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Diversity in Mexico: a case study of minorities

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DIVERSITY IN MEXICO: A CASE STUDY OF MINORITIES

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the theme of diversity in Mexico through the experiences of 8 subjects who perceive their lives in a country that denies their situation, emphasizing their equality as human beings. The researcher's interest emerges from the perception that exists internally as well as externally in a country where diversity problems do not exist because of the connotation that it is given by focusing only on the racial issues and the scope of the concept is forgotten. The researcher found that there is a dual discourse in Mexico. On the one hand, the Mexican constitution protects the rights of all citizens; yet in the day to day life, there is a marked difference in the application of laws which leave individuals unprotected. Through the use of qualitative inquiry, with an emphasis on a narrative-phenomenological approach, the researcher interviewed 8 subjects pertaining to 4 minority groups in Mexico: 2 from non-Catholic religions; 2 pertaining to Gay and Lesbian sexual orientation; 2 native Indians and 2 differently abled persons who share their perceptions about living in Mexico. This study found that none of the subjects perceived unequal opportunities compared to the rest of the population. They did not perceive themselves as belonging to a minority group. In fact, they felt that they had a life of fulfillment and considered themselves fortunate beings within their context. Upon analysis of the data subject's perceptions correspond to those of resilient individuals. Grotberg (1995) mentions that resiliency requires the interaction of resilient elements which come from 3 different levels: social support (I have), skills (I can) and inner strength (I am). All these elements are reflected in the narratives of the subjects in this research.

Chapter I: Background to the Study

The researcher attended a meeting in the spring of 2005 held at the University of Kansas for the purpose of obtaining information regarding accreditation of the Information Communication Sciences Bachelor's program at the University of Monterrey, where she is head of the department. While reviewing the criteria requested by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, the accreditation manager skipped the section pertaining to diversity. She explained that this was a situation that did not exist in Mexico.

On the return flight, the researcher checked the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication documents, paying particular attention to the diversity criteria. She discovered the histories of universities in the United States that have, among other initiatives, established racial quotas for scholarships with the aim of promoting inclusion.

Diversity is not only relative to race but consists of many distinctive characteristics, which include ethnic group, sex, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic context, fitness, religion, and other differences. Along with these concrete characteristics, there are less tangible differences such as ways of thinking, styles of communication, and skills and behaviors that allow us to achieve our goals and objectives as members of human organizations (Clearfield, 2003). The researcher discovered that the first connotation that usually arises in a person's mind when referring to diversity is primarily related to racial groups.

The writer believes that currently in Mexico the perception of diversity is not the same as that which exists in the United States. In the United States, diversity is a common

word and is used in day-to-day discourse throughout society and institutions. In this context, many persons are sensitive and aware of the meaning and importance of the word diversity. However, in Mexico, because of the uniqueness of its history, which is discussed later, diversity has neither been widely explored nor embraced as a social construct, and it is certainly absent in the day-by-day discourse that occurs in Mexican society.

Both the internal and the external perceptions of the nonexistence of diversity in Mexico, and its accompanying issues in the country, generate a social perception that everything is satisfactory. Unfortunately, when this happens it is to the detriment of political and social advances that could occur if diversity and its accompanying effects, both positive and negative, were explored and optimized.

As mentioned earlier, Mexico presents a paradoxical reality regarding diversity. On the one hand, there is a perception, both internally as well as externally, that diversity implies an inclusive nation, and that Mexico is a country where within its legislative framework, diversity is protected and respected. In fact, it is well documented that Mexicans describe themselves as open and respectful of diversity. (Consejo Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación, 2003) [National Council to Prevent Discrimination].

However, diversity as a theme is not found on political or social agendas. This means that in the collective social consciousness there is a denial of both the construct of diversity and its benefits and detriments. This is because diversity is not perceived to exist. However, in daily occurrences, as will be explained later, there is discrimination against minority groups (people who are different) and this highlights that diversity does, indeed, exist in Mexico.

How can it be stated that there is no diversity in Mexico when we find data from the Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática (2005a) [National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Informatics], showing that 62 dialects are spoken in Mexico by 53 different ethnic groups, and statistics indicating that of a total of 6,011,202 native Indians, 720,009 of this population are monolinguistic in a non-Spanish language?

This alone is an example of a group of Mexicans whose diversity promotes isolation and exclusion from representation and participation in the mainstream of Mexican society. Of the native Indians in Mexico, 2,315,959 work, yet 10.4% of them do not receive payment. This means that in addition to being native Indians, a high percentage of them find themselves in extreme poverty. This places them in a nonacceptable or discriminatory classification because of their condition (ethnicity).

Language is not the only differentiating factor between indigenous and nonindigenous peoples in Mexico. Integral to the indigenous population in México, for example, there is an enormous diversity in histories, cultures, ways of looking at and understanding the world. In addition, there are also specific forms of organization and social cohesion (Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, 2005) [National Commission for Development of Indigenous Peoples].

As will be explored, it is important to state that diversity in Mexico is denied, not only with regard to indigenous groups, but also in relation to other minority groups. In Mexico it is not the lack of laws, or their validity, which determine the unequal treatment of minority groups and others who are diverse in relation to the majority. There is significant evidence that the Constitution and laws were drafted to honor and protect all citizens equally.

Yet, these laws have been corrupted in a way that primary personal interests prevail over social interests, which have, in turn, become secondary. The phenomenon of the personal above the communal contributes to the recognition of Mexico as a country, among other developing nations, where corruption and poverty are major factors (Transparency International, 2005).

Diversity as a Problem

Diversity is often regarded as a problem, yet it is a fact upon which we must build society since its benefits can be used for building ongoing progress. Placing benefits at the service of a better relationship between human beings and their environment should be a highly-desired goal.

However, human beings seek hegemony (Aguirre, 2003), a process that by itself does not have a negative connotation. The problem begins when, for the sake of hegemony, that which is different is considered wrong, and when there is no expectation for equality in social intercourse, or even basic respect for the diverse.

Often associated with the term diversity is the term minority. This term has a central role in the debates centered on diversity. Given this association, it is important to define just what the term minority means, because it will be used frequently in this study.

Alfredsson (2006), wrote that in the realm of self-identification, one is a minority if the objective characteristics of the person (most often of national or ethnic origin, language, and religion) and/or the subjective characteristics of a person (those characteristics that develop and maintain identity within a culture of a group) are less than those of half of the population of the state. For some, the status as a minority diminishes through time-influenced assimilation into the majority culture.

For the researcher, discrimination begins when diversity especially associated with self or other-identified minority status is denied, or even worse, when what is different, be it physical, social, economic, or legal, or is annulled or destroyed by the majority; or when in any form, the minority is abused by the majority. Wolff (1997) wrote:

> The terms discrimination, prejudice, and racism evoke considerable passions. Prejudice refers to attitude, particularly unfavorable feelings that an individual has toward another group of people. Discrimination refers to action or outcomes, which suggest that one group is treated unfairly compared to another. People who consciously believe that they are not prejudiced against a particular group may engage in actions that treat members of this group unfairly. Conversely, people who are prejudiced may consciously try to avoid treating another group unfavorably. Racism is often used as a "loaded" term to encompass both prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors. (p.432)

There are many examples of discrimination as evidenced in world history where there have been religious wars, world wars, or widespread genocide such as the Holocaust. Radical groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, among others, marked humanity with pain fueled by their resentments. We can see that discrimination on the basis of diversity or minority status is accompanied by a record of malignant scourges that are not limited to infractions that harm small numbers of minority group members.

