies in place that affect them. The research has identified policies that Oaxaca implemented for the benefit of indigenous women. Indigenous women were not consulted on the construction or implementation of policies, thus resulting in the women rejecting poorly constructed policies. It seems a simple task to ask individuals experiencing the problem how to fix it. However, indigenous people are frequently not consulted in policies that affect them. I found there is very little literature that focuses on the indigenous population self-identifying their needs and solutions to problems.

In the Methods Chapter, I explain in detail my positionality in the research process and how using the Concerns Report Method helped focus attention on the voices of the participants. This Participatory Action Research was an effort to decolonize the research process by having indigenous voices be the guiding factor in this project. This research was a needs assessment focusing on concerns of community members. I asked them to explain their concerns and identify potential solutions to issues and barriers affecting them.

The Findings Chapter outlines the concerns participants identified and how they would like them addressed. During this research the community shared insight into how Zoogochi and surrounding communities are systematically underfunded. I believe this work is important because all people deserve the right to equal opportunities. This research shows the inequities in indigenous health care and education attainment are far from treated equal in comparison to the general Mexican population. I hope to help them find alternative funding sources for community driven projects while collaborating with the migrant community in the US.

The Discussion Chapter outlines the inequities the Zoogochi community is subjected to. I identify these inequities as violations against indigenous communities. I also make the argument that these inequities are acts of everyday violence against indigenous communities. I do not identify specific people that enact violence. Instead, I identify ways the Mexican government has used policies to suppress indigenous knowledge creation and distribution. I also identify the negligence in the government failure to adequately pave the only road to and from remote indigenous communities to Ixtlán. I also specify what we hope will become of this research and the partnerships that have been started with Zoogochi and migrants. The community hopes to address identified problems with community driven solutions while working in collaboration with migrants abroad.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter lays the groundwork for understanding the political structure, socioeconomic context, and life of rural indigenous communities in Oaxaca, Mexico. This social context outlines some of the existing social barriers and obstacles indigenous communities experience. This literature review helps understand the lived experiences of community members by providing the basis for this needs assessment. The chapter focuses on the following four topic areas: *usos y costumbres*, indigenous community schools in Oaxaca, poverty in indigenous communities, and changing identities and the migrant influence. The current contextual background of *usos y costumbres* will address common terminology, structure of indigenous communities in Oaxaca, Mexico that use *usos y costumbres*, and the gendered labor in its participation. The methodology behind indigenous community schools in Oaxaca will be discussed in the following topic areas: indigenous community schools: autonomy and bilingual education, lack of government assistance, and educational attainment gaps for indigenous students. The following socioeconomic and sociocultural factors are used to explain the construction of poverty: out migration, communal obligations, time poverty, education attainment, remittance: both communal and familial. Migration has shifted communal perspectives about "acceptable" forms of masculine and feminine identities in the context of agrarian life styles and the *usos y costumbres* system.

Usos y Costumbres

The constitutional law of Oaxaca was reformed in 1995 to declare protections for traditions and practices in indigenous communities called *Usos y costumbres*, which is still used today to elect municipal positions (Alejandro 2006). It was not until 1990 that Mexico was declared to be diverse and multicultural especially in indigenous communities. The law moved to protect and promote the development of their native languages, customs, traditions, cultures, and liberty to socially organize themselves (Alejandro 2006; Eisenstadt 2007).

Usos y costumbres (traditions and customs) refers to indigenous customary law which legalized the selection of community leaders during community assemblies to fulfill *cargos* or positions (Eisenstadt 2006). There are traditions in *usos y costumbres* such as the *cargo* and *tequio* system. The *cargo* system is a traditional form of governance that has roots in pre-colonial practices and is used throughout central and southern Mexico and Central America. Each community has their own variation of the traditional system, such as who and how an individual may participate. One constant among the *cargo* and *tequio* system is that citizens are expected to participate in them as a part of mutual communal obligations (Eisenstadt 2006).

Cargo and Tequio System Description

The basic definitions of the *cargo* system and the *tequio* system are key to understanding community participation in rural Oaxaca, Mexico. *Cargos* are composed

of religious, social, and political job posts that all community members, typically men, are expected to complete (Jaquez and Arenas 2009). Below is an *Usos y Costumbres* flow chart (figure 1) that breaks down the different parts of *Usos y Costumbres* and the flow of labor associated with *tequios* and *cargos* (Ávila Jaquez and Gabarrot Arenas 2009:74). I have translated and reduced this chart that (Ávila Jaquez and Gabarrot Arenas 2009:74)

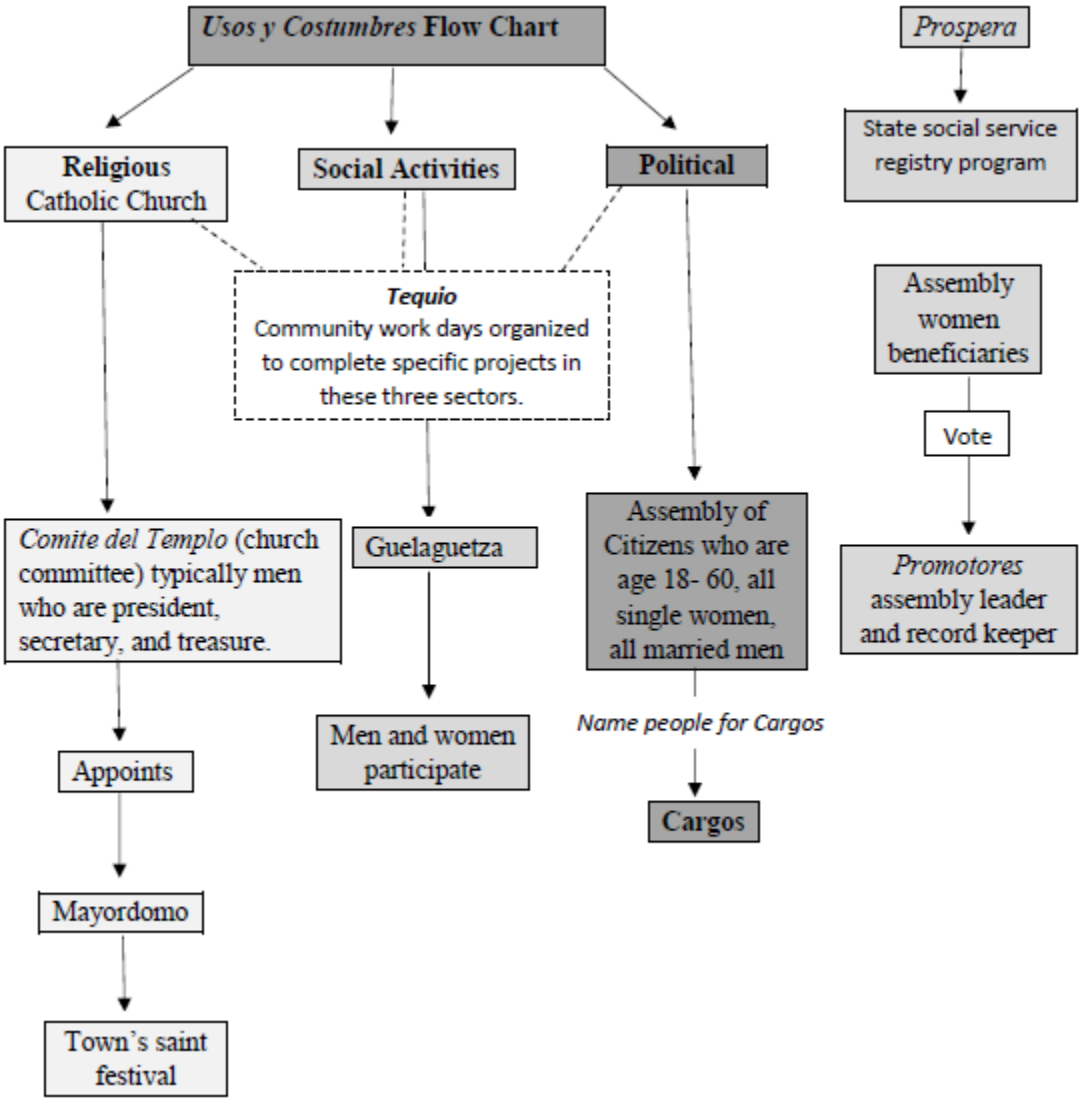

Figure 1. *Usos y Costumbres* flow chart

Tequios are community work days that are organized to finish short term projects in either the religious, social, or political sphere of the *Cargo* system (Jaquez and Arenas 2009; Eisenstadt 2006). *Tequios* are the communities' way of strategically saving financial resources and working collectively for the betterment of the community. Examples of *tequios* are building schools, churches, constructing new infrastructure, maintaining roads, and cleaning pathways (Eisenstadt 2006). The time commitment for *Cargos* is typically one year, but this can vary depending upon the community and the specific *cargo* to which an individual is assigned. Within Mexican customary laws, specifically the *cargo* system, there has been critiques about the exclusion of women. However, the social service program *Prospera* formally called *Oportunidades* has a women's assembly where they vote on measures to take place in the community and receive educational talks from health care professionals and teachers (Jaquez and Arenas 2009). *Critiques about the gender labor differences* will be addressed in the Section *Gender Differences* and following subsections: *The Mexican Male Masculinity* and *Women Participation in the Cargo System - Social obligations*. The overall description of participation in the *cargo* and *tequio* system follow.

Participation in the Cargo System

The *cargo* system is a service-based form of mutual participation in governance that is fulfilled by the completion of *cargos* and *tequios* in the community. *Tequios* are an equally important part of the *cargo* system, but are separate from *cargos*, because they

are short term communal work days that are centered on maintenance, and the completion of short term projects. *Cargos* and *tequios* are completed by community members who are "active citizens" which could be defined as individuals who have maintained their community ties. An active citizen is a person who is between the age of 18 and 60 (Robson and Berkes 2011). Young adults or adolescents that marry before the age of 18, the man will participate in *tequio*'s and the fulfillment of *cargos*.

Cargos are hierarchical in the sense that a community member will start with the base level *cargos*, if the community member successfully completes their obligations, they continue receiving more tasking *cargos* with increased responsibility and control of community funds (Ávila Jaquez and Gabarrot Arenas 2009). There are five *cargos* within the municipal council that require the individuals fulfilling the *cargo* to have their name registered with the state of Oaxaca: town president, syndic, treasury, alderman of health, and public works. These five positions are the most rigorous *cargos* and take the most time (Worthen 2015). Either of the five *cargos* makes it almost impossible for the community members to work in their daily activities and traditional ranch labor. In (Figure 2) there is a descriptive map of community *cargos* in Zoogochi that explains the hierarchical structure of *cargos* where research was conducted for this thesis.

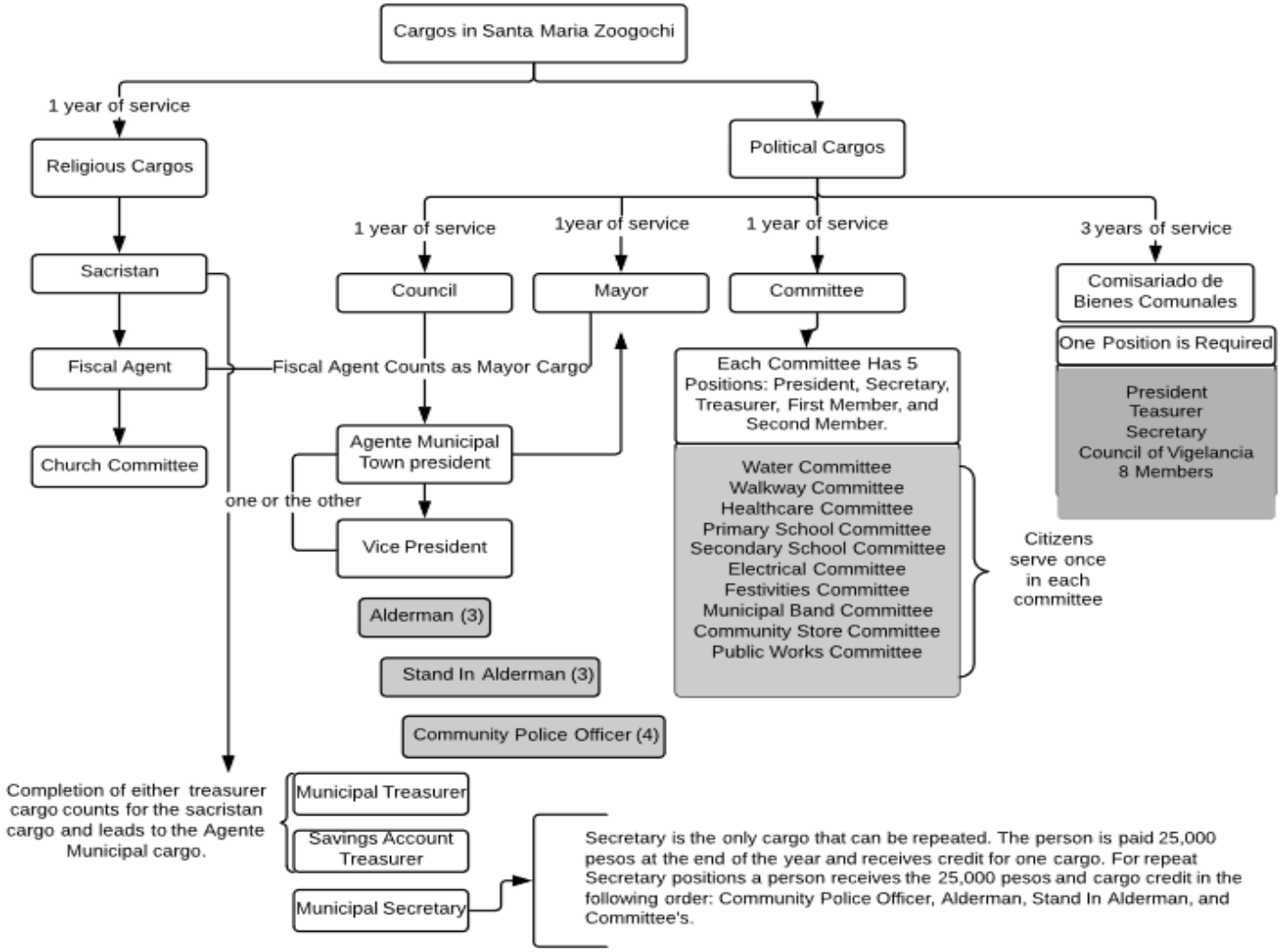

Figure 2. Hierarchical Map of *Cargos* in Zoogochi

Within the *cargo* and *tequio* system, women's participation is usually concentrated in communal practices and rituals. The following section will address the gendered differences in labor and how these differences in labor are replicated in the *cargo* and *tequio* system.

Gender Differences

The *cargo* system is a male dominated system as men are typically required to complete several years of service for themselves and their family units (Ávila Jaquez and Gabarrot Arenas 2009). In some communities there is an equal distribution of women and men that fulfill *cargos*. However, women's participation in most municipalities still follows a strict gendered nature and they do not participate as frequently. Women who participate in the *cargo* system are most frequently seen fulfilling *cargos* that are related to education, secretary, and health (Worthen 2015).

In *cargos* and *tequios* that are exceptionally time consuming for men, women then take larger roles in maintaining their agricultural fields, animals, and generating money (Worthen 2015). Women also make tortillas to help with town functions as part of her unspoken communal membership duties that they see as important roles in the community (Stephen 2005; Worthen 2015). It is important to note the absence of women fulfilling *cargos* is also because of the gendered nature in which the communities have been constructed. The inclusion of women in the *cargo* system will vary depending upon the community.

Some communities see the women's participation as an added burden for women because *cargos* are traditionally a labor that men are required to complete (Worthen 2015). Women who are divorced or widowed can attend and vote in the assemblies, but they are not required to fulfill *cargos* (Ávila Jaquez and Gabarrot Arenas 2009). If a woman is in a relationship there is one vote per family and the male partner or husband assumes the role in the *cargo* system by fulfilling *cargos* and voting.

The difference in participation based on gender specific roles in the *cargo* system has concerned many human and women rights activists. However, defenders of the *cargo* system argue the western implementation of women's rights and human rights is a violation on indigenous sovereignty. Eisenstadt (2006) suggests that a form of *usos y costumbres* that follows universal human rights such as allowing women electoral rights may alleviate the elements of the current electoral system that have been identified as discriminatory. However, researchers have pointed out indigenous women carry what they call a triple burden constructed of household duties, indirect duties within the community, and the duties that previously only men in the *cargo* system completed (Lyon, Mutersbaugh, and Worthen 2017).

Women's rights have been negotiated and strategized at the national level, but indigenous women's perspectives are missing from the debates. Worthen (2015) analyzes a letter sent to the city of Yatzachi from the State of Oaxaca mandating that women must participate in elections and be considered for municipal council equally to men. Women in Yatzachi felt as if their labor was being exploited and the State of Oaxaca was not

respecting their autonomy within the *cargo* system. Married women and single women alike agreed fulfilling *cargos* was too much work for a woman because they have other social labor obligations that men do not. The women of Yatzachi constructed a letter that rejected the mandate with five main points. The first point was many *cargos* were exhaustive physical labor that would be too much for women. Second, the financial burden to fulfill a *cargo*. Single women do not have someone to earn alternative income in their home are who suffers the most. Third, the women demonstrated child care opportunities are not available for them to participate. Fourth, the women call attention to *cargos* are not paid positions and therefore leave single women disproportionately affected. The fifth key point is the women join to collectively protect themselves against what they see as an exploitation of labor by calling attention to the westernized views of how women should participate. The fifth point is the most important because it demonstrates indigenous women are not represented in the national government. Indigenous women wrote maybe someone from their heritage could enlighten them (government officials) about the position in which they live. The mandate from Oaxaca had the opposite effect intended, on women's participation. The mandate instead, moved women to bond together and protect their collective labor since the outside world did not validate it as sufficient. Having indigenous women in the debate about women's rights and indigenous autonomy is key to constructing successful policies.