When there is a problem and its existence is denied or not addressed, the problem has a double impact. Therefore, it is necessary to initiate a social process to recognize Mexico as a diverse country.

This needs to be done in a way that the Mexican population not only accepts, but learns to recognize and respect internal and external diversity as an opportunity to give and receive the best of both worlds. Also, this should be done through the exercise of justice, equality, and better relationships in a way that facilitates actions benefiting not only diverse minority groups, but also everyone in society.

Purpose

The researcher's purpose is to explore, through the personal stories of individuals who belong to minority groups in Mexico, how minority group members experience their differences in a country that denies the existence of diversity and associated discrimination. More specifically, this study will primarily focus on minority individuals with an equivalent educational level to that of a graduate from an undergraduate program.

In the Mexican context, achievement of a bachelor's degree by a minority is considered a significant feat. In this country of many contradictions, an elementary education is free and compulsory by law (Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos n.d.) [Mexican Constitution]. However, only 17% of the population from 15 years of age and older has an elementary education degree. This means that 83% of the population was unable to finish its primary study for various reasons (Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática, 2005a) [National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Informatics]. Although this data has been published, Mexican society feels proud that there is such a law, while simultaneously denying the reality of this dramatic, hard-to-explain gap in the Mexican educational system.

Another important fact is related to the completion of undergraduate studies in Mexican universities. This is something that uncovers the discrepancy between the

rhetoric and reality. Only 14.5% of the population 24 years of age or older, for example, has a university degree. Within this percentage, there is a significant difference between men and women. Men are ranked higher than women according to government data (Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática, 2005a) [National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Informatics].

However, it should be noted that looking at the causes of these differences is not the purpose of this study, but rather for illustrative purposes that offer a realistic, but limited picture of Mexico while defining the difference between what is contained in the country's laws and what happens in its educational system. This situation makes it difficult for the common citizen to develop and achieve his or her goals. If for the average Mexican a Constitutional Right, such as education, becomes a dream that is hard to reach, what is the situation for those who are minority group members and are not in an advantageous position?

The nonexistence of any social conscience toward the problems that minority groups face, plus the social imbalance generated, are both problem areas that require a search for solutions to achieve a better world in which human and civil rights are respected, but any such effort is often hindered. Also, in spite of the existence of laws, few of them are exercised. This makes the problem even more difficult. Compared to the achievements of other countries, Mexico currently experiences a wide gap regarding the application and research of human rights policies on the topic (Wolff, 1997).

The structured work aimed at rectifying the situation on the part of the Mexican government and that of nongovernmental groups is less than 20 years old (Programa de Promoción y Fortalecimiento de los Derechos Humanos y del Derecho Internacional

Humanitario de la Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional, 2000) [Ministry of Defense's Program for the Promotion and Strengthening of Human and International Humanitarian Rights].

Mexican advances in the area of valuing diversity, or at a minimum not penalizing it, rests with the potential for bringing about change in the social consciousness and also in the application of the law. However, to date, not much progress has been made.

The intention of this research is to analyze minority group member experience for those who have achieved at least an undergraduate degree from a university in Mexico. This is done in order to find, through individual life stories, what, if any, obstacles they faced and overcame. The focus will be on problems that are attributed to discrimination, prejudice, and/or racism. Accomplishing this goal will contribute to the body of knowledge related to the mechanism of diversity and its attendant challenges as experienced in Mexican society.

The Opportunity

Given the evidence that minorities in Mexico face significant barriers to full and equal participation in society and must overcome numerous adversities in the pursuit of civil rights as proclaimed in the Constitution, the researcher would like to explore how persons belonging to these groups have managed to progress and excel. Discovering this, the researcher believes that she will at least contribute to opening an important dialogue related to the issue in order to show that diversity is a fact and also an opportunity.

It is important to recognize that scientific research has become increasingly important in public policy decisions. Legislators and political leaders at all levels of government frequently take political positions and propose legislation based on research

findings.

Research may also influence judicial decisions. Some examples include: Linz, Donnerstein, and Penrod (1987) and Fiske et al., (1991); among others all based on research (Cozby, 2003).

The current denial of diversity accompanied by the hidden violation of civil and humans rights appears as a warning signal to this researcher that Mexico is in danger of extinguishing any progress in the effort to participate in an interdependent global society. Globalization is a process whereby the world's people are increasingly interconnected in all facets of their lives—cultural, economic, political, technological, and environmental (Lodge, 1995).

The increasing connections among countries do not mean that the cultural differences are disappearing or diminishing. One of the most important challenges is acknowledging and appreciating cultural values, practices, and subtleties in different parts of the world and as a country. In this context Mexico needs to marshal, not annihilate, all of its potential in order to be prepared to face the challenges inherent in the globalization process. This notion is presented in Chapter II.

Research Question

There are two reasons that have impelled the researcher to raise the question that follows: First, is the challenge brought by globalization before the absence of any political and social structure, guaranteeing the inclusion of the minority groups and respect for their human rights in Mexico? The second is to ask how individuals belonging to these groups have managed to progress and succeed. The question posed is: What is it like for minority group members to live in a country where diversity is denied?

For this study, a minority group will be designated as a group made up of less than 10% of the total Mexican population. Minorities in Mexico include, but are not limited to, groups such as people who are indigenous, the physically disabled, non-Catholics, and homosexuals.

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore and analyze the experience of people belonging to minority groups in Mexico. In this way, a contribution to the body of knowledge will be made.

The strategy to be implemented is to provide a description of the experiences of those who have achieved an undergraduate degree, at the same time taking into consideration the various factors that have contributed to identifiable achievements. Some of these factors may serve as important points of reference supporting and enhancing the social and political consciousness needed to recognize, define, accept, and respect diversity.

The research findings may even provide significant insight and contribute to the creation of an awareness of the inherent potential in Mexico and its developing role in a globalized world. The desired study conclusions may even have the benefit of contradicting Mexico's current long-standing denial of minorities and their rights.

Methods

A qualitative approach will be used to explore thoroughly stories of people belonging to a minority group from a case-study perspective. Participants will be asked to share narratives of experiences they remember, including successes and achievements,

They will also be asked to share the perceptions of their relationship with the

larger society, the perceptions they have held of themselves, and descriptions of support

that they had or did not have during the goal-achievement period. Interviewing

techniques will allow each one to describe, define, and interpret important details drawn

from their experience.

Assumptions

My first assumption, as explained in the introduction, is that in Mexico there

exists a double talk. On the one hand, Mexico is recognized as an inclusive country, and

on the other, there is enough evidence to corroborate discrimination in the broad sense as

it is found in diverse groups of minorities. This is shown in the first Mexican survey

related to discrimination. (Consejo Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación, 2003).