Sylvia Marcos (2005) mentions that when analyzing the roles of indigenous women and their movement there is a “three tier structures of bias” that needs to be

considered. A feminist must first recognize the gendered norms that are used to analyze indigenous women's circumstances. Secondly, the continual communication of male superiority within the indigenous community. Third, the interpretation of gender relations in that community as if they were equivalent to those in her own situation (Marcos 2005). The nation fails indigenous women by not incorporating their voices about how to move forward with policies that are built to progress their rights, autonomy, and needs. The next section will outline how poverty in indigenous communities has affected them at the national and international level.

Poverty in Indigenous Communities

This section will discuss ways in which poverty is defined/measured and the forms that it takes in indigenous communities. This segment will identify how poverty is a catalyst to migration, and how migration results in remittance to redefine access to social capital. The impact of poverty on education and the resilience and resistance of community indigenous schools in the large context of the educational system and neoliberal ideologies. The role of social service programs in the mitigation of poverty is discussed here while looking at *Prospera* and *Seguro Popular* in indigenous communities.

Remittance: impact on poverty, education attainment, and cargo obligation

In 2016 there were approximately 11,831,938 migrants in the United States. Remittances (money from immigrants sent to another country) to Mexico grew by 8.8 percent from 2015 to 2016 and totaled nearly $70 billion dollars (Orozco 2017). Mexico

receives more remittances than any other country in the world (Orozco 2017). Remittances to Mexico have continually grown since 2012 and are predominantly from the immigrants that were already in the US since Mexican migration has slowed down (Orozco 2017). According to the study focused on the impacts of international migration and remittances on poverty in 71 developing countries, "both international migration and remittance have a strong, statistically significant impact on reducing poverty in the developing world" (Adams and Page 2005:16). Migration policies need to be a tool that countries use to combat global poverty and encourage/support economic development. Remittance and international migration are helping to alleviate poverty in some of the poorest areas in Mexico.

The development and influence transnational ties have, can be measured through the remittance transactions of migrants. Remittance is a key factor in alleviating the pains of extreme poverty for some of Mexico's poorest areas. Based on a study in San Miguel Tlacotepec, Mexico, children who have a mother with below average schooling and receiving remittance tend to have an increased desire to continue their education (Sawyer 2010). Apart from the added motivation to continue their education, remittance also increases their chances of completing high school (Sawyer 2010). However, remittance may increase a child's aspirations, it is not a determinant that disadvantaged youth will attain a high school diploma (Sawyer 2010). The main factor in what level of education a child will attain is still the level of education the mother attained. Remittances are important for families and are frequently used to stabilize the needs of an impoverished

family. However, the reliance or increased need for remittance to meet basic needs is a danger to Mexican families who rely on that income. Remittances are contingent on the economic stability of the migrant and this is likely to change as immigration laws are changing and the economy fluctuates (Sawyer 2010, Orozco 2017). Therefore, the connection remittance has in increasing aspirations of attaining an education does not significantly narrow the educational attainment gap but does help motivate and financially support a high school education (Sawyer 2010). There are many factors that affect a child's education attainment in Oaxaca and in the next section I will address some of the obstacles indigenous students face.

Indigenous community schools in oaxaca

This section is an introduction to the education system in Mexico and how indigenous communities continue to be marginalized in accessing education. This section also discusses the decolonization of the education system and the use of the bilingual education model in indigenous communities. At the national level Mexico has a diverse population of citizens that are not receiving a quality education. However, Oaxaca is known for its large indigenous population, low literacy, and educational attainment rates (Godínez and Laura 2015).

In response to the 2009 report from the OCDE that placed Mexico as one of the countries with the worst quality of education, Mexico started an aggressive modification to their education system (Godínez and Laura 2015). On the national level in the school year of 2006-2007 only 55 percent of students who went to middle school, continued to

the high school level (Godínez and Laura 2015). To help mitigate this immense educational attainment gap Mexico formed a plan to amplify access in favor of equal and equitable education attainment (Godínez and Laura 2015). They created more schools, started a program for distance education/e-learning and increased the scholarship program *Oportunidades*. *Telesecundaria* and online high schools were implemented to increase access to schooling (Godínez and Laura 2015). The increase in the scholarship program was to aid families in sending their children to school. However, these funds proved to be insufficient for many families in Oaxaca. The national efforts to expand education in Mexico have increased access but has not eliminated barriers and continue to disproportionately affect indigenous youth.

Indigenous communities resist the further colonization of their people by combating the loss of languages, customs, and traditions through *Escuelas Comunitarias Indígenas* (indigenous community schools). Indigenous Community Schools use the model of Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) to help the communal languages strengthen and foster community knowledge. The *Coalición de Maestros y Promotores Indígenas de Oaxaca* (CMPIO) have fought to establish a bilingual education system since 1975 (Briseño 2015). The Mexican government does not financially support the construction or expansion of indigenous Community Schools at the state or federal level. The only financial obligation the government will acknowledge is to pay the minimal salaries of the teachers, which is much lower than schools that follow the traditional education model (Briseño 2015). Therefore, the communities have had to pay for the

construction of schools and infrastructure, which marginalizes these communities even more as financial resources are scarce.

The teaching method and the structure in Escuelas Secundarias Indígenas is based on a community driven and community needs model that consists of three teachers, one for each grade level. The teachers will organize a *seminario de apertura* where students, teachers, and parents pick a thematic topic that students will work on the rest of the school year. To start the selection process, they begin by identifying thematic interests called *preocupaciones investigativas.* The final step is production of the *esquema de investigación* (investigation plan or outline) that will guide the school years curriculum (Briseño 2015). Students and teachers break the investigation outline into more manageable bits by identifying *ambitos y sus ambitos* (subtopics or subdivisions) that will inform the constructions of *tareas investigativas* (investigative homework in the form of interviews with elders) (Briseño 2015). Students learn the process of investigation and create interview guides in Spanish and their native language. All the students investigative work will go in a portfolio they create. Indigenous community schools are a great way to expand education to community schools.

There are many factors that attribute to students who do not ultimately attain a high school education. The distance rural indigenous communities must travel to attain a high school education is much greater than those of students in the city. The distance comes with added expenses, emotional and cultural barriers students face when leaving their families and small communities to go to school. To send a student to high school,

out of the community, for higher education there are several costs such as housing, transportation, tuition, registration, books, supplies, uniforms, food, and clothing. Indigenous community schools are a great resource for rural communities to focus on cultural preservation and Indigenous community schools are a way to practice autonomy through a bilingual education in Spanish and in their native languages. The Clear Project in Oaxaca incorporated English as a third language taught with the intention of bridging the local and global perspectives while showing the importance of local languages and cultural practices **(**López-Gopar, Jiménez Morales,Delgado Jiménez 2014**)**. This project prepares students with English they otherwise would not have been exposed to. English has been identified as one of the core classes taught and in many prestigious schools is taught starting kindergarten. However, indigenous communities do not always have English available to them, and the way it is taught threatens indigenous cultures. Gorter (2014) argues that if English is taught in a way that minority languages are taught and valued equally alongside the national language, they will foster a multicultural learning experience. The arguments are that the use of multiple languages taught together teaches students and their parents about the local and the global. The subsequent section will discuss the universal health care program called *Seguro Popular* that Mexico uses to mitigate poverty by providing health care access.

Universal health care program in Mexico: Seguro Popular

In 2003, the Mexican Congress approved a new reform that established a public insurance to extend health care access to all Mexican citizens called *Seguro Popular*

(Frenk, Gómez-Dantés, and Knaul 2009). This insurance policy provides access to health care for the most vulnerable and poor population in Mexico that are unensured. By the end of 2007 there were 20 million people enrolled in the insurance (Frenk, Gómez-Dantés, and Knaul 2009).

Universal health care was an important step to help mitigate the effects of poverty in Mexico. Access to health care for indigenous groups has always been limited and inaccessible due to social inequality in Mexico (Leyva-Flores et al. 2014). In 2010, at the national level 7 percent of the Mexican population is indigenous and of those who live in indigenous municipalities 44.2 percent suffer from extreme poverty (Leyva-Flores et al. 2014). Extreme poverty is when a person's entire income is dedicated to the purchase of food and results in an insufficient diet. Those in extreme poverty could not see a doctor or afford medications. *Seguro Popular* makes health care accessible when it would otherwise not be a possibility for indigenous people.

Even with *Seguro Popular* vulnerable groups of the Mexican population defined as migrant, adults older than 60, and indigenous populations continue to suffer from unequal access to health care. The indigenous population face many barriers that inhibit their full use or access to what is available through *Seguro Popular* (Espinosa Trujillo et al. 2014). *Seguro Popular* does not cover all areas of health care needs. To further the reduction in health care gaps among the poor and vulnerable populations Mexico must improve the following: “the technical quality of care; drug availability, especially in hospitals; prescription patterns; care availability during evenings and weekends in

outpatient clinics and emergency services; and waiting times for outpatient emergency care and elective interventions" (Frenk, Gómez-Dantés, and Knaul 2009). To narrow the health care attainment gap among indigenous populations, funds must be allocated to the expansion of services in rural communities focusing on infrastructure, human resources, and basic care (Frenk, Gómez-Dantés, and Knaul 2009). The subsequent topic will discuss the Social Service Program *Porspera*.

Social service programs

Social service programs are helping indigenous families reach their basic needs, but they continue to suffer from disproportionate income inequality that inhibits their ability to escape poverty. The marginalization of indigenous communities continues despite the government's efforts to micromanage their development and socioeconomic decisions. Social Service programs are insufficient in narrowing the income inequality gap. This is not to ignore the progress Mexico has made in opening more preschools, primary schools, and middles schools but rather to call attention to the geographical, structural, and economic barriers which still exist and impede student success in completing a high school education (Godínez and Laura 2015). Government policies need to focus on how to better bridge the structural barriers in reaching an education, healthcare, and the alleviation of the pains of poverty.

Many residents of Santa Maria, Zoogochi utilize social services programs such as *Prospera* (formally known as *Oportunidades)* which provides incentives for students to continue their high school education in the form of scholarships. Families living in

extreme poverty more frequently used their scholarships for immediate needs rather than their education (Sandoval, Noriega, and Trasviña 2017). The scholarships improve knowledge, support, and access to education but are insufficient in reaching the root of poverty.

When a family's basic needs are not met it becomes too difficult for the family to focus on an education. This is a common problem faced by those living in extreme poverty. In Mexico, extreme poverty is when a person's entire income is dedicated to the purchasing of food and they still cannot eat a balanced diet to get the nutrition needed (Leyva-Flores et al. 2014). Programs like *Prospera* and international remittances help families in extreme poverty alleviate the experience of poverty (Sandoval et al. 2017). Although, the combination of social services and remittances help mitigate a child's poverty experience, they do not always solve the problem. Migration also helps alleviate some of the effects of poverty but does not solve the root of the issues. The next section will discuss the effect migration has on the communities where migrants travel to other regions or countries.

Depopulation or outmigration

Out migration affects the small communities through depopulation, which disrupts their local governments system. The depopulation of rural indigenous towns in Oaxaca, Mexico that use the *cargo* system is a continual problem due to the lack of age appropriate men to fulfill *cargos* within their communities. In 45.5 percent of all municipalities in Oaxaca the population has decreased for several reasons, but migration

is the most common (Juárez 2008). The depopulation has also driven the loss of community identity amongst migrants and townspeople because migrants are not able to fulfill *cargos*. Many migrants lose citizenship in their communities of origin because they are unable to maintain their community ties through *cargo* participation (Luna 2010; Robson and Berkes 2011; Robson and Wiest 2014). The impacts of migration on the social structure of the *cargo* system include the disappearance of municipal *cargos* due to the lack of people to fulfill them, the discontinuation of the hierarchy of the *cargo* system, and the changing age limits on who and how long one must serve their community (Robson and Berkes 2011). The hierarchy of *cargos* traditionally is that community members would fulfill lower entry level *cargos* such as *topil* (police officer) before serving in higher level positions. However, due to the limited number of adult males to fulfill *cargos* and due to out migration, many communities have loosened the hierarchy (Robson and Wiest 2014). To compensate for the low number of active citizens in the villages, some communities have changed their age limits of retiring and the number of *cargos*. In some villages there is no limit on the number of *cargos* that an individual can complete, but there is an age of retirement. (de la Fuente and Quintanal 2012; Robson and Berkes 2011; Vázquez García, Cárcamo Toalá, and Hernández Martínez 2012). The cultural significance of the hierarchy of *cargos* is deeply interconnected to community, honor, and, status of the individual (Luna 2010; Rodríguez Blanco 2011).

Community and familial remittances

Remittances can also be a way to stimulate the local economy by supporting socioeconomic, political, and cultural development through the *cargo* system (Joo 2012). When men and women leave their communities, they can no longer fulfill their *cargos* in person. When migrants cannot fulfill their *cargos* in their communities, they also cannot participate in the development of their community, local cultural customs, or the move up in the hierarchical *cargo* system. The migrant's identity and cultural heritage is strongly tied to their participation in the *cargo* system. With the ongoing hostility towards immigrants in the US which has resulted in an increase in border protections and patrol, many migrants are staying in the US (Joo 2012). Traveling back and forth is no longer a viable option. Remittances are a way that migrants support their families in Mexico. The use of remittance to fulfill *cargo* duties and otherwise participate in the local community by providing financial support has been increasing.

Remittance support for communities and the fulfillment of *cargo* positions serve as a way for migrants to maintain their stance in their communities as citizens and contribute to the local economy. The participation in the *cargo* system, even if it is from a distance and through remittance, is an important process in maintaining cultural identity, community ties, and participation in the hierarchical process of the *cargo* system (Joo 2012). Remittances dedicated to accomplishing local communal duties in the *cargo* system can strengthen a community's ability to offer more services, participate more in the local economy, support traditional cultural practices, advocate for traditional political

structure, and strengthen local identity. Using remittances for *cargo* duties not only strengthens community identity and cultural practices but it also allows international migrants the ability to achieve community acceptance because they have not abandoned their *cargo* obligations. Migrants can acquire prestige by financially paying someone to fulfill a *cargo* or allocating funds for other areas.

The effects of poverty on marginalized indigenous communities takes place in all forms of social capital such as the education system and the health care system. This section discusses the way migration to Mexico and internationally is perceived as a way to escape poverty. Migration impacts rural indigenous communities that use *usos y costumbres* through the form of four social experiences. The first social experience is the potential effect of remittance on poverty for the families and communities receiving remittance. Remittance helps families meet their basic needs, improve living conditions, and participate in the *cargo* system. Secondly, the community may experience depopulation which can strain the local governing process and take away from the labor force. Third, migrants can lose their community membership role by not actively participating in the *cargo* system which ultimately impacts the migrant's indigenous identity and community ties in the future. Fourth, migrants experience familial separation when leaving their families and communities when searching for more economic opportunities.

Changing Identities and The Migrant Influence

Gender identities "are not original, natural, or embalmed states of being; they are gender categories whose precise meanings constantly shift, transform into each other, and ultimately make themselves into whole new entities" (Gutmann 2006:40). Gutman (2006) shows that gender identities are more than binary categories that define who people are, but they are fluid and fluctuate.

The migration of men and women from their rural indigenous communities in Oaxaca, Mexico to other parts of Mexico and the U.S. has dramatically changed people identities, and accepted forms of communal participation. The traditional Mexican male masculinity and their gender roles have changed due to the migratory experience. A traditional Mexican male who lives in a rural community works primarily in agricultural food production for personal consumption. This same person would be considered the breadwinner of the household while his wife would oversee childcare and agricultural duties.

Community citizenship has been redefined and, in many cases, excludes and includes people (Luna 2010). If migrants go to the US and do not participate in the *cargo* system and do not donate money when requested of them, they are at risk of losing their citizenship in their towns (Velásquez and Cristina 2004). This means migrants would lose access to communally owned land, goods, and services in their town. This disadvantages migrant workers who live in other areas and lose their citizenship, prestige, and community ties to their community of origin. (Luna 2010) However, the *cargo* system and *tequios* is how the society functions. Considering rural communities have limited

economic resources and opportunities, the *cargo* system is truly a way that everyone can collectively join in operating the collective wellbeing of the community. This type of collective collaboration for the betterment of the town can be seen in the community projects completed through *tequios*. These projects are voted on in the assemblies and then are implemented until completion. (de la Fuente and Quintanal 2012; Robson and Wiest 2014)

Community participation has been transformed by economic factors but still holds cultural significance in the lives of those who come from these communities. It is logical towns require migrant participation because they view it as a form of maintaining communal ties, relationships, and fulfilling one's duties to the community. Some migrants go back to their communities when they are much older and are closer to the age of retirement. Therefore, they cannot fulfill the 21 years of service required of them. Some communities and migrants can work out exceptions or alternative solutions, but some migrants lose their citizenship in the communities if they abandoned their communal obligations. These repercussions are to encourage people to return to their villages and to acknowledge their communal obligations because their communities need them.

Community participation has deep connections to one's identity and honor which is tied to their participation in *tequios* and the *cargo* system. One's honor and prestige are built by advancing within the *cargo* system. To advance in the traditional hierarchy of *cargo* system a person will start with the lower level *cargos* with less responsibilities.

They will then work their way up to higher levels within the *cargo* system such as municipal council members and municipal president. (Aguirre-Sulem 2015; de la Fuente and Quintanal 2012; Luna 2010; Rodríguez Blanco 2011) As previously mentioned, this hierarchy can be seen in Diagram Two Descriptive Map of Community *Cargos*. The *cargo* system has a connection to the identity construction of rural indigenous Mexican males. The following section will discuss in more detail the gender identity construction of Mexican Males and their masculinity.

Mexican male masculinity

The gender identity of low-income Mexican males is shifting from the traditional masculine model. The traditional image of a lower income rural Mexican male is of a man who works primarily in agricultural work solely for their household consumption and earns prestige through the *cargo* system (Broughton 2008). Work has been found to be a predominant that way men have changed their roles based upon their profession. One study identified that migrant Mexican gardeners in Los Angeles, CA shared a common masculine identity because of the manual labor and physically tasking work they were partaking in. This common masculine identity was something they shared with each other based on shared experiences of agricultural work in Mexico and physical labor in the US (Aguirre-Sulem 2015). This masculinity was derived from the traditionalist model of masculinity due to migration, Mexican males have partaken in daily tasks previously considered feminine such as domestic work (Aguirre-Sulem 2015). Therefore, they have redefined their masculinity, focusing more on the type of manual labor work

they have completed. This work as compared to agricultural work for a traditional Mexican male helped them form a new identity based on their common experiences (Ramirez 2011). Migration has created new life experiences that have changed and redefined Mexican male masculinity (Aguirre-Sulem 2015; Broughton 2008; Gutmann 2006; Ramirez 2011).