[National Council to Prevent Discrimination].

Closely related to this, my second assumption is that in given minority groups

there are people who are able to achieve their goals despite discrimination and prejudice.

A third assumption is that most of the literature related to diversity has been

written from the perspective of United States' culture. It is not certain if this literature can

be adapted to minority groups in Mexico. This is important. I assume that at the present

there are more differences than commonalities because Mexican law is not applied as it

should be. The other possible reason is that there is no social consciousness of a minority

groups' human rights and their respective inclusion in the multifarious roles in society.

Limitations of the Study

There are certain recognizable limitations that should be mentioned prior to

launching this study. First, I do not know if the members of a given minority group even

recognize themselves as members of a minority in Mexico. It is possible that some of

them may not even recognize that they are in fact a minority, and the corollary lack of belief that their circumstances are any different than those of other citizens.

Another limitation is that the experiences of some subjects may perhaps hinder the possibility of their being absolutely open to share information that they might consider sensitive and very private. Consequently, extra effort will be made to establish a trusting relationship between the interviewer and the person interviewed so that as much information as possible is obtained. Subjects will be assured of strict adherence to the Guidelines of Human Subject Protection (Pepperdine University, 2005).

A third possible limitation is that since the bulk of the literature has been written from a non-Mexican cultural perspective, the researcher will possibly be influenced by it any way, and the requisite objectivity might not be totally present when analyzing data pertaining to Mexico.

Definition of Terms

Definitions of the following terms are provided so that the reader may have clarity regarding meanings that are assigned to certain terms in the ensuing chapters.

Minority groups. Person(s) of national or ethnic origin, language and religion, and/or possessing the subjective characteristics of a person (those characteristics that develop and maintain identity within a given group culture). This could be a population whose group is estimated to be 10% or less of the state's total inhabitants. This definition includes minority status based upon physical, social, economic or legal, religious or sexual orientation, or other groups whose rights are attacked or abused by the majority.

Civil rights. Civil rights are, in other words, the rights belonging to a citizen as guaranteed by the Constitution, including equal protection under the law and freedom

from discrimination.

Culture. Culture consists of patterned ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting, which are acquired and transmitted mainly via symbols. These may constitute the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts. The essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values.

Influence. The capacity, power, or ability to produce effects on the actions, behavior, or opinions of others.

Minorities. The definition of a minority group can vary, depending on the specific context. However, it generally refers to a subgroup that does not form either a majority or a plurality of the total population. Or, it could be a group that, while not necessarily a numerical minority, is disadvantaged or otherwise has less power (whether political or economic) than a dominant group.

Mestizo. A Mexican who is the child of a Spaniard and an Indian. This term is also applied to the descendants of these children.

Relationship. Implies a pattern of intermittent interactions between two people involving interchanges over an extended period of time.

Role model. A person who is an example to others; they can be the people who possess qualities that others would like to have and that affect them in their attitudes and actions. Role models can be positive as well as negative.

Trait. Genetically inherited features of organisms.

Cacicazgos. The political and social power in a small village or community, that is controlled by one person who is identified as the cacique.

Etnias. Ethnicity.

State nation. A sociopolitical construction, structure, or framework.

In Chapter II, literature on diversity in Mexico will be reviewed as well as additional topics that support this study.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature that facilitates understanding the field of diversity in Mexico. The central word here is diversity because it has largely been denied in Mexico.

The researcher will first consider reviewing the importance of the origin of the people who shaped Mexico as a nation. This will be done in order to understand the theme of diversity from the ethnic point of view and the subsequent crossbreeding among the Spanish people. This overview will help us understand the small or zero tolerance existing from the beginning of this nation and prevailing up to the present.

The purpose of this research is not only to focus on the indigenous people as a minority in Mexico, in addition to the reality they face, but also to explore other minority groups to see exactly who shares in prevailing problems of discrimination, prejudice, and inequality, or other facets, all of which are punishable by law.

The Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos (Mexican Constitution) covers civil and human rights magnificently. However, the paradox lies in that although these rights are protected by the constitution, the reality is that the laws concerning these rights are not fully applied in all of their written force.

The globalization process is a variable that certainly impacts the complexity of diversity in Mexico. Some tendencies are shown in this chapter that generally point to the effects of globalization on culture.

The researcher stresses that while Mexican society does not recognize that diversity exists in the country, and that denying the fact is an expression of discrimination, it will be difficult either for Mexicans or people from other countries and

cultures to live together with respect and tolerance toward diversity until there is a full awareness of the problem. However, the researcher's assumption is that it is more than just a superficial problem, and the situation is then carefully redefined as an exciting opportunity.

As was mentioned previously, this research has as its purpose getting to know the experiences of people belonging to minority groups in Mexico who have an undergraduate degree. A look at the Mexican system of higher education, both public and private, will be presented in order to provide the reader with a realistic context focused on a specific social area. In this case, as mentioned, it will be education. At this point the experience of the subjects who are to be interviewed will be brought to light and carefully analyzed. The literature review has as its objective the uncovering of the importance of the present topic in a country living with a paradoxical reality.

Mexico and its Diverse Past

Before being conquered by the Spaniards, Mexico was inhabited by different indigenous groups called Etnias. These contained autonomous villages ruled by different political, cultural, and economical organizations (Guerra, 1992).This diversity already existing in Mexico before the conquest grew substantially after the Conquistadores arrived and mixed with the indigenous population. This process resulted in the creation of new ethnic groups. Obviously, the cultural, economic, and religious diversity, among other factors was much more complex (Hale,1960).

The Mexican conquest was forceful. It was not only military and administrative, but also social, cultural, and religious. Taken together, these factors forged a unique cultural identity that is now Mexico. The Colonia or Virreinato was the name of the

period that followed the Spanish conquest and lasted for almost 300 years. During this time, the conquered territory was named New Spain. Mexico initiated its independence movement from the Spanish crown in 1810 and the new government formally incorporated in 1821.(Griffin, 1969).

At the beginning of the 19th century, it was a challenge for people in the Mexican political sphere to build the concept of Mexican. There were contradictory ideas among the Indian people, the middle class (children of parents of different races), the Castas (children of parents of different social classes), and the Creoles (children born in Mexico of European parents). Each of these entities had personal interests as groups, and each was against the social interests of all.

The concept of the Spanish Empire Nation meant considering all the American States as structured societies in kingdoms and cities united by common traditional bonds toward country, religion, the king, and the laws of the kingdom (Guerra, 1992). This concept of a nation had to change when Mexico's independence movement started.

The 19th century witnessed the creation of the State-Nation. Mainly, the new country was patterned after a concept taken from the French Revolution. It was understood to be something like the voluntary union of autonomous and equal individuals. The French Revolution's motto was liberty, equality, and fraternity. This French philosophy was the same root on which the Mexican State-Nation concept was built. (Florescano, 2001a).The State, from this viewpoint, "is the legal order whose final objective is to exercise the power over a certain territory in which the population that belongs there is subordinate by a mandatory statement" (Bobbio, 1987, p. 104).

A free country was created and its successful construction depended on the union

of the will of its people, regardless of their historical essence. This, up to the present time, has never been achieved because there have always been groups aligned against this kind of notion of State-Nation.(Florescano, 2001a).

The great State-Nation was set automatically to contain the anger coming from all popular communities, as they wanted to affirm things for themselves as ethnic groups, or even as nations. The group in political power (most of them Creoles) accepted, quite naturally, that the State-Nation is the unique entity to which the people must swear their loyalty (Florescano, 2001a).

The project was a task that sacrificed diversity on behalf of a unitary project that went beyond divisions and internal contradictions. It took almost a century to become effective and then it was won at a high social cost. Judicial arrangements were made for the purpose of exercising power within certain territories and also applied to individuals who belonged there by submitting them by force. (Villegas, 1974)

The group holding political power faced three autonomous, firmly established forces in the territory and in society. The first of these was the Church. The second was the regional cacicazgos, in effect villages with a political organization where the power belonged to one man whom all the people had to obey. The third one was the indigenous villages or communities.(Florescano, 2001a).

These traditional forces were joined by the political power that the army acquired in the 19th century. Representatives of the ancient order put up a determined resistance against the intentions of the modern purpose that was promoted by the State. However, the army conquered the resistance through the force of its power.(Florescano, 2001b).

But, some of the indigenous people kept resisting. Two of them, the Yaquis (in

the Mexican northwest) and the Mayan (in the Mexican southeast) combined their ancient piety with Christian symbols and began a war that had religious overtones. This strengthened their identity and allowed them to hold their ground until the beginning of the 20th century. (Florescano, 2001b).

Ethnic diversity and the size of the economic, political, and cultural inequality dividing the population was the biggest challenge the nation faced. (Sinkin, 1979) believes, "Conflict is a proper ingredient of the construction process of a nation because it implies a struggle between different values" (p. 10). The State-Nation, instead of accepting the diversity of the real society, tends to make it more uniform vis-à-vis general legislation, a central administration, and only one power.

The first demand of the State-Nation was to abolish the heterogeneous society by destroying people as well as their differentiated cultures, etnias (villages of a same group of indigenous people), and even entire nationalities. Gellner (1988) wrote:

> To understand the decisive effect that the State-Nation had in the creation of a new historical memory, it is convenient to remember that the homogenization of a society is carried out especially at the cultural level. To construct the State-Nation the language is first of all unified and immediately afterwards its educational system; then the country is unified under one economical, administrative and juridical system. In the case where several cultures and nations co-exist in one territory, the culture of the hegemonic nation substitutes the multiplicity of cultural nationals. (pp. 6-7)

The most recent evidence of rejection of the indigenous groups is shown in the last Mexican census (Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática, 2005a)

[National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Informatics].In this case, approximately 1million Indians were shown to be monolingual since they speak only their native language. These people refuse to learn Spanish and leave their native tongue. They reject such a change.

According to Florescano (2001a), the project of State-Nation that matured in Mexico during the second half of the 20th century imposed on itself, as a priority mission, the concerted effort to submit the diversity of the nation to the unity of the state. The builders of the state were wishing for a nation that would abolish the historical communities by forming a single plural nation. It was the Creoles and the middle class who imposed themselves as the new nation over the multiplicity of ethnic groups and regions of the country. This was done without consulting anybody else. The Indian people, simply stated, were not recognized in the political and legal structure of the new nation. Pre-Colombian history was used as an instrument to construct a new concept of national identity, and museums became a sanctum for native history.

The diversity of etnias came to be the axis of an educational program that regarded it as a thing of the past and labored to transmit the idea of a complete and integrated nation, which was delineated into clearly defined historical periods that had evolved and become united by intentions and common heroes. (Cardenas, 1972). Through formal education, in other words, a national conscience was forged. Symbols, such as the Mexican coat of arms and national emblems, such as the national anthem and the Mexican flag among others, were used to project this new image of a nation. (Florescano, 2006)

In this manner, diversity was mistakenly established as a reality that had vanished

and only existed in the past. In the 20th century, there was no diversity because the Mexican nation was only integrated by Mexicans with equal rights and obligations. In the contemporary consciousness, this was clearly stated in the Mexican Political Constitution (Villegas, 1986). This new concept of a nation produced a correlative list of enemies who opposed the modern nation.

The indigenous villages on this list stood out prominently. But they were conquered and stripped of their values, culture, and religion. When they faced the new government and asked to be respected, their pleas fell on deaf ears (Villegas, 1986).

The different Mexican political parties (such as the Liberals, Conservatives, and Moderates) that were competing in the national arena, had this as a point of common political coincidence: The indigenous villages were dragging the nation toward chaos and they had to be vanished. The attack against the native Indian traditions and values produced a general reaction against their territories (Florescano, 2001a). This gave birth to an intolerant social consciousness that expressed itself by excluding those who did not share similar values. Pointing at the natives as enemies of progress, and also by blaming them for the delay and defeats of the country, a campaign was initiated that resulted in the creation of natives as part of a negative image (Villegas, 1986).

Mexican history shows that diversity has always existed. However, the idea of a nation that was taken from the French Revolution had sacrificed all the richness of its past for the sake of equality and liberty. For this reason, it is necessary to recognize and respect that diversity, and admit that there are more than 12 million indigenous Mexicans who represent more than one tenth of the population (Cardenas, 1972). They constitute more than 60 villages and speak more than 100 different languages. This alone shows the

magnitude of the diversity that exists today in Mexico.

These indigenous peoples possess approximately one fifth of the national territory and are found living and working in the majority of municipalities and localities throughout the country. In addition to this, many of their members inhabit large territories within the U.S. and Canada (Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática, 2005a) [National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Informatics].

This brief view of Mexico's past and its formation as a nation shows that discrimination against the indigenous people definitely exists. It means that accepting this would be in opposition or outright conflict with the concept of State-Nation. We have to conclude that such implications are held to the detriment of native culture and values (Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, 2007) [National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples].

If there is in Mexico the construction of a nation that denies its diversity and pushes the indigenous people back through different social mechanisms, it is important to reject the idea that Mexico is an inclusive country, that is, one that accepts differences. Perhaps Mexico deceived itself into believing that while constructing a nation it was allowing equal rights and respect for its minority group differences. However, we can see that this tolerance is not present (Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, 2007) [National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples].

As long as Mexico does not accept diversity and the significant differences in aspects, economic and cultural, it will not be possible to construct a structural framework that contains equity, justice, and respect for minority groups belonging to the nation (Bobbio, 1987).

The confrontation and acceptance of this situation will make it possible for Mexicans to become aware of this problem, accept it, and respect the minorities. Furthermore, in the near future, all the diverse groups (in the wide sense) that come to Mexico as a result of the globalization process will ask for the support and respect of Mexican society. Therefore, it is better to be prepared.

Globalization and Diversity

When talking about globalization, our primary concern is an increase in international trade for goods and services, participation, and governments. Nevertheless, globalization is more than the simple internationalization of markets. It is political and cultural (Guiddens, 2000).