When migrants travel they must redefine their identities stemming from the traditionalist views and what Aguirre calls the brave migrant identity. Traditionalist views are more gendered and picture the women in a domestic role and the males as the breadwinner (Gutman 2006). The brave migrant will relocate to provide for their family which subjects them to the hardships of living alone, working in a new area, and doing the domestic work which would have been considered non-masculine (Aguirre-Sulem 2015). When these men return to their homes and villages they form a collective identity of the brave migrant worker who sacrificed for his family. Individuals that identify as the brave migrant worker also start to present a new type of masculinity that flows into the village they are from when they return to their communities. This flow over effect is because communities are now accepting migration as a form of bread winning when previously agriculture work was the only way. As previously outlined, migration affects a migrant's ability to participate in the *cargo* system and can have lasting effects on their community connections. The aspects that make this identity so different is they now see another way of life other than agricultural work as an acceptable form of providing for their family (Aguirre-Sulem 2015). With the changing of Mexican male masculinities and

the depopulation of communities, women's participation in the *cargo* system has been on the rise (Rodríguez Blanco 2011).

Women's participation in the cargo system - social obligations

It is important to recognize that traditionally women have not formally participated in the *cargo* system by being elected to municipal council or other fulfilling *cargos*. The participation of women in the *cargo* system and the community structure is not questioned by the communities which receive her labor. Women's labor can be seen in many spheres such as; domestic, agriculture, social obligations, and communal obligations. By not recognizing women's roles in municipalities that use the *cargo* system ignores the work they do and that is culturally both required and expected of them. Indigenous women partake in gendered forms of labor such as, bringing tortillas, *café*, other food products, helping during the town functions (*fiestas*, rituals, and collective labor among other women), and participating in *gozona* practices.

Gozona practices are a culturally recognized - but not mandatory - form of sharing resources, working collectively, and forming community relationships. *Gozona* practices are the exchange of help in the form of labor or products and it is expected that the favor will be returned in the future (Flores 1972; Gil 2017; de La Fuente 1944; Ruiz 1976). When a woman's husband is elected as the town's president the municipal council gathers the council members and, in some cases the entire community, to welcome the new council members into their positions and thank them for their services. The wives prepare a large meal and people in the community will also bring things to the town's

president to show their respect as a part of tradition. This tradition is a part of *gozona; as* people cycle through the council, the town offers support and the women organize the events offering help with food, labor, and products because in the future the town will do the same for them. These tasks and community participation are examples of social obligations that are a part of the *gozona* practices (Flores 1972; Gil 2017; de La Fuente 1944; Ruiz 1976).

Gozona practices are frequently seen in agricultural work as a means of a financial transaction with the flow of labor replacing the monetary value of labor. It is expensive to hire someone to help in the fields and resources are scarce. Men and women will look for people to work with them on an agricultural project such as prepping a corn field or making *panela*, with the promise to return the favor by helping them when they need it (Flores 1972; Gil 2017; de La Fuente 1944; Ruiz 1976). Women collectively participate in *gozona* practices when organizing town functions like fiestas, community meals centered around religious events, music, and *cargos*. Women see their participation in these cultural functions along with their normal gendered roles in the home and agricultural work to be sufficient (Marcos 2005; Worthen 2015). Women see themselves as participating in the indigenous society through their social activities and social obligation commonly referred to as *gozona* ((Flores 1972; Gil 2017; de La Fuente 1944; Marcos 2005; Ruiz 1976; Worthen 2015). In many cases, indigenous women see *cargos* as a burden for them because they do not have anyone to help them in their everyday work (Worthen 2015). The outside political pressure indigenous women receive to

participate in the *cargo* system comes from westernized feminism and human rights rhetoric which can ignore the realities that women live in.

International feminism or westernized feminism is not compatible with the socioeconomic and culturally constructed gender roles of indigenous women (Blackwell 2012). Neoliberal feminism would call for equal participation and voting, and participation in all spheres. Blackwell (2012) makes the argument that indigenous women have been organizing against neoliberal governmentality in three forms of resistance. Blackwell (2012:705) makes the argument that gender has been "utilized by the state as a discourse of governmentality to regulate indigenous subjects. It focuses on how organized indigenous women's groups challenged the gendered logic of racism used by the Mexican government to co-opt women's rights in its arguments against indigenous *usos y costumbres* - in 2001 congressional debate surrounding the "Law on Indigenous Rights and Culture".

There has been resistance from indigenous women to be mandated by the state to participate in the *cargo* system. The community of Yatzachi received a mandate in 2009 stating that women must vote and be considered for municipal council *cargos*. Yatzachi women formally sent a letter stating that they willingly rejected municipal council participation due to the extent in which it would exploit their labor (Worthen 2015). Their reaction to fulfilling municipal council *cargos* was that of being overburdened by their normal gender role tasks in addition to that of a *cargo*. The government's mandate is an example of how the government is breeching indigenous women's autonomy (Velásquez

and Cristina 2004; Wortham 2004). Women are denied the collective labor and culturally appropriate forms of participation that women partake in. The labor exploitation of indigenous women is seen through the devaluation of the tasks they complete and do not get recognition for because of cultural customs, traditions, familial obligations, and agricultural practices that are a part of social reproduction.

Women do not take on *cargos* themselves, but they still have familial, agricultural, and economic obligations they take on when their husbands are fulfilling a *cargo* (Worthen 2015). Women feel they may not actually do the *cargo*, but they participate by supporting their husbands while they are serving their community (Worthen 2015). Therefore, women's labor is reinforcing the cyclical pattern of gendered labor practices and how each the male and female roles coexist and reinforce each other. However, migration has influenced women's role in the *cargo* system heavily. Women are becoming overburdened with their traditional roles in social obligations, activities, and their need to fulfill *cargos* (Vázquez García 2011; Velásquez and Cristina 2004; Wortham 2004). Women in some areas are having to participate in the *cargo* system more frequently due to depopulation which has led to a lack of men to fulfill *cargos*.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the different socioeconomic and political issues that affect rural indigenous communities in Oaxaca, Mexico and solutions that seek to mitigate poverty. A focus was on issues surrounding outward migration and how they affect social institutions due to changing demographics. Due to the depopulation of towns, the communities are redefining which citizens can vote and how citizens can participate from a distance. Through these exclusive definitions of active and non-active citizens there are tensions created between migrants and the social institutions in the towns. The communities need male members to stay and be active participants in the *cargos* and *tequios*. If individuals are not actively participating in the town's government, then the town lacks the ability to complete important community projects. Migration and depopulation are also the driving force changing Mexican male gender identity as Mexican men find alternative options to provide for their families other than primarily agrarian lifestyles. These changes in the Mexican male identity are also flowing into the communal identity as people choose to live in other areas instead of returning to their hometowns. Therefore, the town loses citizens and citizens lose honor and prestige in their communities along with the loss of citizenship. Citizens that do move back to their communities bring back new life experiences and knowledge they utilize to participate in the community.

This chapter also focuses on how indigenous communities continue their effort to decolonize the hold the Mexican government has on the production of social capital

within these communities by maintaining their local government structures and using community schools to promote bilingual education. Many articles state a disturbing conclusion that women are invisible in the *cargo* system and this is a very ethnocentric and culturally insensitive point of view. Women have a role in communities that use the *cargo* system. Women are important members who participate in social interactions, obligations, and communal practices. The indigenous women's roles do not align with the westernized version of feminism and women's rights. Women's roles are fluctuating within the *cargos* system and they are participating more than ever by fulfilling *cargos*. However, the government and researchers need to recognize the life experiences and the situation in which indigenous women and men live, to create policies and programs that truly help indigenous populations and support their autonomy. To make progress and mitigate poverty, researchers and government agencies need to ask the source what they need. The source defined as the indigenous women and men who ultimately have the most insight about what they need as a community. The subsequent methods chapter will address the structure and setting of the research conducted in this needs assessment of a rural indigenous community.

METHODS

This chapter addresses the methodology and strategies used to conduct research in Santa María Zoogochi, commonly known as Zoogochi, in the Ixtlán de Juárez or (Sierra Juárez) region of Oaxaca, Mexico in December 2017 and Jan 2018. This research had approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Humboldt State University. The IRB approval number was 17-074 and the date of approval was December 4th, 2017. I describe my personal involvement with the community and how this relationship affected my research. I discuss the interview process, analytical plan, and methodological issues faced in carrying out this study. I then describe tensions between the community and municipality and how that affected this research and participants' views on community needs. I address the structural aspects of data collection, analysis, and management of the research project.

Community

Santa María Zoogochi is a remote indigenous community that predominantly speaks Zapotec. The Spanish language is later learned in school. In less than 5 families Spanish is the number one language spoken at home. The community schools in Zoogochi teach Zapotec and Spanish. Children are taught at a young age to translate Zapotec to Spanish and Spanish to Zapotec.

The geographic location of Zoogochi provides an abundance of water, fresh fruits, vegetable, and a tropical atmosphere so that corn can be planted twice a year.

Coffee is the primary source of income for most indigenous farmers in Zoogochi and surrounding communities. However, the location is also one of the greatest barriers the community struggles with as the roads are inadequate.

The road going from Ixtlán to remote communities in the mountains is a dirt road. The car ride to Ixtlán from Zoogochi is a 4 to 5-hour drive and is exceptionally long, windy, and rough. Due to the location of Zoogochi and primarily the lack of government funding for road maintenance the roads are frequently shut down in the rainy season. Annually communities are completely shut off from Ixtlán and Oaxaca due to landslides and heavy rains. In 2017 the region suffered from heavy rains and one community is at risk of a future landslide that could wipe out most of the village. Due to the heavy rains and the landslides communities in the Sierra Juárez region had received canned foods, clothes, blankets, and hygiene products.

Interview Settings: Access to Community

I conducted 16 in-depth qualitative interviews in participants' homes and most frequently in the *comedor*, an open gathering area where people eat and store firewood, corn, coffee, and beans under a tin roof. Homes are very close together and are open. Homes are typically built of stone and mud with a roof of tin. In households with more economic resources homes are built of cement and cement blocks. It is common to see a mixture of construction materials as people add onto their homes. Communal paths or dirt trails run through houses and properties, so people can freely walk through the community. The public usually passes through all homes so salutations can be made even

when passing through. These trails highlight the openness of the houses in these locations and the steady flow of people who walk through private houses daily. Homes in this context are privately owned but are still communally accessible.

Recruitment for interviews was typically done through casual conversations that lead to scheduling interviews and I received suggestions on whom I should ask to participate. Usually we would sit down at the table and start talking casually until we decided it was a good time to start the interview. In some cases, we interviewed people as they were cooking, degraining corn, or cleaning beans within their homes. We had many informal conversations with women in their kitchens. The house was the singular most intimate and comfortable place for people to talk. A participant's home was also culturally appropriate as everyone who participated in the interviews treated them as meetings among their family and friends. In most cases we were met with the family's persistent petitions to join in a cup of coffee or a meal. The town is geographically far from the city and most of the residents live in extreme poverty. When constructing my IRB, I made sure the demographics and setting of the community were clear.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Concerns Report Method (CRM)

I conducted research using the Participatory Action Research (PAR) and the strategy of Concerns Report Method (CRM) (Arellano et al. 2016). Participatory Action Research allowed me to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine access to resources, education, community enrichment courses, and resources to aid in cultural preservation. The CRM is a way for the community to identify key issues, think of potential

resolutions/goals, and act (Arellano et al. 2016). The CRM is intended to incorporate the community's perspective on issues that affect it (Arellano et al. 2016). To decolonize the research process, the community and the researcher need to produce qualitative data that is based on community-identified problems and needs (Mora and Diaz 2015). The use of (PAR) helps to break the relationship of power that benefits academic knowledge over local and indigenous knowledge (Zavala 2013).

My research focused on education, cultural preservation, general community concerns, and strategizing about solutions to community problems. When participants identified specific needs, desires, wants, and obstacles I asked that they provide their opinions on what solutions can mitigate the identified concerns. This style of questioning is a key component to the CRM. This method of CRM provided the space necessary for participants to self-identify the most important needs. Participants reported an overwhelming need for better health care. The PAR method has been identified as a key method in analyzing health care disparities (Wallerstein and Duran 2006). Health care was identified as a primary need during all interviews regardless of age.

The parental consent was waived for minors, ages 14 through 17, who did not live with their parents due to their marital status or cohabitation with their partner. The age for adulthood in rural Mexico is deeply connected to the community and the life course of the individual. Three types of marriages are recognized in *usos y costumbre*: *union libre* (common-law), civil, and religious matrimonies (Howell 1999). If a person is married or living with a partner before the age of 18 their community sees them as an adult and they are officially incorporated into indigenous customary law. This incorporation is the

equivalent to coming of age at 18. They gain voting rights in the *agencia*, they must participate in the *cargo system*, pay their dues, and go to *tequios*.

I worked closely with the community to discuss concerns and needs, while addressing the communities access to education, and educational resources. In examining access to education, I mainly focused on middle school and high school. Some of the community concerns and how political tensions influenced them are outlined in the following section.

The Concerns Report method proved to be successful in this setting because of my personal ties to the community and the community's receptiveness in allowing someone they were familiar with access to their intimate concerns. The trust they gave my husband, the Zapotec interpreter, and I came with a social and political obligation to provide accurate descriptions of participant experiences. The community identified key problems and potential solutions. Participatory Action Research helped facilitate community conversations and engage the community in the research process by incorporating their concerns and potential solutions into a community plan of action. Using the PAR method and the CRM strategy I was able to help the community identify concerns and solutions through interviews, focus groups and community forums. My research questions included: What are the geographical, cultural, and societal barriers that hinder reaching higher education in rural indigenous communities of the Sierra Juárez region in Oaxaca, Mexico? What role does "*Usos y Costumbres*" have in the development of community identity/individual identities and how are these identities affected when people migrate to pursue higher education and work? What is being done

to help students/community members set and achieve higher education goals, community enrichment, and cultural preservation while simultaneously advocating for communal identity through indigenous customary laws?

I conducted interviews in Spanish or Zapotec asking the community about their concerns. In addition to interviews I took field notes/journaled and engaged in informal conversation. The informal interviews or casual conversations were typically with family members of participants before and after interviews. The interviews conversations continued as participants engaged in conversation with friends and families about what was discussed.

Informed Consent Process

Before starting a formal interview, we reviewed the consent form with participants and in some cases the interpreter read aloud the consent or assent form in Zapotec. We answered any questions they had about the project and we provided them a copy of the Spanish translation of the consent form to sign and keep for their records. There was not a written translation of the Zapotec forms. All forms were orally interpreted as those that needed to speak exclusively in Zapotec typically could not read. Once consent forms were signed, questions were addressed, and the interviews were initiated.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

The main form of recruitment was through the snowball method and interactions with community members. I communicated with those in the municipal council regularly and invited residents to participate in interviews. I made myself regularly available in the community and frequently went walking during the evenings to talk to residents. Most participants found out about the research through the town president. However, those that participated did so because they were asked directly to participate. I talked to residents about my research and set up interview dates. Community suggestions led me to interview specific people which resulted in a snowball sample.

The suggestions led me to experts in the community such as a man who repetitively fulfilled the secretary *cargo* and many elders. The community suggestions of potential participants led to a partial snowball sample of participants. The Snowball method was helpful in identifying experts and elders who held valuable information about the community.

I received approval to begin the research from the 2017 president and started inviting people to participate immediately. It was not until the 2018 president came into power that he made the announcement of the research in early January. The 2018 president of Zoogochi announced my research to the community during the town assembly and invited residents to participate. He informed the community of the nature of our study and to contact me if they were interested in participating. His announcement came several days after we started interviewing people. This was due to the transition of

power between the 2017 president and the 2018 president. I talked to the 2018 president before and after he took office in which he provided his consent for the research to take place. I communicated with both town presidents to ensure the community and they were appropriately informed. The announcement of the research was not the main recruitment method. The announcement served as a form of respect and culturally appropriate method of introducing the research to everyone in the community.

All participants were community members in the Sierra Juárez region of Oaxaca, Mexico. The students I interviewed were studying in other areas in the Sierra Juárez and Oaxaca City. On the day of one of the assemblies, I interviewed several women in their homes. It was during our walks and community interactions that people inquired more about the research. Participants would suggest specific people we should talk to.

Positionality

My role in the community affected the type of responses received, communities' receptiveness to the project, and my presentation of the data. My role and story in this community is told from the perspective of a white heterosexual woman who is married to an indigenous community member of Zoogochi.

My wedding took place in Zoogochi and was a symbolic event that signaled my integration into the community and the unity of our families (even though our visitation is dictated by the political borders between the US and Mexico). My integration into the community was and is today defined by my relationship with my husband. I learned through trial and error the cultural nuances such as how to properly say "good day." I was

also taught first-hand about the *cargo* system, the form of autonomous governance used in the community described in the previous chapter.

The community trusted us individually because of our status of being an outsider and an insider. I am seen by community members as an outsider but accepted because of our continual involvement with the community and our efforts to maintain community ties. I became a hybrid, never fully an insider, and never fully an outsider. My husband's role has also shifted as an insider advancing in the outside world while maintaining his family and community roots. Our complex insider and outside roles are in part due to my husband and I not residing in Santa María Zoogochi. We live in the United States while my husband has a petition requesting leave from the community *cargo* system for an undetermined amount of time. Community members saw our difference as a benefit and wanted to see the research was used to guide projects in the future. Participants were very grateful to see people from the community doing work in the community. An older woman we interviewed knew my husband and told us, "I am happy you did not forget about us." In this context "us" referred to the community (*el pueblo*). Many participants shared this same notion of gratitude and referenced times in their lives when people moved away and started lives in the cities but forgot about their communities or origin for many reasons. This insider and outsider role comes from our lived experiences and straddling the knowledge and customs of both worlds. My husband and I are both privileged college students and that unintentionally sets us apart. This same privilege and life experiences made this research project possible along with the help of the Zoogochi

community. I choose to take a much more politically charged stance on indigenous rights due to the blatant disregard for their advancement.

Participants

Participants were from Santa María Zoogochi who were either studying in other areas or living there. I conducted a total of 16 formal interviews. All participants were born and raised in Zoogochi. The only participants that did not exclusively live in Zoogochi were students. One participant was a minor, age 17, who was studying music in another community. There were 3 in-depth interviews with young adults, two females and one male, 18 to 29. Each student went to a different high school and worked part time. One of the women worked as a nanny at her aunt's house in Oaxaca in exchange for room and board. The other students worked part time at small businesses in the city. All students were home for Christmas vacation. The students that participated were able to come home for a short period but were due back in Oaxaca for classes after Christmas. Each student had unique experiences in their high school and educational goals. All interviews with students took place in their homes and usually incorporated informal parental participation. After each interview conversations would continue with parents and students to discuss more about the topics that came up during the interviews. I never denied talking to families as a unit because students chose to involve their parents in the conversations. The informal family conversations were especially common among the sisters that participated in interviews on a rainy day. Due to the rain the family did not go to work in the fields and instead visited with us. My husband knew this family from his

childhood and they were very insistent about us staying to chat. After the interviews we visited the family for 3 hours. One of the sisters studied in Oaxaca and recently transferred to the high school in Yagavila to be closer to her parents and spend less money. The school in Yagavila is a 40-minute walk from Zoogochi in one direction.

The young man that participated was a distant relative of my husband's grandmother who helped butcher and prepare a pig at our grandmother's home. During holidays and festivals, it is common to butcher animals such as bulls and pigs to consume and sell the extra meat in the community. My husband and the participant consider themselves to be *primos* (cousins) because they are about the same age, grew up together, and are distant relatives. My husband, the participant, and I helped make *rellenos* (pig intestines stuffed with green onions, blood, pig fat, and meat). We sat at a wooden table and chopped about 50 pounds of green onions for the *rellenos*. During this time, we started a formal Interview. After we were done with the interview we continued discussing the project and community while helping with the meat preparation.

The other 12 adult interviewees were variety of ages from 30 to 65. Of the elderly that participated we interviewed three participants, one female 79, and two males 85 and 73. The female had one daughter who ran away to Mexico City and another daughter and son who lived in the village. The female participant suffered from COPD or similar symptoms due to continual smoke inhalation from cooking with wood. Most elderly women I observed and talked to informally expressed their difficulty breathing and decreased lung capacity. Other participants commented on the difficulties in accessing health care and managing communal knowledge of traditional healing practices and

modern medical practices. Most families told personal stories of their families' difficulties in accessing health care and how it affected them. Typically, the elderly will live with one of their children when age starts to become a barrier to working in the fields, carrying firewood, and cooking.

The older male participant had several children living in the US and Mexico. The other male participant had several children and grandchildren who were well educated. He said he and his wife lived in Oaxaca most of their lives and his children grew up in the city. He was very proud of his children and informed me they were in several professional jobs such as: a lawyer, nurse, teacher, and business owner. He currently lives in Zoogochi and his wife continues to live in the city. He is also well known for his participation in interviews with students in the community school investigations. Students would frequently come to his shop in the evenings with their interview guides to talk about the historical and cultural knowledge he held as an elder. The investigation process of the community schools reinforces within students that elders hold valuable knowledge. This participant clearly identified many concerns with elaborate responses that made connections at the local, state, and national level. His interview is heavily quoted in the analysis section because he provided valuable information and stories of his own life. The next section will discuss the source of this research as first-hand data that I collected from recording the in-depth interviews.

In-depth Interviews, Field Notes, Content Analysis

I brought all the supplies needed to conduct the interviews such as: electronic tablet, pens, paper, consent letters, interview guide, interpreter/research assistant, and a demographic face sheet (Johnson 2002; Warren 2002). I recorded interviews with a variety of devices. I used my tablet and my cell phone. I transcribed the interviews and made summaries that were in the preliminary report given to Zogoochi. The interview guide, consent forms, and demographic fact sheets can be found in the appendix with supporting documents.

The interview guide helped me listen closely to the interviewees responses while simultaneously taking notes, maintaining a conversational atmosphere, and attempting to maintain a natural flow of themes. Charmaz (2006) recommends interview guides should include broad open-ended questions, followed by probes. This type of layout allows for flexibility and encourages an in-depth conversational setting for the interview (Charmaz 2006). The power dynamic between interviewees and I was balanced so the participants felt comfortable sharing their perspectives. All interviewees understood I would interpret the data collected in collaboration with them to form their stories and understand their perspectives (Saylor 2012).

Location and consideration of power differentiations were essential to why I chose to schedule interviews in their homes if possible. The location of the interview was convenient for the participant, a place he or she felt comfortable disclosing information, and culturally acceptable. Most of the interviews started with personal conversations and

small talk over a cup of coffee. I initiated the interview formally when I sensed it was the right moment through body language and the conversations we had (Salyor 2012; Johnson 2001). The location of an interview usually shaped the conversations to be open with the family. Children were frequently running back and forth playing while others who were doing their chores. I took notes on the setting and indicated shifts in conversation, emotional reactions, and surrounding environment (Charmaz 2006).

The relaxed natural setting of the formal interviews allowed for the development of social interaction between interviewees and myself and created intimacy (Charmaz 2006; Johnson 2001). I had to gage the level of the intimacy in the interview and understand when it was ethically correct to continue probing a respondent especially because I knew them. I was a participant observer in the community and at times I had more information about the community members than I would have normally (Charmaz 2006; Warren 2002; Saylor 2012; Johnson 2001). In participatory research a researcher's role can shift dramatically and it is important to note why, when, and where the changes take place. The ethical dilemma around how much information is too much information, is left to the researcher and the participant to decide. I frequently would confirm what they said to ensure accurate interpretation of their perspective. The goal is to protect the communities by maintaining their social prestige, reputation, and social standing (Johnson 2001). Deciding when to probe for more information is an ethical decision I had to decide on. In some cases, I felt probing for more information was appropriate or they would offer more information without me asking. I was careful to not probe for more information if the participant showed emotional distress as it would have been a violation

of our relationship in the community and outside of the roles we were performing as researcher and participant (Saylor 2012; Warren 2002; Johnson 2001).

I shared my personal information, ideas, and goals of this project during the interviews and this is an ethical decision that I self-monitored. I feel that full disclosure and their collaboration in this project is what will make it truly successful. I utilized co-collaboration as a conscious decision to incorporate the voices of the community in this research.

Interview Team Dynamics

I chose to do research in Zoogochi because my husband, Jose Uriel Morales Hernandez, is from this community and we are trusted members who frequently visit our family and participate in community functions when possible. The close relationship between us and the community was a key factor in my decision. I wanted to do research that would have a mutual benefit and a positive impact on the community. Due to our close community ties, the community was receptive to our efforts to do a community needs assessment. Zoogochi residents were pleased to see community members returning with skills to conduct research with good intentions. There is a heightened sense of protectiveness towards communal knowledge and lands due to geopiracy from outside organizations looking for natural resources and land access. Geopiracy in the Bowman Expeditions was controversial due to researchers not providing proper consent and information on beneficiaries/funders of the research, the US Army (Herlihy 2010; Herlihy et al. 2008; Wainwright 2012). The Bowman Expeditions were vigorously

denounced online and gathered international attention as indigenous communities agreed to not allow access to the expedition. Indigenous communities have valid and clearly identified reasons as to why they have a fear of outside research from this experience and ones like it.

Language

The fact that I was the researcher and my husband was the interpreter made participants feel more at ease participating. In fact, many elderly community members would not have been able to participate to their fullest extent without having a familiar face and the ability to communicate in the community's specific version of Zapotec. The use of the community language allowed participants to express themselves freely and to connect with everyday language used to describe the contexts in which they live. This research team could accommodate the unique mixture of Spanish and Zapotec making it possible for all community members to participate.

This multilingual approach was essential for creating environments that were conducive to the interview process. Many participants communicated in both Spanish and Zapotec. Those who were more confident in Spanish did their entire interview in Spanish. Some participants would use Zapotec when describing aspects of communal lifestyles. Elderly community members typically were unable to communicate fluently in Spanish and were happy they could participate in Zapotec. The multilingual approach to interviewing reinforced the community's beliefs and practices of the importance in speaking Zapotec. Due to the variety of languages used in each interview the interpretation process varied depending on my understanding and the use of Zapotec.

Interpretation process

As noted before, my husband was part of the research team and acted as the interpreter during pre-interview discussions, consent form questions, interviews, and follow up questions. As each participant had different language capacities in both Spanish and Zapotec we offered interpretation services to all participants regardless of age. All participants opted to have the interpreter present for their interview. Most of the interviews were in Spanish. However, of the interview in Spanish participants expressed a few sentences or paragraphs in Zapotec. In some cases, the interviewee would be telling a story and then quickly say a joke or reference in Zapotec engaging in communication with the interpreter. When it was appropriate the interview would derail a moment as Jose or the interviewed described those comments in Spanish to me. In some cases, the remarks were mixed enough with Spanish and common Zapotec words that interpretation was not needed. The body language between me, the interpreter, and the interviewee was enough for me to communicate that I understood their story and their comments. I would nod my head in reassurance, provide commentary when appropriate, and ask follow up questions that let the interviewee and the interpreter know I was able to follow the conversation without the added interpretation. However, for interviews that were predominantly in Zapotec I relied heavily on interpretation and my understanding of the participants' responses.

For interviews predominantly in Zapotec, I asked the questions in Spanish. The participant would either start to talk promptly or provide body language that they were thinking of a response. If they did not understand they would look to the interpreter and

he would immediately restate the question in Zapotec. They would respond mostly in Zapotec with a minimal amount of common Spanish words. This mixture of language is becoming more common in younger generations as Spanish continues to replace Zapotec or there are no words to describe certain things in Zapotec. During these interviews Jose would interpret what they said to me in Spanish. The interpreter also engaged in negotiating meaning of statements with the participants to assure accurate interpretations were made. It was common to hear him clarifying meanings and reiterating the meanings to the participants for their reassurance during the interviews.

Transcription

I used transcriptions and auditory summaries to compile the analysis section of this thesis. All interviews that were in Zapotec were translated and transcribed into Spanish by my husband. I selected specific interviews in Spanish that I transcribed as they either held key stories or were extra-long. I wanted the transcriptions of these interviews to better analyze what was said by participants. Not all interviews were transcribed. Some recordings I chose not to transcribe, and I listened to them repetitively and pulled out the key concerns and suggestions from those interviews held. One interviewee requested no recording be taken of her voice and we proceeded with notes. With this participant I noted her key concerns, suggestions, and her inspiring story about continuing her education. In the Epistemology section I discuss the methods I used to ensure accurate representation of the lived experiences and stories I was told.

Epistemology

There is no better way to describe a participant's words other than to use their words as they intended (Johnson 2001). I found it my responsibility to continually look for ways to accurately portray the participant's stories. I also wrote about my personal ideas, ideologies, biases, and assumptions that could potentially skew the data collection or analysis (Johnson 2001). My personal experiences and education on the subject matter helped me understand and analyze the qualitative data I received. I journaled after each interview and I wrote about the formal and informal conversations I had with individuals.

I have familiarized myself as much as possible with the Spanish language by graduating with a Bachelors in Spanish and International Relations. My husband, a native speaker of Zapotec and Spanish, answered many of my questions about the Zapotec and Spanish languages. I familiarized myself enough with Spanish and Zapotec to become comfortable with the topic area to ensure the truth is relayed through the research process (Johnson 2001; Warren 2002). Cultural knowledge is vital to accurately interpreting the experiences of the participants (Bishop 2008).

Qualitative interviewing is closely linked with ethnographic research because of the lived experiences that become known through intensive interviews. In Ethnographic research the researcher must be aware of their gender, race, class, and perspectives (Bishop 2008; Smith). All these factors can have potential influence on the research, interviewees, and the community. Working with this rural indigenous community magnified the importance to collaborate and be mindful of the audience and participants of this research. I became the storyteller recounting the lived experiences participants

shared with me (Smith 2008). The decolonization of research involves having a more inclusive research process where marginalized groups take part in the distribution and creation of knowledge (Burford et al. 2012; Bishop 2008; Smith 2008; Wallerstein and Duran 2006; Zavala 2013).

Analytic Plan

After each interview, I summarized and analyzed the recordings. I wrote about my reaction and the experience in the interviews. All 3 recordings in Zapotec were transcribed and 6 interviews in Spanish were transcribed that were exceptionally long and packed with information. I created a report on each interview detailing the highlights and key quotes that was part of the preliminary results given to the community. This was useful as a quick reference to specific stories and voice recordings. I used grounded theory because I immediately transcribed or wrote an interview summary while the information was fresh in my mind. I would review my memos and notes and transfer them in my report (Charmaz 2006). In the creation of the preliminary report I saw overarching themes in each interview which allowed me to categorize them into participant identified concerns and strategies. The next section of this chapter outlines the steps in this research and the final stages of the CRM report method. In the following Analysis chapter, I will reveal the stories and perspectives participants shared with me. Vital resources are not being provided and it becomes obvious in the data analysis chapter that the indigenous communities are too frequently neglected.

DATA ANALYSIS

In the previous chapter I described the methodology used to conduct this research. In this chapter I report my findings based on analysis of field notes and 16 in-depth interviews in Santa Maria, Zoogochi. My research focused on providing a needs assessment of Zoogochi and community concerns about education, cultural preservation, health, and general community concerns. The findings are organized into three thematic sections: access to education and educational experiences, community enrichment/cultural preservation, and community concerns regarding health and wellbeing.

The goal of this research was to collaborate with the community by identifying obstacles and subsequently community derived strategies to address those obstacles such as potential projects, courses, and workshops. This chapter is therefore organized around three thematic sections. Following each section describing a key community need I report community derived solutions or strategies to address those needs.

I identify ways that *gozona* practices are utilized in Zoogochi. I also identify the systemic patterns of inequality in the indigenous community schools and within the established health care system. In the discussion section, the theory of everyday violence identifies and explores the violent strategies of oppression the Mexican government uses against indigenous communities. I identify what I believe to be a form of violence, the neglect of the community schools by grossly underfunding them which ultimately results in the control of the creation and distribution of knowledge. The Mexican government

has been negligent by not providing essential resources to schools, ultimately affecting the quality of education.

Primary community concerns centered on access to health care and the Mexican government's inability to quickly expand the health insurance program *Seguro Popular*. I also identify the excessive obstacles indigenous people face in accessing *Seguro Popular* services and benefits. These obstacles essentially define who can afford health care. Before reporting my research findings, however, I reflect on my personal experiences with family and my history with this community during the research process. The subsequent section discusses literacy and poverty rates at the national level.

Oaxaca, Mexico

The state of Oaxaca is known for its large indigenous population, tourist economy, and their cultural arts productions. Indigenous people represent 65 percent of the overall population of 3,967,889 in Oaxaca. In 2015 most of the population age 5 or above (N= 1,171,878) spoke an indigenous language (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía 2015). Of the population 5 years or more that spoke an indigenous language, 86 percent spoke Spanish and 12.6 percent were monolingual with the indigenous language. The number of monolingual indigenous speakers has steadily decreased as the Mexican government has expanded access to education in rural communities, which has resulted in a steady increase in literacy rates. The literacy gap between males and females has also leveled out. However, among indigenous communities the average number of

school years completed was 7.5, which is lower than the national average of 9.2 years of schooling.

The increased literacy rates for both males and females in Oaxaca can be associated with the increase in opportunities and social development that has been implemented to raise literacy in both sexes. The average literacy rate for males and females who are: 30-44 years old is 92 percent, 45-59 is 83 percent, 60-74 is 64 percent, and 75 and older is 48 percent. Literacy rates are lower among older generations but also among women. Women experience lower levels of literacy in every age group except 15-29 years old, whose literacy rate of 2.3 percent is roughly equal to that of men (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía 2015). The overall literacy rate for individuals, 15 years and older in Oaxaca is 86.7 percent (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía 2015).

The Mexican Government uses a marginalization index to measure poverty. This index measures several factors associated with poverty such as monetary poverty rates, literacy rates, access to food/clean water, basic services in the dwelling such as plumbing/electricity, quality of space in dwelling, and access to health care. Areas with a concentrated level of poverty are characterized by largely indigenous populations and are referred to as microrregiones. In Oaxaca there are 570 municipalities and 75 microrregiones (Ávila Jaquez and Gabarrot Arenas 2009).

Santa Maria Zoogochi

The total population of Santa Maria Zoogochi in 2010 was 310 people (Anon 2010) representing 88 homes, of which 78 were occupied. Fifty of the 78 occupied homes have covered floors, 76 have electricity, 76 have water piped to their homes, 66 have a drainage system, 76 have sanitary services, and on average there are 3.97 people per household. Amongst the population, 30 percent of individuals are ages 0-14, 26 percent who are 15-29, 34 percent who are 30-59, and 11 percent who are 60 and over.

A home with a dirt floor in Mexico is used as a primary indicator of extreme poverty and the government has worked to reduce the number of homes with dirt floors. In 2015 18.3 percent of smaller communities (less than 2,500 inhabitants) had dirt floors. Data from 2010 in Santa Maria Zoogochi showed that the percentage of occupied homes with dirt floors was 35.8 percent (Anon 2010). There was a significant drop in the number of houses with dirt floors. The drop is attributed to the Piso Firme Program in 2011 that reached Santa Maria, Zoogochi. The Piso Firme program helped families in Zoogochi by providing enough cement to put flooring in portions of their homes. The Piso Firme program was created as a tool to alleviate the pains of living in extreme poverty. This program was expanded after results from the initial phase proved to be extremely effective in improving the living conditions of children and their mothers. Mothers showed improved mental health but no significant changes regarding the father's health were mentioned in the study. Results showed the children in families that were given cement floors had 78 percent fewer parasites, half as many diarrhea episodes, an 81

percent drop in anemia, and the children's cognitive tests improved by 36 percent (Kaiser 2008). The program was implemented nationally to improve the quality of housing for families in poverty after the program had been proven successful. Therefore, the percentage of families with dirt floors in Santa Maria, Zoogochi has decreased dramatically since the 2010 census.

In communities with fewer than 2,500 inhabitant's 75 percent of the population reported using wood and carbon for cooking. The wood and carbon use have serious health implications for women due to smoke inhalation. However, propane gas was very expensive for remote indigenous communities and although some women had gas stoves they were used infrequently due to the price of gas. The economic burden of gas has therefore placed indigenous women in a more marginalized position that affects their health and labor.