A question that emphasizes this position is why, despite so-called globalization, cultural barriers remain? The answer is simple. It is a result of the strength that culture has over politics and economy (Guiddens, 2000).

The cultural structure is more stable than economy or politics (Zavala, 2002). This is because general culture in the world has practically not changed for three and a half centuries. Huntington (2001) identified eight major civilizations: Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and African. This contemporary cultural map is almost the same that existed four centuries ago and covers almost the same territory.

Governments in the world have focused energy and efforts on the economy as the great strength that moves their countries into change. We cannot deny that opening the markets generates, among other things, work sources that will generate money or wealth, but not necessarily quality of life. The life of money-making is one undertaken under

compulsion, and wealth is evidently not the good we are seeking (Sen, 1987).

Globalization is a uniform model that pretends to ignore the cultural diversity and isolation of communities. It wants to reinforce the identity of one thing to the exclusion of the other (Touraine, 1999).

There are underdeveloped countries where the average earning per capita is less than a 20th part of that which exists in the U.S. The constant in such countries is that they lack working markets, good education systems, and modern machinery and technology (Zavala, 2002). Globalization in this scenario behaves as an agglutinating strength that tries to minimize individual differences while maximizing the common areas.

Schein (2004) says, "Therefore the learning leader should stimulate diversity and promulgate the assumption that diversity is desirable at the individual and subgroup levels" (p. 401). So, if government officers forget that culture is the great social balancer while it is kept alive and used in a broader manner in society, there will be more justice in the globalization process.

It is necessary to be ambivalent when facing most of the changes expressed in terms of globalization (Touraine, 1999). Diversity, he maintains, has to be lived in society according to values, and the main value has to be everyone's ability to combine a globalized world and the uniqueness of cultural, personal, and collective experiences. It is more than tolerance. Society cannot survive, nor be democratic or free, if it does not learn how to respect and promote differences. To achieve this, the world needs to be respectful of human rights, and Mexico has to face this new tendency while consciously moving forward.

Mexico and Human Rights

People in society are not governed by other people. In reality, government is determined by laws, which are the structures that determine social balance. If the desire of a society is to have justice, peace, or equal opportunities, as well as respect for individual differences, then the sum of these may mean obtaining an increase in material wealth as well as ideas. However, in this view of things, a structure is required that will allow human beings to develop and reach their goals. Therefore, laws are the basis for setting the stage so that within a nation its citizens know their rights and obligations. The corollary is that by respecting the law there is a search for individual and social growth (Touraine, 1999).

As previously mentioned, there are many contradictions related to what is written in the Mexican Constitution as a must and practiced in the law on a day-to-day basis. The Mexican government has been the recipient of the Human Rights award. It was the first nation in the Americas that officially abolished slavery. This happened in 1810 (Consejo Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación, 2003) [National Council to Prevent Discrimination].

During the Mexican Independence movement, the topic of human rights was fundamental in the construction of the new nation. The Mexican Constitution of Apatzingan, written in 1814, reflects this aspiration in the establishment of the individual guarantees chapter. The same assurances were also written into the Mexican Constitution of 1917, and they are still evident at present as a result of the government undertaking its responsibility (Sierra, 1977).

The construction of a culture of human rights cannot be an exclusive task of the

government. In other words, there needs to be a consensus, a kind of cultural construction in which all the social actors agree to the rights and obligations and the way in which these will be actualized (Touraine, 1999).

There are excellent examples of the Mexican government's international participation. This has been demonstrated by its great interest as a promoter of human rights. In 1993 at the World Conference of Human Rights, celebrated in Vienna, Austria, the Declaration and Program of Action of Vienna arose (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, n.d.). In paragraph 71 of the declaration a recommendation is established for the governments of all nations to consider the possibility of preparing a plan of national action. The plan would outline which necessary actions are taken to improve the promotion and protection of human rights (The World Conference on Human Rights, 1993).

As a result of the above-mentioned conference, Mexico made a commitment to create a National Program of Human Rights (The World Conference of Human Rights, 1993). However, this international commitment was not approved and implemented until March 6, 2006 (United Nations, 2006). In this document, Mexico agreed to the international commitment to establish the base for a state policy focused on respecting, promoting, and protecting the human rights of all persons. The National Program of Human Rights in Mexico proposed strategies to accomplish this as a required international commitment and has worked to meet the needs implied regarding this topic within the country (The World Conference on Human Rights, 1993).

Mechanisms were designed to coordinate actions among the legislative, executive, and judicial powers that opened spaces to all the social actors in the country. During the

past few years, Mexico's foreign policies regarding human rights have considered the unified collaboration of international organisms and the international community as a central issue (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2000) [State Department].

As commented on above, some human and civil rights recognized in Mexico's Constitution are examples of what is considered on a legal plane, such as the right to equality, prohibition of slavery, and the principle of nondiscrimination (Article 2). There is also compulsory elementary education (Article 3, Fraction VI). The Constitution states that all education provided by the state will be free of charge (Article 3, Fraction VII). Another statuette stipulates that there will be equality between genders (Article 4), and Religious freedom is included in (Article 24) (Cámara de Diputados del Heroico Congreso de la Union, 2007).

The guidelines for national development must lead toward the guarantee of the full exercise of the freedom and dignity of individuals. Article 25 is another essential guarantee, in addition to the right to work, trade union freedom, and social forecast contained in Article 123 (Cámara de Diputados del Heroico Congreso de la Union, 2007).

Among others, these are some of the individual guarantees that are established in the Mexican Constitution. The researcher appreciates that Mexican law could easily serve as a role model for many countries in the world. The only problem is that what is written down on paper is one thing, and what is actually done is another (Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez, 2006).

Another example of the apparent Mexican government's interest related to Human Rights is this. In 1990 the National Commission of Human's Rights was created. In 1992 came the constitutional reforms and propagation of its laws. Next, the reforms pertaining

to the strengthening of the judicial power came in 1995. Among other considerations, it is important to mention the creation, during the recent federal administration (2000–2006) of the National Council for Dealing with Discrimination. Then there was the National Advisory Council for the Integration of Persons with a Disability followed by the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous People, and finally the National Institute for Women (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2003) [State Department].

Even though these data show political interest in this topic in Mexico, the fact is that there are levels of poverty and inequality that are higher than those found in other developed countries. From the beginning of the 20th century there has been awareness of the problems of poverty and absence of equality. To try to solve this situation, the Junta Federal de Conciliación y Arbitraje [Federal Committee of Conciliation and Arbitration] was created in 1927 (Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social, 2010) [Labor and Social Welfare Department].

This was but one more of the actions taken by the Mexican government to try to solve problems through laws. The committee pertains to a Mexican government agency. It is democratically composed of three sectors: Workers, employers, and the government acts as the arbitrator. Its purpose or objective lies in seeking to maintain a balance between production factors (Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social, 2010) [Labor and Social Welfare Department].

This is attempted via its conciliatory functions and the application of justice regarding labor relations pertaining to federal laws. Deployment of involvement in cases comes directly from the Secretaria del Trabajo y Previsión Social, which has an autonomous status (Secretaríadel Trabajo y Previsión Social, 2010) [Labor and Social

Welfare Department].