Education in Santa Maria Zoogochi

In Santa Maria, Zoogochi there is a preschool, *Augustin Melgar*, a primary school *Renovacion*, and a middle school, *Educación Secundaria Comunitaria Indigena* (Anon 2010). The average length of community school attendance is 5.80 years (Anon 2010), which is far below the national average of 9.2 years. Census data does not reflect the community's private initiative in creating the school *Educación Secundaria Comunitaria Indigena.* Again, it is important to recognize the community paid for the construction of the community school. Until recently, the community also paid the electric bills of the

school. The school has received little funding from the government, as they only pay teacher salaries. School supplies and funds for such items are extremely limited.

During this study, I discovered there is a fine placed on families if a child drops out of school. These fines are in place to motivate families and children to continue in school. The fine is 5,000 pesos, a substantial amount of money for this region. During my time in Zoogochi, I learned about one adolescent who paid the 5,000 pesos so she could marry her fiancé. Her husband paid the 5,000 pesos and she left school at age 14 to start a family. The following section discusses the political tensions that were present during the research and how those tensions have limited financial revenue and development in Zoogochi.

Political Tensions: "Transa" in Ixtlán de Juárez

I began research by noticing the political tensions between Ixtlán de Juárez and Zoogochi. Participants informed me of the tension during interviews and it was apparent the deteriorated relationship with Ixtlán influenced interactions between the communities. During interviews, community members mentioned their feelings about the growing list of community needs and the corruption their municipality, Ixtlán de Juárez, is accused of. A common feeling of frustration and loss of confidence in Ixtlán's ability to honestly manage and support villages was expressed repeatedly. Several community members stated they felt Ixtlán was punishing them for the uprising (legal actions and protests the community initiated forcing Ixtlán to fund Zoogochi and other communities their full monthly operational budget). Community members informed me that Ixtlán would not

pass their requests for project proposals for the Ramo 33 fund three and four. The Ramo 33 fund has 7 funding categories. Each category has specific regulations and standards a community project must meet to be funded. Zoogochi community members said they typically request funding from categories 3 and 4. Informants said category three is for public projects/infrastructure and category four is for public security.

Zoogochi joined 4 of the 12 *agencias* who organized, to call attention to the diverting of funds from their *agencia*s. The communities identified the funds they were receiving as insufficient, and less than they should have been receiving. Communities and residents referred to this corruption as a *transa*. A *transa* is a transaction that is designed to take funds from the original proprietors using unethical and dishonest methods. Communities identified how several thousand pesos equaling almost half of their current allotted monthly funding was never dispersed to the *agencia*s. The *agencia*s took legal actions to receive higher monthly revenue disbursement and fought to be included in the voting process for selecting a municipal president. The communities received more funding, but still have not received the full amount believed to be allotted. The political tension between Zoogochi and Ixtlán due to the *transa* has deteriorated their mutual respect and relationship.

The deterioration in political and social relationships was evident in the interactions I observed between the municipal president and the community. Traditionally the municipal president would come to Zoogochi and other surrounding communities to conduct the assembly for the transfer of power from the previous to the new town president. The new town president would invite the municipal president to their

house for a meal and festivities. The town president in Zoogochi traditionally gives the municipal president gifts in the form of naturally produced products from the region such as: ground coffee, tortillas, beans, *panela*, squash, and liquor. This tradition holds many social obligations for women who cook and make tortillas for the festivities. Men would gather and prepare the house and grounds, so everything was ready for the arrival of the municipal president. However, this year's transition period of 2017 and 2018 was remarkably different.

In Zoogochi the municipal president was not welcomed with gifts, communal respect, and was not allowed to come to the community for the assembly. Indigenous community members said teaching respect (*el respeto*) was an important cultural and communal value present in their language and community customs. The loss of respect and the shunning of the Ixtlán president was a powerful political statement that represented a communal decision of resistance. The community collectively decided to end their relationship with Ixtlán. Informants attributed the loss of respect to the *transa* that had withheld millions of pesos from communities in Ixtlán. The community members were adamant they did not need the municipal president to do anything for them. The community decided they would send a representative to Oaxaca to register the names of the new municipal council members. Community members also shared their educational experiences, concerns, and objectives regarding community development.

Community Concerns: Access to Education and Educational Experiences

I interviewed students age 17-26 about their transition from middle school to high school. The middle school used a community-based project model that taught students to go into the community and do investigations using interviews. Students had to interview elders or people in the community who held specific knowledge about cultural practices, historical events, agricultural practices, and traditional gastronomy. This method teaches students about their cultural heritage while integrating standard educational objectives into their projects. This method of community teaching and involvement is incredibly effective in teaching cultural knowledge to students. However, some parents and students expressed concerns with access to a quality education in the community schools. Most participants said a quality education would incorporate better preparation in the following subjects: Spanish and English languages, mathematics, sciences, and computer courses. In the next section I outline what informants identified as key obstacles to obtaining an education.

Financial concerns in continuing education

The greatest obstacle in attending school reported by families and young adults was financial resources were scarce, and families struggled to send their children to middle school, high school, and college. The main concerns parents and students had in continuing education was the lack of financial resources. When the children are going into elementary or middle school in Zoogochi, the burden on parents and children is much less than students who study in another region. However, the obstacles start when

children must leave town to start high school or college. Parents reported the main expenses to send their children to school included rent, bus passes, food, uniforms, and school supplies. All young participants stated in the interviews they work and go to school simultaneously.

One young woman said she moved back to Zoogochi when she heard the high school opened in Yagavila, the neighboring community. The same informant said she had fallen behind in math and science and had to work hard to catch up with her peers. She attributed this gap to the teaching structure of the community middle school. She said she worked part time and was homesick while studying in another region. She attributes her success in high school to her decision to move back and enroll in the newly opened high school in Yagavila. Young indigenous women are frequently employed as nannies and this also places a dramatic burden on their workload while going to school.

Difficulties and obstacles to continuing educational goals

The primary difficulties families face in education is the distance they need to travel to access quality educational opportunities. It was not until recently that Zoogochi opened the *Educación Secundaria Comunitaria Indigena* and the community adjacent to Zoogochi, Yagavila, opened a high school. My conversations with participants showed a common pattern of content with the community middle schools and community high schools. However, community members also agreed they needed to better prepare students to go to high school or college in Oaxaca. Many young people chose to study high school in Oaxaca or Ixtlán to get a full immersion in the Spanish language.

However, families who wanted their young adults closer to home, community schools were a great option and taught them important cultural knowledge.

The dramatic difference in the funding of community schools was a probable factor for the difference in student preparedness. Until recently, the Zoogochi community has been paying the electric bill of the middle school with its already limited monthly operational funds. This was not standard for other schools in Oaxaca or in Ixtlán. The teachers are underpaid in comparison to other teachers in traditional school settings. Both community schools in Zoogochi receive minimal school supplies. The government has effectively underfunded community schools to the extent students and parents worry about the quality of education.

Concerns in quality of education

Some students that attended the elementary community school reported difficulties in transitioning to high school or college, due to the system of teaching in the community schools. The community schools focus on projects that teach students to do research. Students learn differently than those who study "*secundaria técnica y telesecundaria.*" Students who graduated from the *Educación Secundaria Comunitaria Indigena* school stated they enjoyed the community school model of teaching but wanted more support in specific curriculum. Parents and students did not want English, Spanish, math, or computer courses to replace the project-based model of teaching but wanted them to supplement it. Overall parents and students were happy the school was a community school as it helped maintain cultural knowledge and the Zapotec language. I asked student participants what type of community resources they would like to

complement what they are learning in the *Educación Secundaria Comunitaria Indigena*. In the next section I discuss the suggestions participants had for enriching education in the community.

Community Driven Solutions: Access to Education and Educational Experiences

In this section I discuss parent and student suggestions for resources that will enrich education in the community. The chart below demonstrates the suggested courses and workshops proposed by students in order of the most frequently requested starting with English, mathematics, Spanish, computer courses, science with a laboratory session. Students said several courses are needed and would help during their transition to high school and college. English and science with a laboratory session are not offered in the community. Students at all levels of education stated there were insufficiencies in mathematics, computer courses, and Spanish. Most parents and students mentioned it was indispensable to have a computer lab with internet included. The lab would ensure students could do their homework and research projects anytime they needed. Also, they need computer lessons to gain more knowledge about computers and programs. There are computers and an antenna for internet in the middle schools. However, the government has refused to pay for the internet.

English classes were number one on the list of recommended courses. English has become an important course in the school system in Mexico. Some parents commented that in Oaxaca City they teach kids English in early grades such as primary. However, in rural communities such as Zoogochi, English courses are not available. This complicates

a student's transition to high school because teachers expect children to know some basic English. Two young adults in their early twenties wanted to study other languages in Oaxaca. They were dissatisfied with not having learned English early in life and the current cost of the language program.

I noticed in the community there were at least 10 primary students who have double nationality (Mexico and the US), representing approximately 14 percent of the 70 primary students. Zero resources were available to support double nationality students and their parents in Zoogochi or near Ixtlán. It would be beneficial if there were English classes that could prepare students for the possibility of exploring what their double nationality and potential trilingualism could offer them in the future. Having exposure to English would help students overcome substantial language barriers if they decided to travel to other countries, especially the United States.

Mathematics is another course that needs to be focused on as most parents and students reported the current learning structure was not preparing students. Many students felt the elementary school does not prepare them enough for when they start high school. Finally, parents and students would like students to have science classes such as: chemistry, biology, and physics with an equipped lab to do experiments. Students believed that courses such as math, English, science, and computer class will prepare them well through their education. Some of these students proposed a library would be an excellent resource for them to have the access to books, computers, and supplies to improve their education.

Community library

Several students and their parents reported the need to have a place to complete homework, conduct research, and work collectively or collaborate on assignments. Some parents stated the middle school has computers, but they do not have access to them after school hours and it does not have internet. Students must rent a computer and/or pay for internet access to complete homework and it is an expense that parents cannot always afford. Therefore, the suggestion parents and students made about a space to do homework, research, study, have access to internet and computers, aligns with that of a public library.

A public library would be a community project that could provide the resources parents and children need to successfully complete their educational goals. The library could be for all grade levels so children in the primary and middles schools could have access to educational resources. Students could take their homework to the library and teachers could use it as a resource for their classrooms regardless of age. Access to books and internet would alleviate the difficulties students have in conducting research. Workshops and other community driven educational support materials could be conducted and housed in the library. Equipping a library would be a way to help students and teachers have access to technology, classroom supplies, books, workshops, and materials that are centralized in one area to serve all grade levels and the broader community.

Community scholarships

Students shared that having access to community scholarships would be a vital resource to ensure their success in high school and college. One student mentioned her goal of becoming a nurse and the registration fees alone were around 15,000 pesos, not counting the cost of supplies, materials, food, or rent. She suggested community scholarships be made available because many families have insufficient funds to send their children to school. The government provides some assistance through the *Prospera* program, but those funds prove to be insufficient and ultimately are used for necessities and not schooling. All families stated that lack of financial resources was the main obstacle in sending their children to high school and college. Most families in this region generate income through the production of coffee and many suffer from underproduction due to the coffee plague in Oaxaca. When parents were asked to provide ideas for what could alleviate some of the schooling expenses many suggested community scholarships for high school and college. Another suggestion was to increase the number and quality of schools nearby.

There was previously a researcher who focused on community schools in the region and their learning methods. Community members stated the researcher made suggestions to the community and the school about the same grievances students and parents reported to me about the Spanish language and mathematics. However, it was the consensus of parents who participated in my study that the researcher did not think the English language was a priority for indigenous communities. One mother expressed her dissatisfaction with the previous researcher who said the community did not need

English. This mother felt otherwise as her daughter was studying English in high school and found it difficult due to the lack of previous exposure to the language. The school and teachers have made changes to the way they are addressing educational gaps in Spanish and mathematics based on the public comments of that researcher. Teachers and students reported there has been an overall improvement in the community school and the curriculum. Students and parents suggest the improvement stems from the researcher's suggestions the community implemented. I recommend the community continue to adapt and listen to parent and student suggestions as this will lead to successful program development which will continue to merge cultural knowledge with traditional academic knowledge. The parent forums are a key place to bring grievances as well as empowering words of encouragement. Parents wanted people to participate more in the forums, so all voices and opinions are heard.

Community Concerns: Health and Wellbeing of the Community

This section identifies the concerns participants had regarding health care. Participants of all age groups expressed concerns with the inadequate health care services available in the clinic. Most mentioned the lack of qualified nurses and doctors. Another primary concern was an ongoing lack of basic medications, supplies, and medical equipment. Community health and wellbeing was frequently limited to the services the community clinic could offer. Most families did not have the income necessary to pay for travel to and from the city, nor a place to stay while seeking medical treatment. Many elderly individuals did not have the ability to navigate the city by themselves due to

limited mobility issues and language barriers. The community expressed the need for the state to expand *Seguro Popular* to better serve rural indigenous communities. Health care was such a prominent concern, and frequently was grounds for deeper conversations with young adults and students.

Barriers to accessing Seguro Popular: poverty and distance

I identify the dirt road that links Zoogochi and other surrounding communities to Highway 175, passing through Ixtlán, as a major barrier in accessing basic resources. The dirt road negatively affects indigenous populations access to health care through *Seguro Popular*. Limited road access and frequent road closures due to landslides have dramatically affected the communities who rely on the roads as their only lifeline to larger cities. The road is the reason there are health care, educational opportunities, and more resources in the community. However, the Mexican government has refused to invest in the development of infrastructure in remote areas of Ixtlán. The dangerous road contributes to the poverty level in this community and is the primary reason travel costs are high in this region. The road is an obstacle for families to export natural products and goods to the city. The following Google Maps image, 2018 demonstrates the location of Santa María Zogoochi, Ixtlán de Juarez, and Oaxaca city (Anon 2018).

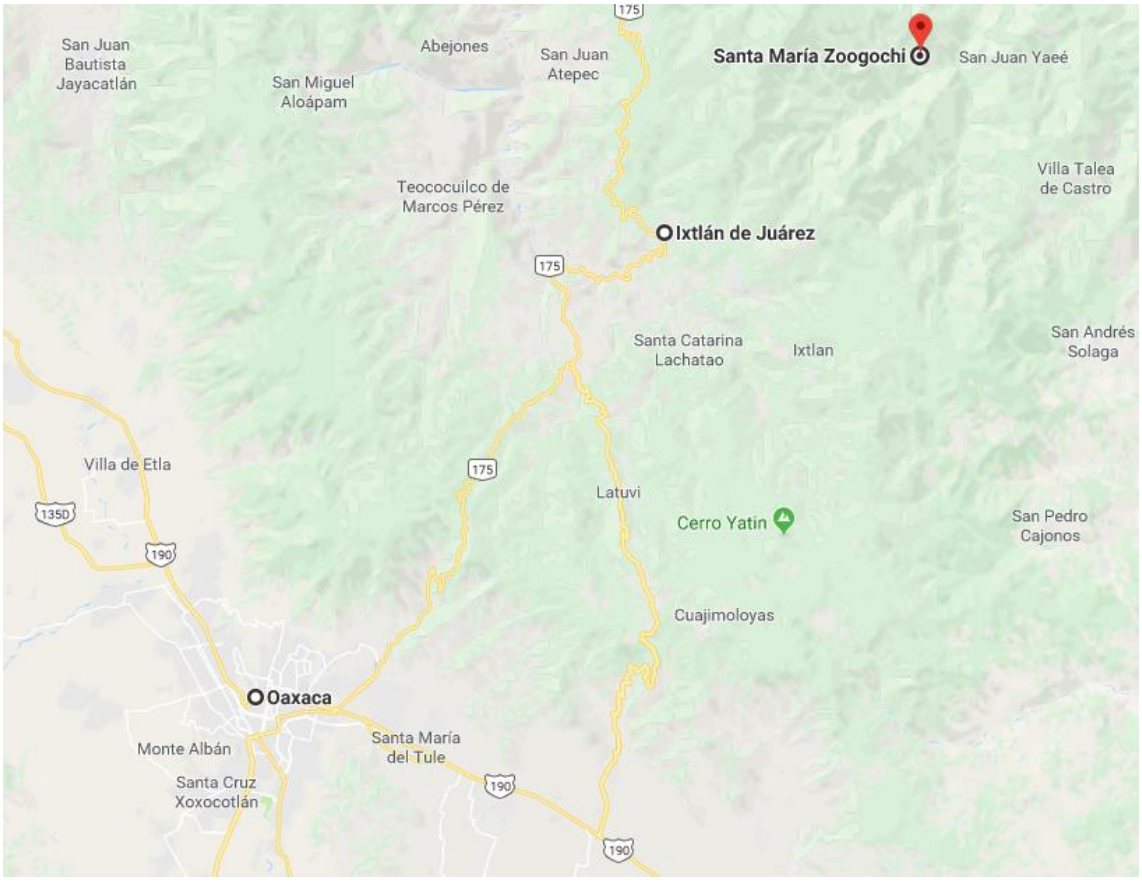

Figure 3. Santa María Zoogochi in the Sierra Juárez Region

The subsequent image provides a visual representation of the dangerously curvy road, represented in white zig zag lines, linking remote villages to highway 175, represented by a pink line to the left (Geografía (INEGI) 2000). Highway 175 connects remote communities to Ixtlán and Oaxaca.

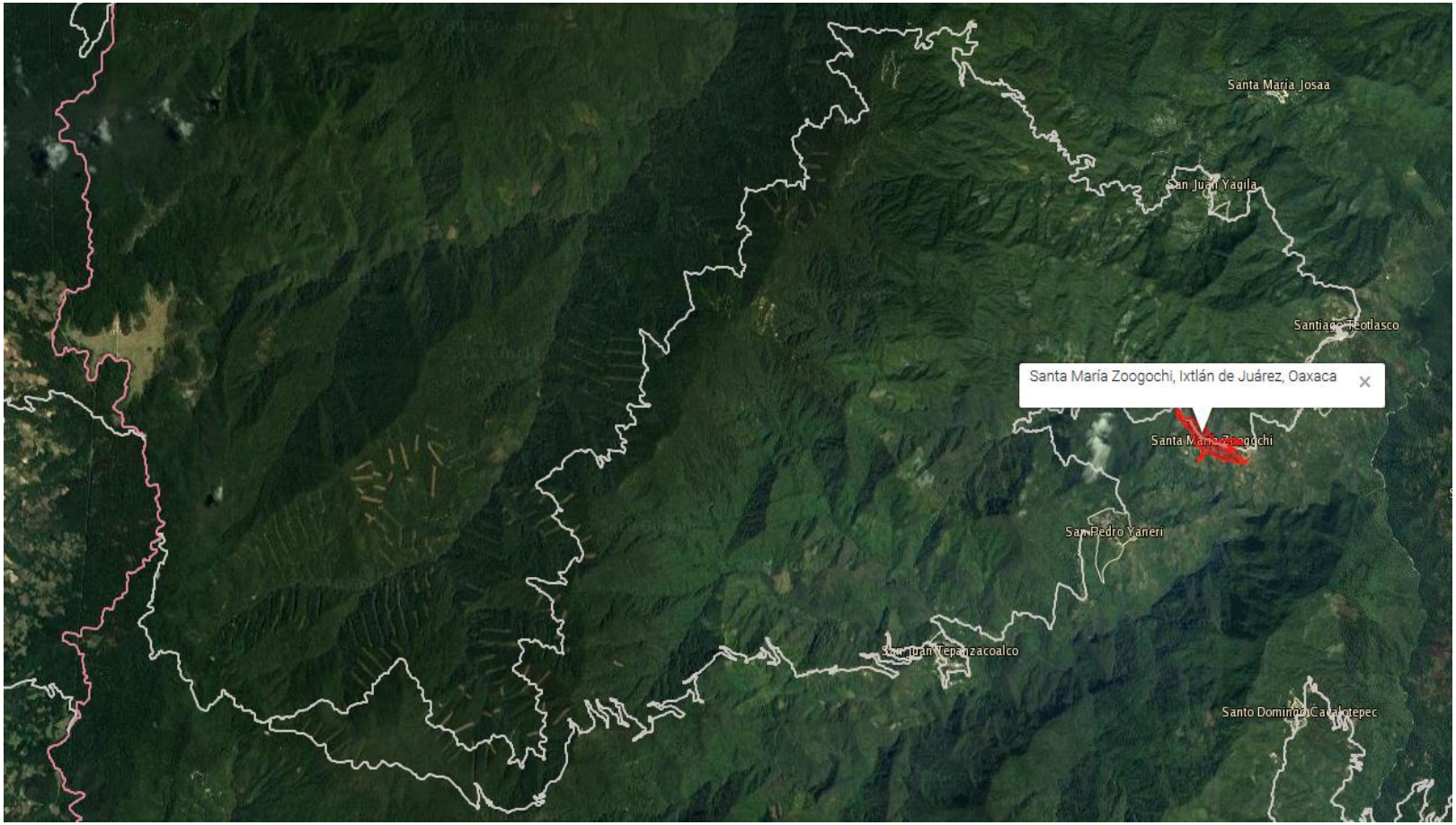

Figure 4. Location of Santa María Zoogochi on the Dirt Road Leading to HWY 175 Towards Ixtlán

The cost of transportation from the villages to Ixtlán is also expensive due to the dirt road and the driving conditions. Apart from the transportation cost there is lodging, meals, and taxi fare while residents are being seen at the hospital. The elderly cannot make the trip on their own and usually need to take at least another person with them. That doubles their travel costs to access services that should be of little or no cost. One man said, “the clinic never has what you need. They only have medications for vomit or diarrhea. They tell us to go to Ixtlán, but we cannot afford to go there.” The five-hour trip from Zoogochi to and from Ixtlán is 75 pesos each direction. The average taxi is 10 pesos. The cheapest hotel in Ixtlán is 200 pesos. Many people try to stay with someone they know in Ixtlán if possible. The Catholic church has created dormitory like shelters for people due to the high number of indigenous people seeking refuge in Ixtlán while traveling away from home. Space is limited and fills very quickly. The church does not turn people away for inability to pay but asks for 10 pesos the night. However, vehicle access to communities is also on a limited number of days. It is hard to find a truck or bus going to the villages. Typically trips end up being multiple days and can cost thousands of pesos.

Many of these costs could be eliminated if the clinic had a qualified physician and medications readily available. I suggest each clinic also have over the counter medications. In Zoogochi the community has started dedicating money to the clinic for the purchase of medications the clinic otherwise does not have. In Zoogochi the community has also agreed that no person no matter their origin or status in the community will pay for their visit or their medication. The community decided they

wanted everyone to access the clinic as a basic community resource. Zoogochi made this decision in response to community members having to pay when they went to clinics outside their community.

Inaccessibility within Seguro Popular and remote clinics

The original purpose of *Seguro Popular* was so the poor could access health care. However, some of the poorest regions are still unable to access *Seguro Popular* services. *Seguro Popular* is intended to address extreme poverty by providing necessary medical attention and medications at no cost to them. The obstacles indigenous elderly and adults face in accessing services that should be free to them are the lack of services provided in the community clinics. The lack of medications, medical equipment, and supplies in the clinics is negligent because of the Mexican government. Apart from the lack of services in the communities there are little to no services that help the elderly reach the hospitals in a timely manner.

Families discussed the difficulties of childbirth and the lack of midwives in the community. The clinic started a new program where women in the community can be trained and recognized in the clinic as midwives. This program is just starting and has the potential to truly help the community restore traditional midwifery. The community currently does not have any practicing midwives.

One of the main concerns of the participants is the constant lack of medication in the clinic. Elderly residents reported they suffer from chronic health conditions such as hypertension and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and do not have a consistent and adequate supply of medication. The nurse and residents acknowledged the

shortage of medication treating chronic conditions is a barrier to proper health care services.

Apart from the lack of medication, elderly residents who participated, in the survey, mentioned they are not satisfied with the services they are receiving. The participants heavily commented on the unqualified nurses that fulfill their public service requirement in the community. They voiced concerns the community does not have a qualified medical doctor who oversees medications, prescriptions, and the patient progress. Citizens informed me the clinic is only staffed with aspiring professionals who are completing their end of program community service placement. They express their concerns the people who are sent, do not have enough training or guidance to be in a clinic by themselves. The following excerpts from the interview is an individual's personal experiences and critique of the healthcare system currently available. I have chosen to provide this section in its entirety as it has key examples of needs and negligence that another participant also talked about. This participant was particularly talented in his story telling and used humor as a way of describing the inequities in his community. When I asked him about community needs the following response is very thoughtful and explains the setting and geographic obstacles the community faces:

> There are many needs, however in the level of regional or sector needs we have one, the pavement of the highway that connects the communities in this region. We do not have a paved highway like many other areas. The highway we have is in grave condition. For example, with this highway it is 4 or 5 hours to Ixtlán. If the road was paved it would be 2 hours. Sometimes there are emergencies like

taking a sick person to the hospital in Ixtlán. On the road or on the way to Ixtlán the sick person has kicked the bucket already.

Another need is at the individual level in every community which is the need for a permanent or stable doctor with experience. Because they send us those who have barely passed or are practicing with patients. Imagine being sick and a trainee comes and pokes you. They do not really know what they are doing yet. There was an occasion when a nurse in Zoogochi applied a children's vaccine to the elderly. Therefore, we need someone with experience!

I experienced this first hand when I was sick and in the hospital in Oaxaca a few years ago and they sent a practicing nurse to practice giving injections on me. She could not get the IV in my arm, so the other nurse had to come and do it. When they see you are strong they put you with a practicing nurse or doctor but when they see you are really fucked they throw the specialists at you left and right. And they do this with the villages. They send trainees or students who are doing their social service here in the communities. Sometimes you go to the clinic and they tell you there is no medicine, sometimes the only medicine you can find is for vomit or diarrhea. I have realized that the students that graduated with the best grades and qualification go to the cities and those that fucked up (jodido) get sent to the farthest and most remote communities. Sometimes they say because you got bad grades you are going to be sent to the most remote place possible (la casa de la chingada).

> While we are on the topic of the clinic, they need materials, equipment, and medications. The biggest need is a doctor who is adequately capable of requesting medications that are appropriate and needed in the clinic. For example, here we have the risk of poisonous snake bites and we do not have the appropriate medications. Also, the other day a woman's blood pressure went up and the nurse said we need to get her to the hospital in Ixtlán, but she did not have the money to leave. So, she went to a private woman in Yagavila who sells medicine and she helped her. The woman in Yagavila is the same one that sells the antidote for snake bites. Adequate transportation to the hospital is what we need. None of the communities in this region have an ambulance. What we have done in this community, is use one of the *agencia* trucks to transport people for medical reasons, but it's not the same as an ambulance. An ambulance is equipped to transport ill people but in the truck there you are, fucked and bouncing around like a ball. An ambulance would be nice, but we need basic equipment like a nebulizer, wheelchair, gurneys to transport people to and from the clinic.

Clinics do not have snake bite medication

Another man shared his story about a snake bite victim that is a good example of the indigenous beliefs around traditional healing methods. The man who was bitten by a snake was working in the forests cleaning his corn fields. His corn fields were on the other side of the mountain. He walked an hour to get back to the community after he was bitten. Once he arrived back in Zoogochi, he left on foot to Yagavila another hour and a half walk. He did not tell anyone a snake bit him. It is believed in the community that

when a snake bites a person, they should not tell many people, or they will surely die. By the time the man arrived at the woman's home in Yagavila she really did not want to take him in because he was so ill she thought it was too much of a liability. However, the woman knew if she did not help him right away he would not make it to Ixtlán. The woman contacted the man's family in Zoogochi and let them know he was very ill and needed medical attention and that she would do what she could. Fortunately, the man did get well. However, snake bites are extremely common in this region and the community needs a consistent supply of medication in the clinics for life-threatening conditions. Zoogochi struggles with mixing traditional healing practices with modern practices because the medical professionals do not understand the community's practices. The clinics need to have culturally competent personnel that can understand the illnesses people describe. All elders speak Zapotec and many do not know Spanish well enough to answer medical questions. I witnessed many elders answer the nurse's questions with simple answers but did not elaborate on those responses. The personnel need to notice these details and continue with extensive questions one by one that will help the patients describe their symptoms. Questions need to be specific and clear for the patients. My experience with the clinic in Zoogochi is centered around my conversations with the medical staff.

Allergic reaction while in zoogochi

I have made multiple trips to the clinic in Zoogochi. During this research period I was seen for an allergic reaction to a jellyfish. I had zero symptoms until I hit the two-week mark. While I was in Zoogochi the allergic reaction started. The questions I was

asking like so many residents were some of the basics. Does the clinic have the medicine I need, or will I need to go to Ixtlán? How will we leave, and will we need to leave right away? On our multiple trips to the clinic we found the clinic was closed during scheduled open hours and the nurse was frequently not there during the scheduled open hours. I encountered several people who also had scheduled appointments and they were not seen because the nurse left the clinic grounds. I was able to locate the nurses phone number and ask her when she would be back in the office. She gave me two shots as they were out of hydrocortisone cream. The shots worked, and the irritation eventually dissipated over the course of the next week.

The nurse would leave for long breakfasts and other miscellaneous things that took her away from the 8 hours a day the clinic was open. The nurse scheduled home visits that had time conflicts with previously scheduled clinic visits. The inconsistent presence in the clinic was common and people feel if they complain there will be repercussions. The frequent and continuous absences in the clinic are problematic in emergency situations as there is only one person who staffs the clinic. Each year there is a new nurse in the community clinic.

Apart from the nurse’s inconsistent attendance in the clinic she did in-home visits with the elderly. Not all nurses do scheduled visits in people's homes who are incapable of coming to the clinic. In the past the community has had to carry their sick family members to the clinic. This nurse was very considerate about seeing the elderly in their homes.

Most residents stated they had a difficult time accessing the resources *Seguro Popular* offers because of their remote location. Participants said a key concern in Zoogochi is the lack of medical equipment and supplies in the clinic. All adults that participated in interviews mentioned the lack of medications. Young adults and minors also mentioned the lack of medication and lack of resources in the clinic. In all interviews health was a key concern. The concerns for health care was much greater in the older populations and adults. Among young adults and minors access to education and educational resources were top concerns alongside healthcare and economic opportunities. Participants expressed their frustrations with the clinic and the government's inability to provide sufficient medication and a permanent doctor.

Mexico's universal health care program, *Seguro Popular*, must focus on helping indigenous communities access healthcare by addressing the health care inequities. There must be changes that are specifically designed to expand access in remote regions focusing on the distribution of medication, management of prescriptions, medical personnel staffing in remote clinics, and expanding services available with *Seguro Popular*. The assigned nurse or doctor in the clinic meets with the women in the Social Service program *Prospera*. The clinic staff meets with the women and they give talks on topics related to healthcare and wellbeing. However, there is only so much education that can happen when residents and the clinic do not have sufficient resources to adequately take care of mosquito bites. Sometimes the clinic runs out of basic items such as hydrogen peroxide, antibiotics, hydrocortisone, and medications for hypertension. The nurse at the clinic informed me, *Seguro Popular* does not provide nebulizer medication.

Nebulizer medication is a basic treatment for people with COPD. Most elderly women have poor lung health due to cooking with wood their entire lives.

Grandma's visit to the doctor

During this research period I also assisted my husband's grandmother, Lupe, in going to the clinic. She has COPD, hypertension, and cataracts. However, at the time we were only aware of her hypertension. I suspected she had COPD and had purchased her a nebulizer and medication in Oaxaca before we arrived in Zoogochi. When I went with her to the clinic to discuss the nebulizer and her hypertension, I had already talked with her about the symptoms she was having. I was able to ask her more questions and help the nurse get her to elaborate about what she was feeling. I asked the nurse about her hypertension record and found she had been taking several different dosages of medication and varieties of medication trying to regulate her blood pressure. However, her blood pressure had consistently stayed at 180 and had even reached 190. I found her medications were not helping her condition. After I saw previous attempts in lowering her blood pressure were unsuccessful, I talked with Lupe privately. I told her she needed to go to Oaxaca to see a physician. The physician discovered the medication she was prescribed in the Zoogochi clinic was lowering her heart rate too much. The medication was not lowering her blood pressure. The physician told us Lupe had cataracts and prescribed her a preferred medication for her blood pressure that was 1200 pesos for a month's supply. The physician told her if she couldn't get that medication she could take one like it, which Seguro Popular should have in the clinic.

My cumulative analysis of the health care concerns in the community is the Mexican government must expand *Seguro Popular* with clear objectives to bridging indigenous communities access to health care services. Citizens identified cultural, economic/transportation, and language barriers affected their ability to access health care. The main obstacle is having to travel to Ixtlán for basic services that should be offered at the clinics in their hometown. In the subsequent sections I make suggestions based on participants' ideas, obstacles, and specific suggestions that are related to access health care. I also describe the obstacles they have identified and how these affect them and their health.

Community Driven Solutions: Health and Wellbeing of the Community

In this section I describe a variety of solutions participants identified as ways to improve access to health care. The main suggestion is infrastructure improvements to the main dirt road that connects the Sierra Juárez communities to Ixtlán.

One elderly participant identified the need for a dentist and stressed that it is expensive to go to a private dentist. A private dentist is the only dentist close to the community and requires private pay. For state services related to *Seguro Popular* there are long wait periods for dental work. They usually require a consultation and an appointment later. Frequently clients will be sent for X-rays in other areas. This system places an unequal burden on indigenous populations.

The community overwhelmingly agreed the clinic needs to be staffed with qualified and responsible personnel, so patients do not need to travel as frequent. Many

community members stated they felt the government forgets about them. They feel their communities are not attended to adequately and lack the basics. The community suggested the clinics start to carry more over the counter medications that *Seguro Popular* does not have. People also wanted to see *Seguro Popular* incorporate more medications into their system such as nebulizer medication. I was told by a doctor in Oaxaca and a nurse in Zoogochi that *Seguro Popular* does not cover or offer nebulizer medication. Some residents also mentioned having a community pharmacy available. Zoogochi invested in its own clinic by sending the nurse to purchase medication that *Seguro Popular* did not cover. The community just started this method. However, this is something that should be available to the community at no cost to them. The community is having to pay for too many necessities that the Mexican government should have at their disposal free of charge. The community's vital contributions to the clinic are unjust inequities that disproportionately affect indigenous communities. There is a disturbing pattern of financial abuse in indigenous communities.

Community ambulance

The regional hospital is in Ixtlán de Juárez and the Zoogochi community has expressed their need for an ambulance to transport people to the hospital. Currently the community uses the pick-up truck belonging to the community for medical emergencies. The pick-up truck is not equipped with a bed or any supplies for medical use. There have been reports of women who have given birth in the pick-up truck on the way to the hospital.

The community also mentioned a need for vehicle access to the clinic, which is located at the bottom of the hill. The hillside is steep and would need to be paved to transport patients. The community does not have gurneys or beds. In emergencies, community members come with whatever is available to help carry patients to the top of the mountain where the road is located. It takes about 20 minutes to transport a patient up the steep hill. The community has mentioned the need for vehicle access to the clinic during several meetings and would like to move forward with the project if funding can be secured.

The community has also mentioned the lack of medical equipment in the clinic. The participants identified the following items as immediate needs in the community: crutches, nebulizers, wheelchairs, gurneys, hospital bed, Oximeters, leg braces, arm braces, wrist braces, and a spare oxygen tank.

Community Enrichment/Cultural Preservation

The next section outlines the concerns the community had with cultural knowledge, customs, and practices they believed needed to be taught to younger generations. The participants identified specific examples of cultural knowledge that has been lost in the community or things that are rarely seen.

Most people in the community mentioned the Zapotec language as the most important cultural aspect to continue teaching young people. When asked about traditions and customs, participants said they wanted to see the following preserved: Traditional pottery and all it was used for previously, respect to older adults, traditional meals with

natural ingredients from the region, artisans, and traditional tools made from leather and wood. The Zapotec language and the respect to elders were the two main cultural concepts mentioned.

The concept of respect is broad in definition because it encompasses the family unit, world, environment, community, and elders. Respect is the way a person interacts with the world, how they see the world, how they were taught to treat the world, and how they interact with the community and people in their lives. The concept of respect was frequently described as a family unit practice that needed to be taught to children.