The facts show that the salaried workers have not benefited from the opening of trade during recent years. In fact, all salary indicators have fallen including the maquiladora of the North which is the leading export sector of the employed population, 65% does not have fringe benefits (De la Garza, 1993).

Even more interesting, the available data on workers' starting salaries, including those who work independently, show that their incomes are lower than those of workers previously employed (De la Garza, 1993). The results of the Junta Federal de Conciliación y Arbitraje [Federal Agency to Resolve Labor Conflicts] do not reflect, in reality, the progress for which it was created.

Mexico is 11th among nations in population. There are 103.1 million people living in this country (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e informática, 2005b) [National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Informatics, 2005].

These numbers show a country with a large, diverse population, which has redoubled its human rights efforts during the last decades, even though it still faces a great task ahead.

It is common to hear complaints about the poor performance documented in relation to this topic. For example, the National Network of Civil Organisms of Human Rights (2005) has pointed out that although the administration of President Vicente Fox initiated a process of reform on justice and human rights, there is still important work pending in order for the population to finally be able to enjoy fully its rights.

One of the urgent challenges is to push forward a prompt, free, and impartial system of justice. It needs to be one that will guarantee all citizens an effective judicial

tutelage. On the other hand, Mexican legislation has still not adapted completely to the international standards regarding the protection of human rights. One reason is that constitutional status has not been granted to international agreements referred to in these topics or ratified by the country (Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez, 2006).

Deep concern exists for the situation faced by women and the indigenous Mexican people because their human rights are systematically violated (Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez, 2006).

Attacks also are committed against the defenders of human rights and the journalists. Mexico was placed, in 2006, for the second consecutive year, as the first Latin-American country in which the largest number of murders were committed against journalists (Ríos, 2010). The murder of any journalist is an outrage against the freedom of expression that is stated in the 6th Article of the Mexican Constitution.

In the case of human rights defenders, work has been hindered with acts that go from harassment, theft of offices, death threats, murders, manufacturing of crimes, alertness, eviction notices and declarations, censorship, spreading false information relative to specific rights, and arbitrary detentions. Consejo Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación (2005) [National Council to Prevent Discrimination]. There are more sophisticated forms of harassment such as the cybernetic theft of economic resources from reporters who go too far.

Organizations hope that the Inter-American Court of Human Rights will closely monitor the problems in Mexico and prepare a follow-up report with recommendations for the government and the Commission on Human Rights in Mexico (Adital, 2006).

With this evidence, it is, therefore, not too difficult to imagine that the minority groups are still not sufficiently supported by the exercise of the laws in Mexico. The point is that they need to be treated equally, and in this way facilitate long overdue respect for their human rights. Consejo Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación (2003) [National Council to Prevent Discrimination].

As was mentioned before, the Mexican laws are careful in pointing out what should be the best human rights practices, even though the reality is that they are neither applied nor respected.*Consejo Nacional para prevenir la discriminación* (2005) [National Council to Prevent Discrimination].

Under the circumstances described in this chapter, the following questions arise: How have the people, pertaining specifically to minorities, achieved not only a kind of survival existence, but managed to excel and be successful? And, how are they different from those who merely survive, without any hope in disadvantaged circumstances? Another question is: How do they achieve the goal of graduating with an undergraduate degree in Mexico under these kinds of circumstances?

Social Commitment of the Participating States

The United Nations sponsors a project called World Agreement. Mexico belongs to it. Among other features, one of the programs is the International Convention of Rights for Disabled Persons. The purpose is to create an international code that applies to the rights of persons with disabilities. The researcher presents a summary of the most important provisions of the convention (United Nations, 2006).

Countries that join the convention promise to prepare and put into practice pertinent policies, laws, and administrative measurements that will help assure that rights

included in the convention are recognized, and to abolish the laws, regulations, customs, and practices that constitute discrimination (Article 4 of the Mexican Constitution).

When held accountable, members agree to make essential changes in perceptions that will improve the situation of persons with disabilities. The countries ratifying the convention must fight all kinds of stereotypes and prejudices and help promote public awareness regarding the potentialities of these persons (Article 8 of the Mexican Constitution).

As for the fundamental question of accessibility (Article 9 of the Mexican Constitution), the convention requires that countries identify and eliminate the obstacles and barriers in order to assure that persons with disabilities will have ready access to the environment, adequate transport, and the range of public facilities and services, information, and communications technology.

Member countries recognize these rights as a kind of standard of living and adaptation of social protection. The provisions even include public housing, services, and other disability-related assistance. Another provision includes assistance payments for expenses associated with poverty cases (Article 28 of the Mexican Constitution).

The countries involved must promote access to relevant information, provide information in general formats anticipated for the public, make technologies accessible, facilitate the use of Braille in some cases, utilize sign language and other forms of communication, and encourage the mass media and Internet providers to offer online information in accessible formats (Article 21 of the Mexican Constitution).

The participating states must assure equality of access for primary and secondary education, professional training, adult education, and permanent learning. Education must

use the materials, educational technologies, and current forms of communication design. (Article 3 of the Mexican Constitution).

Education for disabled persons must promote participation in society. A sense of dignity and personal value should be emphasized and the potential development of the personality should be taken into consideration. Talents and creativity have to be included (Article 24 of the Mexican Constitution). All this is required so that people with disabilities can achieve their maximum independence and potential.

Disabled persons should also have an equal right to work and make a living. These countries must prohibit discrimination in questions related to employment, promote jobs with proper accountability, and insure competent managerial capacity. Businesses would do well to hire disabled workers, and persons with disabilities should be employed in the public sector. Private-sector employment of disabled should be promoted, and guarantees made that reasonable serviceability exists in the place of work (Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution).

Participating countries must guarantee equality of participation in political and public life, including the right to vote, to run as a candidate in elections, and to occupy public positions (Article 29 of the Mexican Constitution).

Countries must provide assistance for the development of support for the efforts of developing nations in order to put the convention into practice (Article 32 of the Mexican Constitution).

In order to assure the application and effectiveness of the convention, countries must designate a center of local coordination in government and also create a national mechanism with this purpose in mind (Article 33 of the Mexican Constitution).

A committee on the rights of disabled persons, composed of independent experts, will receive periodic reports from the participating states detailing the means they have adopted to fulfill their obligations in accordance with the convention (Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, 1993)

Social Obligation of Mexican Companies

In Mexico the effort of the International Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Serna, 2000) is coordinated by the Confederación Patronal de la República Mexicana [Coordinating Managerial Center and Employers Confederation of the Mexican Republic]. The program extends the services of the Mexican Center for Philanthropy. In Latin America it is known as the World Agreement.

There exists another program known as the Enclosing Company. This entity works with the Secretary of Labor and Social Forecasting through a program called the New Labor Culture (Zedillo, 1996).

The Mexican Institute of Social Security is another government agency that supports persons with physical disabilities.