Children are taught to respect their parents and elders. Respect is also the conscience of the community for the betterment of the lands for future generations. Zoogochi and the community schools teach the children to focus on the concept of respect in the community and respect toward communal lands. In relation to contamination people mentioned the citizens recognize and have a conscience about the environment. The following excerpt is from an interview where an informant talks about contamination, respect, and cultural traditions. In this case he is talking about pottery and how it would be an important cultural practice to bring back to the community and in the community school. He talks about the lack of respect the government has for the environment. He also hints at the disappearance of many animals in the Sierra Juárez region.

> Environmental contamination is in the conscience of every person that lives in the community. Here in the community a lot of plastic has arrived. Here in the

community the agreement is that everyone is to burn their plastic trash. Before everyone used pottery but that tradition has been completely lost in this community. If someone could bring it back that would be good because they were things our ancestors used. Pottery would be a good project for the community school because of the school projects they do. We would need the government to send economic resources to have an individual teach the community how to do pottery and purchase equipment required to start the pottery. But, in reality, it is not to the government's benefit because this would get in the way of the agreements they have with other countries. Everything is about business because they sign agreements so that all plastic trash can contaminate. They (the government) do not care about the life of humanity. What is important to them is money. They do not know money will not save them in life because while having millions, death still comes, and all is left behind. But great politicians and big companies are incapable of understanding all of this and they only want to poison the world to earn the power of wealth. The power they have is more than a drug, they want to create and dissolve humanity with the power of money. They do not understand that we are on earth for a short time simply passing through and we will not stay here forever. God willing, one day the government will see what comes from these communities and help save the knowledge that is being lost. Many things have been lost. Also, respect has been lost. Here in the community even the animals have disappeared. Species that were here before are not seen nearly as frequently, and future generations will not see these animals.

Suggestions of courses and workshops

All participants saw the community school as a tool for knowledge distribution. The community school helps teach children in a communal way by sending them to talk to elders and community members who hold specific knowledge. This knowledge is passed down through the generations. All informants saw the main concern of the community in maintaining the Zapotec language. In Zoogochi almost all residents speak Zapotec. The community holds closely the Zapotec language and the community school as key instruments in teaching children cultural knowledge. Many people mentioned the traditional gastronomy as an important cultural aspect they wanted young people to continue learning in the school. As one of the investigation projects students are assigned to make recipe cards. I asked informants what they would like to see taught and these were some of their answers: basket making, traditional foods, pottery, and baking bread.

Observations: Gozona Practices: Three Types

The Literature Review chapter touched on the *gozona* practices that are present in indigenous communities, and in this section, I will discuss the way *gozona* is utilized in Zoogochi. I witnessed three types of *gozona* practices: The *cargo* system *gozona* practices, Catholic resident *gozona* practices, economic and subsistence *gozona* practices.

The cargo system gozona practices

Gozona practices are commonly witnessed in the *Cargos* system during the end of the transitional period when new personnel are selected to fill positions. The person selected to enter as municipal president celebrates the position with a party hosted by the

municipal council as special guests. The festivities are usually extended to the entire community. However, a large party is not required, and some families do a small party and meal with the municipal council members and their families.

The *agente municipal* (town president) that was going to take office in 2018 chose to do a large celebration with the entire community. The tradition is the community band plays through the community celebrating the transition and continues until they reach the house of the *agente municipal*. Once the band arrives at the home, they play a few songs and then sit down to celebrate with a meal and drinks. The family purchased traditional piñatas made from ceramic and filled them with candies. The piñatas were broken in front of the Catholic church and the *agencia municipal* (town's municipal building) initiating the start of the celebration, and the band stopped playing for people to chant the piñata song in Spanish.

Catholic resident gozona practices

Within the Catholic church there are seven sacraments and *gozona* practices connect with four of them. The four sacraments that *gozona* practices are witnessed in mostly baptisms, eucharists, confirmations, and matrimonies. For each of these sacraments people select *padrinos* (people who support them during their sacrament completion process). Agreeing to be a *padrino* is a form of *gozona*. The *padrinos* bring gifts and spiritual guidance to mentees.

In this section I identify some of the gender specific roles individuals take part in while participating in *gozona* practices. *Gozona* practices can be seen in the Holiday festivals such as Christmas posadas, Día de lo Muertos, and the annual town festival.

During Christmas families in the Catholic church will register to host a posada. This process entails decorating the house and preparing an altar, preparing, and passing out coffee, bread, tamales, *mezcal*, or other food items to community members who come to the posadas. There are usually 200 to 300 people who attend. To host a posada is time consuming, costly, and requires many people to help. Men and women take on specific tasks in helping attend those who are coming to enjoy the posada and help the family hosting the posada. Women predominantly work in the kitchen helping make tamales the night before, boiling coffee, preparing rice, preparing punch, and assuring every person who comes receives food and drink. Women will carry baskets of tamales or multiple plates to pass out to people as they work their way down the line of attendees. Men usually carry heavy cases of beer, and soda donated to the host family. The men will also help prepare the grounds for the festivities by pulling weeds, carrying tables/chairs, setting up tarps as canopy's, decorating, and harvesting plants found in the forest that are used in the altar. The men typically pass out beer and liquor in the festivals. I found it is not traditionally the women's role to pass out *mezcal*. Many women and men chuckled as they saw me passing out *mezcal* at the party.

During the research process Daniel and his wife Ariel asked if we would come to the posada. My husband and I went to the posada to help with preparations. Daniel's parents helped at our wedding and as a form of respect and *gozona* we helped his family prepare for the posada. Daniel is in the military stationed in Mexico City and his wife Ariel was born and raised in Mexico City.

I took a break from interviews on Christmas eve to help with the posada and we started decorating their house with lights and Christmas ornaments. Many people came by to drop items off as their contribution to the festivities or to help with labor. Most of the donations were, tamales, tortilla, cases of beer, and cases of soda. Daniel and his family were keeping track of who helped and who brought item to the Posada as a form of *gozona*.

Ariel's experience relates to the intentional negotiations with her husband based on her level of education and what she believes the gender roles in her family should be like. Ariel and I discovered we had many things in common and we talked for hours as we worked frantically to get the house decorated and the goodie bags passed out to the children. Our husbands helped set up the patio area. Ariel and I talked about our husbands and their paths to their careers, family goals, and educational goals.

Ariel and I first bonded over our kids playing together and she asked what I did. I told her I was in school getting my master's degree and that my husband, Uriel, was in college as well. She had her bachelor's in business administration. I asked if she went to school or worked and she said she worked when she met Daniel but after their marriage she quit working to be a stay-at-home mother. She expressed her distress with being a stay-at-home mother. Her distress was centered on her husband's dangerous career choice and lack of better options without a college degree. She said she was very active and outgoing before and she misses working.

She enrolled Daniel in night school classes, so he could get his high school diploma. The night high school classes are the equivalent to night GED classes in the US.

She talked about her feminist views and how she was pushing and supporting her husband to get a college degree. She was very proud of him for getting his high school diploma. She was trying to convince him to get a college degree, so he could have more options. I told her I did the same for my husband. When my husband came to the US I said he was adjusting to the environment, suffering from culture shock, and had a language barrier that was very difficult in his job. I enrolled him in ESL classes, art class, and a Spanish class. Her experience was very similar to mine as she said, "One day Daniel got home from work and I printed his class schedule for him and told him, 'you have class on Monday.'" We both found it fascinating we married two men who were redefining what it means to be masculine in their lives with their families.

Ariel believes Daniel has made many improvements in how he views the women's role and she also sympathizes with her husband on his traditional masculine views of the man being the provider. She realizes he did not grow up in the city or have the same experiences she has. However, she makes it known she expects him to continue improving because she would like to work outside the home again. Daniel said that attending college was a possibility that seemed to be expensive and out of his reach if he did not save enough money. However, Ariel believes she could support the family while he went to school if Daniel would let her work.

I think Ariel's gender role negotiations both publicly and privately are good examples of how men and women negotiate gender roles and how they change based on experience, education level, and environment. Ariel's main bargaining chip in negotiating gender roles with her husband is her education level and her emotional health she hints is

depleted by staying at home. When she shared her distressful emotional health, I encouraged her to take the kids places, to continue her efforts to work within the home, and to continue negotiating with her husband. She asked about my husband's reaction to my absence in the home and my working. I told her my husband mentioned early on about me staying home and I was emphatic I would be doing no such thing. I think communication is key and there have been times things were not fair, and I brought these examples to his attention, so we could correct them together. I also explained we were living in another country and he was experiencing different pressures to recognize and correct behavior that would be machismo.

Another interesting result of our conversation was the realization that some women who are educated are not only supporting but pushing their husbands and partners to continue with their education. Ariel and I took more direct approaches to enrolling our husbands in classes. There needs to be more studies about the gender role negotiations that take place in relationships with a more affluent partner. I believe we will see more intentional negotiations of gender specific roles or expectations if a woman has higher levels of education.

My wedding with my husband is a good example of the *gozona* practices that take place in Zoogochi. My husband's family hosted the wedding as was tradition in the community for the groom's family to oversee the wedding preparations and festivities. Traditionally the groom would bring my family many gifts such as chickens, beef, pork, *mezcal*, firewood, agricultural products, and in some cases money. However, I am not from this community and we skipped that step as I was already living in his family's

home and my mother was visiting for the wedding. We had legally married six months before the wedding in the Catholic Church. However, it was important to his family, the community, and my husband we marry in the Church. For the purposes of the wedding which was an important part of the family's traditions I spoke with the priest and was baptized and received communion. My husband's parents organized the technicalities of those celebrations as well. As the baptism and communion were on the same day we had one couple who acted as my *padrinos* (people who help guide you through the process). In Zoogochi it is tradition to give gifts and have a dinner with the *padrinos*. When this couple agreed to be our *padrino* it was the equivalent to agreeing, without verbally acknowledging, we would help them in the future with a wedding, baptism, or communion. The wedding was in 2014 and the family still has notes about who helped and in what way they helped.

Economic and subsistent gozona practices

Agricultural practices in indigenous communities heavily rely on the exchange of labor through *gozona* practices. *Gozona* is providing work related labor to fellow neighbors, friends, and family knowing they will return the favor in the future. Most residents in rural indigenous communities participate in agriculture and traditional agricultural practices. Families plant fields of corn twice a year in Zoogochi. In some surrounding communities the climate only allows for corn to be planted once. Apart from corn production, sugar cane, beans, squash, vegetables, bananas, and other fruits are cultivated. Families will participate in *gozona* practices by inviting people to help work in their plot of lands by preparing the land for planting (burning the ground area), planting

seeds, cleaning the crops, and harvesting the crops. In exchange for help the family promises they will help those who come to assist them with something in the future. In Zoogochi the tradition is if someone does not have an agreement to exchange labor then families can pay the person 150 pesos per day. The females in the family will also oversee bringing food and beverages to the men in the fields.

An important dietary element in indigenous communities is meat. Meat is expensive, but many residents raise animals and harvest their meat. Part of *gozona* practices incorporates raising livestock and other animals. An example of this is pigs. It is very common when a resident is raising a pig or multiple pigs they request the kitchen scraps from some of the community members. Those who agree to participate and help take scraps to the pigs are promised meat from the pigs when they are butchered.

The same promise of meat is given when people provide pasture for bulls or cows. Bulls are primarily used to plow fields and spin the sugar cane machines. Those with animals will frequently help others plow fields and juice sugar cane in exchange for money, *panela* (sugar cane cooked down into hard sugar blocks), and promised future labor. Donkeys and horses carry loads of firewood used for cooking. When there are marriages it is common for the groom's family to take several loads of firewood to his future in laws. It is common for friends and family to help carry and provide the firewood to the groom's in laws in exchange for future labor.

Migrant Families That Return

The main concern of the family who recently returned was centered on the limited economic and opportunities and limited supplies (medical and food) in the communities. I interviewed one woman, Sally, who recently returned from living in the US to move back to Zoogochi with her husband and three children. The family had been living in Zoogochi for four months when I interviewed Sally. Her migrant experience heavily impacted her perspective in this research and she mentioned different topics than the community members who have been in Zoogochi consistently. The family's recent arrival in Zoogochi was new to her children and she expressed her concerns about their health, adjusting to life in Zoogochi, and the school system. First, Sally explained in detail the difficulties her children had transitioning to life in *el pueblo* (the village) and some of the new experiences her children had in Zoogochi. She mentioned her youngest daughter feared the neighborhood dogs and bugs. In later parts of her interview she describes in detail the horrors of human trafficking that takes place at the border and the vibrant migrant networks in the US. Sally personally had two experiences with human trafficking. I asked Sally about what prompted their return to Zoogochi. Sally said, "I wanted my children to know where their parents came from." It was important to Sally and her husband their children not only hear about their parent's stories, but their stories to become shared experiences. The children spoke only Spanish and were learning Zapotec in the community, with other children, and in the elementary school. Sally expressed her concerns with the lack of economic opportunities in the community and the stores were frequently without products.

Human trafficking experiences

Two of Sally's siblings came across the border via a paid coyote (a person who is paid to bring people across the border) during different time periods. Her brother and sister were victims of human traffickers. Her brother made it to the US successfully, but her sister had no such luck. Her sister was dumped in an unknown location after being assaulted and robbed. She was later picked up by border patrol agents in Tijuana. A family friend from Baja California drove her from Tijuana to Zoogochi to recover. In the case of Sally's brother, the coyote received payment to deliver him to a specific location. However, his path was changed after he was violently kidnaped by the coyote that transported him. Sally's brother was forced to contact her for ransom money or they were not going to let him go.

Sally described how she insisted on talking to her brother to ensure his safety and that he was still alive. She and her siblings had agreed to always communicate in Zapotec to identify if the person was truly their relative. When the kidnappers put her brother on the phone they spoke in Zapotec. Sally said, "The kidnappers were furious and told them to only speak in Spanish or they could not talk anymore."

Chapter Summary

This chapter identified how Zoogochi has worked collectively for the safety and wellbeing of the community with limited government assistance. Zoogochi built the community middle school and stocked the clinic with medications. Zoogochi and other remote communities in the region live in extreme poverty with a failing dirt road that

connects them to Ixtlán. The lack of connectivity to the city is what continues to block economic growth in the region.

The main concern of all residents was health care. The lack of medications was a cause of many unnecessary travel expenses and gaps in treatment. *Seguro Popular* services were not easy to navigate and can further the gap in access to healthcare for elderly indigenous people. The expansion of *Seguro Popular* services and medications must be a priority in remote communities. Remote clinics should have a pharmacy with basic items not covered by *Seguro Popular*. The Mexican government needs to expand what medications *Seguro Popular* offers in remote areas. The failure to expand *Seguro Popular* to remote areas and provide medications, supplies, and qualified personnel is negligent.

The second most frequent concern was accessing education and having the school in the community funded. Many parents and students expressed the desire to stay local. Staying local should not mean that students will not have equal access to educational services. The community schools are working with parents and students to improve. However, the drastic underfunding of community schools does not allow for vital resources the schools need to improve services to students. In the Discussion Chapter I analyze in-depth what I believe to be organized acts of violence against Zoogochi and other surrounding communities.

DISCUSSION

"The power they have (the government and corporations) is more than a drug, they want to create and dissolve humanity with the power of money."

- Male elder Informant

The previous analysis chapter outlined the experiences with health and educational services reported by Zoogochi community members. I identify inadequate conditions as organized acts of everyday violence against indigenous communities. I do not identify specific people that enact violence. Instead, I identify how the Mexican government has used policies to suppress indigenous knowledge creation and distribution. Regarding health care I describe how the Mexican government has failed to adequately expand Seguro Popular benefits and access to remote areas as negligence. The failure to adequately pave the only road to and from remote indigenous communities in the Ixtlán region contributes to the severity of the inadequate services. I also specify what we hope will become of this research and the partnerships that have been started with Zoogochi and migrants. The community hopes to address identified problems with community driven solutions while working in collaboration with migrants abroad. The quote below identifies the pattern of colonization, oppression, and how the government and corporations have collaborated in the exploitation of indigenous communities.

It may be easier to cast aside the poor, forget their struggles as they are not your own, and deny their requests for what seem to be trivial matters. It is harder to answer to people who call out the double standard and the modern-day colonization of indigenous

communities. As the researcher I was tasked with seeing past the invisible stories of the poor indigenous *paisanos* to find the continuous ways these stories are silenced and made invisible. Their development should not rest on what the world defines as their needs. We instead should be asking the community for their perspective first hand. It is the researchers job to write their stories and publish them as they were intended.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes (2004) uses the theory of structural violence to describe the inadequate and unequal treatment of indigenous populations that leads to continuous forms of systematic oppression. Atrocities that affect the poor are frequently called invisible. These atrocities are taken for granted and normalized ultimately allowing humanity to justify inaction on grounds of invisibility (Scheper-Hughes 1996). Structural violence naturalizes poverty and allows humanity to justify harmful actions or inequities that disproportionally affect the poor (Scheper-Hughes 2004). I argue that Zoogochi and remote villages in Oaxaca have experienced everyday violence due to the normalization of poverty and the physical distance of these communities.

Everyday violence takes place in the geographical location of remote communities and the government's unwillingness to fund road development in the region. Zoogochi has submitted community projects proposed for funding and have been denied funding for projects supported by community members. The municipalities are dictating what the smaller communities can accomplish with the limited funds. Ixtlán insists that the natural resources be sourced from other areas causing the community to lose the added income. Previously Zoogochi would get a quote from a company on what sand and gravel would cost. Zoogochi would match the quote and the community members would

do *tequios*. The money would then stay within the community in exchange for the natural resources used to build. Community members reported that Ixtlán would no longer pay the community for the resources ultimately making the labor of the community an invalid form of work practices. Instead Ixtlán insisted they contract a company, in Ixtlán, to deliver the material or they would not be paid. Recently Zoogochi opted to have Ixtlán bring gravel and sand since the community would no longer receive reimbursement. The micro management of indigenous communities is used to continually govern over the collective communal decisions and indigenous labor for profit. This mentality comes from the colonization experience of indigenous communities and represents how society ignores the sovereignty indigenous communities fight to maintain by defining their own development and social capital.

Indigenous community schools are an important method of resistance to colonization. Systematic oppression of indigenous populations by not supplying schools with the necessary equipment or supplies is an organized act of violence. I argue that by continuously underfunding indigenous community schools the government is attempting to crush a social movement based on cultural empowerment and decolonization.

I ask the academic and the activist think tanks to pay close attention to efforts Zoogochi and other remote communities have made in resisting colonization. It is in the community organization, collaboration, and determination that we see what resistance truly looks like when against one's own country. Zoogochi has faced many barriers in accessing basic health and educational resources that can be traced to intentional acts of deprivation at the hands of the government. Most communities in Mexico are not held to

the same standards of paying for educational and health care services as in Zoogochi. Zoogochi paid for the construction of their middle school, and the school's electric bills until recently. The community has paid for basic medications the clinic didn't have, so their citizens could access them. The government installed an internet antenna in the middle school but refuses to pay the internet service fees for students. As previously outlined in the analysis chapter, the lack of financial support at the state and federal level for indigenous community schools is negligent. The groundbreaking advancements in access to education can be attributed to the indigenous community schools and Mexico's expansion efforts outlined in the literature review. Where there is not a traditional school, there is a community school funded and uplifted by the community it serves. However, indigenous community schools continue to be underfunded. It is time the Mexican government funds indigenous community schools with a budget that acknowledges the expenses communities made, and that focuses on student retention and success. Mexico has effectively underfunded indigenous schools to control what knowledge is taught to students and what knowledge they can continue to create. Decolonization of indigenous communities is an ongoing effort in Zoogochi. They continue to teach and use Zapotec and express their autonomy to cultural rights, traditional practices, and customs.

As previously outlined in the literature review chapter, migrants living in the United States face the common obstacle of maintaining community participation from afar. Our community involvement has been influenced by my enrollment in a public sociology master's program, my husband's enrollment in college, and our combined effort to make a positive impact based on what the Zoogochi community needs. We hope

this research will lead to more applied research and community projects in this region based on indigenous perspectives.

This research was an attempt to place the indigenous perspective at the forefront of strategies and solutions to problems they experience. The final component of the Concerns Report Method was a meeting or review of the information collected. As part of the final step to the CRM I created a preliminary results report which I shared with the Zoogochi town president and town council, who would later share the report with the community. I spoke with the town president about some of the key concerns identified by community members and the next steps he wanted to take.

Organizing community projects are encouraged and if a person has a high school education or higher they may be sought to fulfill these needs in the community. The complexity of requesting funding for projects is something that the community knows they need more help with. This research project was an important step in identifying the needs and resources of the community.

Before we left, I turned in a report of the preliminary findings to the 2018 town president and his council. I explained some of the main concerns community members shared and their suggested plans for future projects. The incoming town president indicated he wanted us to look for future funding options and investigate creating a committee of community members in the US. The Zapotec interpreter for this research, Jose Uriel Morales Hernandez, started a Facebook group in the US with the goal of partnering with Zoogochi. The primary goal of the Facebook group is to take a more active role in seeking alternative funding sources for community projects. The

community wants to see more alliances with migrants abroad and help securing alternative funding sources or strategizing to enrich the communities access to vital resources. Some members of the Facebook group have mentioned doing fundraisers for some of the needs outlined in this research.

The president of Zoogochi in 2018 requested our assistance in starting what he hopes will be a committee of Zoogochi citizens living in the United States. The committee will be a way for people in the US with community ties to Zoogochi to participate and help organize data driven social change. The findings from this research in the Sierra Juárez Region will be used to inform the development of community projects as well as promote access to healthcare, cultural preservation, access to education, and community enrichment. The intention of this research is to incorporate indigenous people's stories, voices, opinions, and ideas into the broader academic and political analysis of their community needs. The oppressed know their stories better than anyone else and research needs to hear what they propose as solutions to problems they experience.

I am organizing an effort to start donation drives for needed items identified by the clinic and schools in Zoogochi. I am also dedicating time to help the community find alternative funding for projects. The community both internationally, locally, and in Mexico are looking at ways to partner with the community to see that these suggested solutions in this research become a reality.

I recognize as the researcher I am responsible for the portrayal of the indigenous perspective. I have found it a tasking yet necessary process to listen to recordings

repeatedly to accurately portray the many stories, life experiences, and opinions as true to their intended meanings as possible. I utilize many excerpts from the recordings to convey the participant's perspective. I reveal the unjust structural barriers that continue to block indigenous communities from using resources at their disposal. I also identify areas in which the Mexican government has been negligent by not providing essential resources to schools, ultimately affecting the quality of education. The community's primary concerns are with access to health care and Mexico's inability to quickly expand *Seguro Popular* to adequately serve indigenous communities.

Future Areas of Research

Future research questions that need to be addressed in additional studies and community collaboration are centered on health and education. My research provoked more questions than answers in the realm of Seguro Popular. Researchers need to focus on identifying obstacles in medication management and distribution within Seguro Popular. How does Seguro Popular need to be expanded to bridge the health care attainment gap in indigenous communities? What are the main obstacles for the elderly accessing healthcare? What are the best practices in expanding traditional health care practices with modern medicine?

Regarding education I believe there needs to be an in-depth analysis of the ways the Mexican government maintains control over indigenous autonomy through education. How is underfunding community schools a method to eliminate the creation and distribution of indigenous knowledge? What are the financial forms of oppression used to

control remote regions. What policies disproportionately affect indigenous communities and their schools? I believe by doing more research in identifying the structural forms of oppression, we will expose the structural violence and normalization of poverty in indigenous communities. Research needs to merge with activism by focusing on the lived experiences of indigenous populations to deconstruct the normalization of poverty.

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APPENDIX

Informed Consent: Parental Consent Form

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian: _____
Name of Child: _____

Access to higher education in Santa María Zoogochi, Oaxaca, Mexico
Parental Consent Form

My name is Natasha O'Loughlin, and I am a Graduate Student at Humboldt State University in the Sociology Department. The purpose of this research is to analyze access to higher education. Your child is invited to participate in a research study that is part of a community wide effort to understand access and barriers to attending middle school/ high school, community enrichment courses, and community needs or concerns.

Your child was selected as a possible participant in this study because they have expressed interest in continuing their education or are continuing their education. If you decide to allow your child to participate, he or she will be asked to talk to Natasha about their experiences going to school and what concerns they have about attending school. His or her participation in this study will last about an hour.

There are no possible risks involved for your child. There are some benefits to this research, particularly the process in which your child will be asked to talk about their plan and goals. Talking about goal and plan help student map them out and identify what is important to them. The process will more than likely encourage your child to further their education and start to think about how they could continue their education.

Your child's participation in this project is entirely voluntary. Even after you agree to allow your child to participate, you may decide to stop their participation in the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which he or she may otherwise be entitled. If you want to withdraw from the study inform Natasha and your information and child's information will be removed from the study completely. Describe withdrawal procedures and whether data can be removed or not once collected.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Measures to ensure your child's confidentiality are I will use pseudonyms on all documents concerning your child. All documents and recordings will be stored in a secure location that only I have access to.

The data obtained will be maintained in a safe, locked location and will be destroyed after a period of 7years after the study is completed. This consent form will be maintained digitally in a secure storage along with the data collected. The consent form will be destroyed after a period of 7 years after the study is completed.

I will ask all participants if they would like to have an interpreter present to participate. If you or your child need an interpreter I will arrange to have an interpreter for the duration of the research process.

If you have any concerns or questions, you may contact the principal investigator: Natasha O'Loughlin, nso30@humboldt.edu, (707) 499-3876. If you have any concerns with this study, or questions about your rights as a participant, contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at irb@humboldt.edu or (707) 826-5165.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to your child's participation, and that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue your child's participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which he or she is otherwise entitled.

Signature:_____ Date: _____

Informed Consent: Interview

Access to higher education in Santa María Zoogochi, Oaxaca, Mexico
Informed Consent: Interview

My name is Natasha O'Loughlin and I am a Sociology Graduate Student at Humboldt State University in California. You are invited to participate in a research study which will involve an interview. The purpose of this research is to learn about your experiences with higher education. The goal of this research is to help the community identify courses, workshops, and resources that could support community members who wish to obtain a higher education. The information collected will be used to inform the community in the development of strategies to promote community cultural knowledge.

If you decide to participate, I will ask you about your experiences, concerns, and needs. Our discussion will be about an hour long. The interviews will be videotaped with audio. The audio will be transcribed into an interview transcript to identify patterns.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You have the right to end your participation any time. If you choose to leave the study, you have the right to request that your information be retracted from the study. I will retract all your information upon request. I will ask all participants if they would like to have an interpreter present to participate. If you need an interpreter I will arrange to have an interpreter present.

Your participation presents minimal risk. If you are uncomfortable or unwilling to answer any of the questions, you may skip that question, or end the interview at any time. I do not think these questions will cause undue stress. You may find it beneficial talking and reflecting on your experiences, contributing to community understanding of the difficulties in accessing education, and what solutions might exist for increasing educational access. Although there will not be any compensation, your contributions will benefit student success efforts in the Sierra Juárez region and in Santa María Zoogochi.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Information acquired from this interview may be presented in classrooms, journals, presentations, publications, and online, but will not be connected to you in any way that would reveal your identity. In the analysis and reporting of any information linked to this research, all identifying information will be removed. If I use any quotations or excerpts from your interview I will omit identifying information and use pseudonyms so that your identity will not be revealed. If using a quote could compromise your privacy, I will not use that quotation.

The data obtained will be stored digitally on a password protected computer until it can be uploaded to my Google drive account where it will be retained for 7 years. All paper will be kept in a secure location until it is scanned into the computer. The paper versions will be destroyed. All consent forms will also be maintained in digital form and will be kept for 7 years.

If you have any concerns or questions, you may contact the principal investigator: Natasha O'Loughlin at [local number to be provided once I arrive in the community]. You can also reach Natasha by email at nso30@humboldt.edu. If you have any concerns with this study, or questions about your rights as a participant, contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at irb@humboldt.edu or (707) 826-5165.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, you are at least 18 years old, and understand that you may withdraw your consent at any time to discontinue your participation without penalty or loss of benefits to which he or she is otherwise entitled.

Signature:_____ Date: _____

Informed Consent: Child Assent Form

Education and Community Concerns in Santa María Zoogochi, Oaxaca, México
Assent Form

My name is Natasha O'Loughlin and I am a researcher from Humboldt State University in California. The purpose of this research is to understand the experiences of students trying to continue their education. I would like to talk to you about what your needs are in your community. I will ask you about high school, community enrichment courses, and college.

I am also interested in understanding what makes going to school difficult, and what suggestions you may have to help other people like yourself. I would like you to talk to me for no more than an hour about your experiences.

I will ask you if you would like to have an interpreter present while you talk to me. If you need an interpreter I will arrange to have an interpreter present. This research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to talk to me, or you may stop talking to me at any time.

If you have any questions about what you'll be doing, or if you cannot decide whether to do it or not, just ask me if there is anything you'd like me to explain.

If you want to talk with me about your educational experiences, please sign your name on the line below. Your parent(s) have already allowed you to make your own decision whether to participate.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Interview Face Sheet

Interview Face Sheet

Does the Interviewee want an interpreter? YES NO Date: ____/_____/_____

Interviewee Synonym _____ Age: _____ # of children _____

Main Source of Income: _____

Location:

- Interviews Home_____
- Public Area _____
- Other _____

Sex: M F
Marital Status

- M = Married
- N = Never married/single
- W = Widowed
- D = Divorced
- S = Separated
- J = Juntado (Cohabitation)
- O = Other _____

Education Completed:_____

Interview Setting Description (before and after interview notes on surroundings)**:**
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
Family Dynamics (Who lives in the home, etc.)**:**
_____
_____
_____

Interview Guide: Adults

Initial Setup and Interview Steps

- Pass out Consent Form and read it to the participant. Then, address any questions the participant may have.
- Describe the research purpose and goals:

  This research is designed to learn about your access to education needs and concerns. You will be asked to provide examples of how you think the concerns and needs of the community would be best met. I will ask you questions about access to higher education and the communities input about higher education, cultural preservation, and community enrichment courses. I would like to identify the community resources most needed. I will ask you about possible solutions to community concerns. These research findings will be presented in the form of a community Concerns Report. In a community forum we will create a Community Plan of Action designed to address the concerns of the community.

Background and Setting

1. Can you tell me about yourself, your family?
   Probes:
   - What do you and you and your family do to earn money?
   - What are some important lessons you teach your family?
   - how many children do you have?
   - What are their ages?
2. Tell me about your lives in this community and what brings you joy in living here?
3. Tell me about some of the difficulties that you and your family face?
   Probe:
   - Economic
   - Geographic Barriers
   - Education

Perspectives and Experiences with Education ("Now I'd like to shift our focus to talk about you and your family's educational experiences")

1. What does education mean to you? Your family?
2. What do you tell your kids about education?
3. What are the most challenging obstacles in sending your children to school?
4. What would help you send your children to school?
5. Now I would like to ask you about your experiences with formal education?
   - What was your highest grade completed?
   - What influenced your ability to get an education?
6. What were some of the expenses that you had when going to school?
   1. How did you pay for those expenses? Did family help you, did you work?
7. Did you ever have to move to another town to go to school?
   1. If so, how did this impact your schooling? Your family?...

8. If yes, where did you move? Where? And for what type of schooling?

9. Tell me about your comfort level with speaking Spanish outside of your community
    - How has your level of confidence with the Spanish language impacted you both in your community and outside? Have you ever not done something in your community or outside of your community because you did not feel comfortable speaking Spanish?

   What do you think is needed to improve your confidence communicating in Spanish?
10. Do you plan to send your children to high school? Can you tell me about your decision?

Probes:

- What influenced your decision?
- Where will they go to school if they do go?
- Who will they live with?
- What will this mean for you financially?
- What could make attending high school easier for students in this region?
- What worries you the most about your children going to high school?
    - Financial
    - Transportation
    - Safety
    - Distance
    - Communication provide examples
    - Food
    - Cultural Practices
- Are you concerned about your children and their participation in the community if they move away to study or work?

Probes:

- What are the repercussions if people are unable to fulfill *cargos* or come back to the community? Do they lose connections in the town?
- Does the loss of the Zapotec language worry your family?

Community Preservation and health

1. Would you and your family be interested in workshops and educational events that help students and families learn more about their environment, cultural preservation, and higher education?
    - Who do you think holds this knowledge and could do a workshop for the children and community?
    - Do you think the elders or women's group would be interested in this type of work?

- If the community had a resource center, what would you like to see the center offer or have available to the community?

2. What workshops or classes would you like to see offered for students
   Probes:

   - Study groups
   - Mentorship Program
   - Field Trips
   - Spanish Classes
   - Computer Courses

3. What cultural preservation workshops or classes would you like to see offered for the community and students.

Cultural Preservation Probes:

- Traditional medicine
- Cultural storytelling
- Artisans, basket/sombrero making,
- Traditional plates and cups
- Dancing
- Music

Community Concerns

1. How would you describe this community to strangers? Finish the following sentences:
   a. "What I like most about Santa María Zoogochi is ….." (Tell me more about this)
   b. "What Santa María Zoogochi needs most is…" (Tell me more about this)
2. What do you think needs to be done to address the needs of the community?
3. I am going to identify different areas of concern. Tell me if you think any of the following areas are of concern to your family and/or the community:
   - Transportation
   - Economic
   - Food
   - Clothing
   - Housing
   - Water
   - Contamination/Pollution
   - Elderly Population
   - Health Care Access

Recent Natural Disasters

1. How have the recent heavy rains, landslides, and earthquakes affected your access to resources?
   Probe:
   - Clinic
   - Schools
   - Transportation
2. Foods? Such as coffee production, corn, beans, and squash?
3. How have these affected you?
4. What do you think needs to be done?
5. Does the community have any plans on how to manage or organize for a natural disaster?

Interview Face Sheet: Minors

Does the Interviewee want an interpreter? YES NO Date: ____/_____/_____

Interviewee Synonym _____ Age: _____ # of children _____

Main Source of Income: _____

Location:

- Interviews Home_____
- Public Area _____
- Other _____

Sex: M F
Marital Status

- M = Married
- N = Never married/single
- W = Widowed
- D = Divorced
- S = Separated
- J = Juntado (Cohabitation)
- O = Other _____

Education Completed:
_____

Interview Setting Description (before and after interview notes on surroundings)**:**
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
Family Dynamics (Who lives in the home, etc)**:**
_____
_____
_____

Interview Guide: Minors

Interview Guide for Minors

Initial Setup and Interview Steps

- Pass out Assent Form and read it to the participant. Then, address any questions the participant may have.
- Describe the research purpose and goals:

The purpose of this research is to understand the experiences of students trying to continue their education. I would like to talk to you about what your needs are in your community. I will ask you about high school, community workshops, and college.
I am also interested in understanding what makes going to school difficult, and what suggestions you may have to help other people like yourself.

Background and Setting

4. Can you tell me about yourself, your family?
5. What are some of you goals or plans after middle school?
6. Do you plan on going to High school?
7. Tell me about some of the difficulties that you and your family face in sending you to school?
8. What makes going to school difficult?
9. What makes school manageable and enjoyable for you?
10. How does your family help you with going to school?
11. Do you feel like you need more help with your school work?
12. Do you ever need help completing homework or assignments?
13. What would you like to have more access to in your community that would help you complete your goals?
    - Study groups
    - Mentorship Program
    - Field Trips
    - Spanish Classes
    - Computer Courses
14. What do you need to help you get through school?
7. Do you feel comfortable speaking Spanish outside of your community?
8. Has your level of confidence with the Spanish language influenced you to not do something in your community or outside of your community?
9. Would you be interested in language development courses?
10. Would you be interested in workshops and educational events that help students and families learn more about their environment, cultural preservation, and higher education?
    - Who do you think holds this knowledge and could do a workshop for the children and community?

- Do you think the elders or women's group would be interested in this type of work?
- If the community had a resource center, what would you like to see the center offer or have available to the community?

Community Enrichment Courses and Cultural Preservation Workshops

4. What workshops or classes would you like to see the community teach students?
5. Do you have any ideas of cultural knowledge that you would like to learn more about?
6. What cultural preservation workshops or classes would you like to see offered?

Cultural Preservation Probes:

- Traditional medicine
- Cultural storytelling
- Artisans, basket/sombrero making,
- Traditional plates and cups
- Dancing
- Music