Even though the conscience of employers in Mexico generally respects the inclusion of disabled people, there exists a growing gap when attempts are made to achieve social responsibility. Maybe this is because a large percentage of the Mexican population has disabilities. These individuals could, if developed properly, help contribute to maintenance of the national economy. Tapping into this labor pool might also help the disabled succeed, where equality and justice is concerned at the national level (Zedillo, 1996)

A Look at Minority Research

Minorities have been a topic of research in countries such as the United States. Everyone knows that the U.S. is made-up of a demographic population of immigrants who arrived from other countries around the world. Within the broader sense of what minority means, ethnicity has been the starting point here for many researchers (Handlin, 1951).

De Blij (2006) in the U.S. Atlas, describes the dynamic forces that have shaped the United States of America, including psychological, economical, religious, urban, and cultural factors, ranging from environmental change to religious practice, the plight of indigenous peoples, and even different kinds of migration patterns.

Immigration has been one of the cornerstones of the U.S. as a successful country. The fact is, the United States constitutes one of the most important areas for immigration in the world. Between 1820 and 1990, the empty continent had received more than 55 million persons. They came from some of the most diverse places on the planet (Hatton & Williamson, 1998).

North American immigration presents very special, if not at times, odd features. It certainly offers clear differences with regard to the immigration that takes place in Western Europe (Walker, 1964). These differences refer both to the volume of newcomers, as well as to the composition of the immigrant population. Another difference is related to the social perception of the migratory phenomenon. North American society is a product of immigration and has developed the way it has with the contribution and effort of millions of immigrants settling in the country throughout decades (Hatton & Williamson, 1998).

One of the essential components of the United States of America image is that it is

a nation of immigrants. Immigration, in this instance, is substantially part of the national mythology. This is distinct from Europe where the essence and origin of the different countries over time has adjusted itself to a kind of cultural homogeneity (Segal, Elliott, & Mayadas, 2010).

In societies that were considered to be perfectly formed, such as the French, the contribution of immigrants has never been valued as a contribution to the creation of a unique group. This population, from the Revolution of 1789, was already presenting itself as developed and refined. On the contrary, help from temporary migration has been seen, instead, like a passenger making only a cursory contribution to national development. It has even been looked at as a kind of problem that in the long term will threaten national norms and cultural unity (Handlin, 1951)

Although almost all Americans belong or are descended from immigrants of major or minor antiquity, or precisely because of this fact, American history has lived permanently plunged in an endless debate on the immigration topic. There have always been questions, for example, such as: Which immigrants to admit? How many? What were their best characteristics? Also, perhaps, there is concern for the balance of miscellaneous ethnic and cultural origins (Segal et al., 2010).

This debate has turned out to be re-intensified at times, for example, when there is an increase in the migratory flow, but, especially when there is transformation in the composition of culture and race. It becomes obvious in this that there may occur an imminent collision between the pressures of the newly arrived immigrants and the older, more established political and economic interests of ethnic/cultural groups, who were themselves once, ironically enough, of immigrant origin (Jones, 1960).

They see themselves as a threatened group losing their relative weight as a dominant influence in society. In regard to immigration, the demands of the labor market also impact policies and practices (Segal et al., 2010).

The discussion concerning the assimilation, if you will, the integration of/or the cultural plurality, is particularly intense in the so-called heartland of American society. The xenophobic reactions of the people proud to have arrived first, against new generations of immigrants have used the false argument of the impossibility of the newcomer's Americanization, or that newcomers pose some kind of risk to American society (Hatton & Williamson, 1998).

This kind of bias was intensified during the decade of the 1980s, when changes were seen regarding the origin of the newly arrived immigrants. At the time, there had also been a strong and uninterrupted increase in the influx of immigrants that would begin peaking sometime around 1910. This was all part of the social, political, economic, and cultural patterns of the period (Segal et al., 2010).

Bringing Together the Different Threads: Diversity, the Disabled, Immigrants, and Minorities

With this background in mind, it should not be too difficult to understand the researcher's interest in minorities regarding their ethnicity. Themes about race, ethnicity, popular language, and social practice in the early 20th century have been reported on by Roediger (2000).

Drachman and Paulino (2004), as editors, present in the book titled *Immigrants and Social Work: Thinking Beyond the Borders of the United States,* a collection of papers by authors who focus on the role that immigration plays in the lives of very low-income

women living along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Nevertheless, HauSiu Chow and Crawford (2004) conducted research in U.S. and U.K. companies that actively promoted equal opportunity employment. They found in the U.K. companies that, at least when regarding perceptions and using social identity theory as a structure, disparities were there to be found, for instance, among gender and racial and ethnic groups regarding degree of consultation, support from colleagues and managers, promotions received, work atmosphere, and attitudes toward work.

The researchers listed a number of comprehensive studies regarding education, women, and diversity in the U.S. One example is Anyon (2005). This author argues powerfully and convincingly for a new vision of urban school reform. She proposes that educational improvement for students of color cannot be solved through educational reform alone. Federal policies such as the minimum wage, union organizing, and tax regulations also influence possibilities of progress for justice and equity in schooling.

Zentella (1997) follows the development of bilingualism among five friends as they grow up in *El Barrio* in New York. Utilizing an anthropolitical linguistic approach for this study, she joins two ideas: "the qualitative ethnographic methods of linguistic anthropology with the quantitative methods of sociolinguistics" (p. 13). The individual code switching styles of five friends are detailed, as well as the development of their English and Spanish counterparts as they became teenagers.

The author continues to study the girls when they became mothers, offering insights into the socialization of their babies through language use. Confronting issues concerning the relationships among bilingualism and linguistic, cognitive, and educational development, this text provides an insight into the language, economic, and

educational issues of a Puerto Rican community (Zentella, 1997).

Bernal and Elenes (2011) argues that Chicana college students face obstacles with the potential for impeding their success in school by employing strategies learned at home. Data analysis from interviews and focus groups is framed by the construct of *mestiza* consciousness.

By centering on the Chicana in the research, the authors recognize the importance and pedagogies of the home in order to answer questions related to the intersections of class, race/ethnicity, language, and gender.

For the researcher, it is important to mention the findings of Apple (1990) regarding the impact of educational institutions. He argues that in order to promote social justice, there must be critical analysis of the different belief systems. He states, "The focus, then, should…be on the ideological and cultural mediations which exist between the material conditions of an unequal society, the material conditions of this society, and the formation of the consciousness of the individuals there" (p. 2). By examining the economic and symbolic issues and cultural capital, we can begin to understand how schools "create and re-create forms of consciousness that enable social control to be maintained without the necessity of dominant groups having to resort to overt mechanisms of domination" (Apple, 1990, p. 3), highlighting the idea that education is not a neutral enterprise, since it is the primary mode of transmission of cultural and economic aspects of the dominant group.

Apple (1990) brings together critical theory to examine the relationship between educational practice and ideologies. In order to accomplish this, he points out that it is essential that it be well situated, "through the concepts of hegemony, ideology, and

selective traditions, and that it can only be fully understood through a relational analysis"

(p. 13), which means, by applications of these same concepts.

The opportunity presented by this research is simply to increase knowledge about

minorities in Mexico. In the next chapter this idea is further described, and the research

methodology will be explained.

Chapter III: Methodology

This chapter includes a description of the process used to identify methods for the research and includes the qualitative research design, which emphasizes a narrative approach. This chapter also reviews the selection of the target population, data collection, provisions for internal validity and reliability, the role of the researcher, and human subject protection issues.

Model for Research

In analyzing which methodology to use for this work, the researcher decided to use qualitative inquiry, which focuses on meaning in context and requires a data collection instrument that is sensitive to the underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data (Merriam, 1998). In this study, the researcher engages in qualitative inquiry because of the nature of the research question: What is it like for minority group members to live in a country where diversity is denied?

The phrase *What is it like*, is a foray into the topic describing what is going on in the country. This topic needs to be explored and presented as a detailed view of findings presented. Also, qualitative methods will be used that will facilitate a more in-depth study of the issues. Qualitative methods focus on the themes that emerge from the narrative of the subject, and such descriptions are expressed in non-numerical terms using language and images (Cozby, 2003).

Qualitative studies have been classified or organized as typologies under a baffling number of traditional choices. Some of these are people such as Jacob (1987). He organized all qualitative research into traditions such as Holistic Ethnography and Ecological Psychology. Then Tesch (1990) was ambitious enough to organize 28

approaches based on the researcher's central interest. Creswell (2003) chose

representative discipline orientations that included Ethnography from Anthropology and

Sociology. There was Phenomenology from Psychology and Philosophy. He also

organized grounded theory from Sociology. He took a biography originating from the

Humanities and Social Sciences, and finally, case study from human Social Science.

Qualitative inquiry allows not only learning about the experiences of others, but

also the possibility of examining the experiences that the researcher brings to the inquiry.

These are experiences that to some extent affect what is studied and help shape, for better

or worse, what is discovered (Patton, 2002). For this research, a qualitative inquiry study

will be the method that allows the researcher to find the information that is sought.

Qualitative Research Design

Design is the logic that links the research questions, the data to be collected, and

the conclusions to be drawn. Yin (2003) states, "A research design is the logic that links

the data to be collected and the conclusion to be drawn to the initial questions of study"

(p. 19). This is fundamental for the researcher to achieve a process that helps to answer

the question understudy in a logic way. Qualitative research has origins in human and

social sciences. Creswell (2003) compares and identifies fundamental differences among

the five qualitative traditions of inquiry: (a) Biography, for example, focuses on exploring

the life of an individual through interviews and documents; the data analysis is done

using stories, epiphanies, and historical content. The narrative form is a detailed picture

of an individual's life. There is (b) Phenomenology. This is applied as a description of the

essence of the experience. The focus is to understand the essence of experience about a

phenomenon and then data analysis is applied using statements, definitions, and general

descriptions of the experience. Next is (c) Grounded Theory Focus in which the emphasis is on developing a theory grounded in data from the field. The narrative form is an abstract or theoretical model. The data analysis is through open coding, axial coding, selective coding, and conditional matrix. Then there is (d) Ethnography. This is defined as a description of the cultural behavior of a group or an individual and the main objective is to describe and interpret a cultural and social group through description, analysis, and interpretation. The (e) Case Study is the final approach. It focuses on developing an in-depth analysis of a single case or multiple cases and it is presented in narrative form describing in-depth study of a case or cases. The data analysis is done through description, themes, and assertions.

Within the qualitative methodology, the phenomenological approach was most appropriate for the researcher's purpose. Through this approach, the researcher can capture the description of the essence of the subject's experience by focusing on understanding the primary elements of experience related to a phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). Phenomenological studies utilize narrative analysis to understand the subject's life and the way it was experienced and perceived. Data analysis involves using statements, definitions, and general descriptions of the experience. The researcher's objective is to deduce how the subjects of this research experience their differences in a country that generally denies the existence of differences.

It is a challenge for the researcher to represent a life in scientific work (Lynch & Woolgar, 1990), as there will always be a gap between what was lived by the subject and any communication about it. Schwandt (2001) insisted on careful description of ordinary conscious experience of everyday life (the life-world) a description of things (the

essential structures of consciousness) as one experiences them. These things people experience include perceptions (hearing, seeing, etc.) believing, remembering, deciding, feeling, judging, evaluating, and experiences of bodily action.

Phenomenological descriptions of such things are possible only by turning from things to their meaning. This turning away can be accomplished only by a certain phenomenological reduction or epoch that entails bracketing or suspending what Husserl (1999) calls the natural attitude which is the everyday assumption of the independent existence of what is perceived and thought.

Phenomenology then, is a method the goal of which is to identify and describe the subjective experiences of respondents by studying everyday life from the subject's point of view. Through the phenomenological approach, the researcher records and interprets the subjects' experiences and strives to understand the essence of those experiences.

Research Question

The first thing the researcher must to do is be explicit about what he or she wishes to know. Questions and answers are part of everyday conversation. As was stated before, the research question is: What is it like for minority group members to live in a country where diversity is denied?

Several writers offer suggestions for writing qualitative research questions (e.g., Cozby 2003; Creswell, 2003; Patton, 2002). To accomplish this, the objectives of studies are to explore (a) self-perception in his or her interaction with others; (b) look at the perception of the attitude of subject's close family and friends, as they are regarded as part of the specific minority situation; (c) identify the barriers—if they exist—and how participants were able to avoid them; and finally (d) the helpers who motivated subject

participant success and their contribution, where it applies, will be described in each case. All of these objectives will be used in this study, except (b) because the researcher will not be interviewing family members as well as friends.

As mentioned in Chapter II, Mexico is a country in which diversity is handled with a kind of double speech. In the constitution, it is stated that everyone has the same rights and obligations, but there are clear discrepancies thatexist. Evidence suggests that minorities in Mexico may be denied equal treatment, which devalues and subtracts from the importance of their specific differences. If this is true, how minorities handle the day-to-day adversity of being denied opportunities and still achieve their goals is a major concern in this work? This is the central focus of this research.

Given the evidence that minorities in Mexico face significant barriers to full and equal participation in society, and must overcome numerous difficulties in the pursuit of civil rights proclaimed in the constitution, the researcher would like to explore how persons belonging to these groups have managed to progress and excel. Discovering this, the researcher believes, will show the reader what the Mexican reality is on a day-by-day basis, despite what is written in the law.

Using the question: "What is it like?" for the researcher really means "tell me your history, or talk to me about the barriers that you faced," if that was the case, or "what or who gave you the most support that helped you succeed?" To collect rich data related to these questions the research design necessitates having face-to-face interviews with respondents. "The fact that an interview involves an interaction between people has important implications. First, people are often more likely to agree to ask a real person questions than to answer a mailed questionnaire" (Cozby, 2003, p. 121). The face-to-face

interview is a technique that could appear as an easy-going conversation between the researcher and the subject under study. In reality, it is an exciting challenge to be able to establish trust about the confidentiality of the subject's information. Another factor is this: in modern society, the time expended is an element that could become an obstacle in completion of the task. This is because it takes more time to go deeper into the expression of thoughts and feelings, especially if they are ambiguous and more a specific explanation and detailed examples are needed.

Having adequate time to accomplish this effectively can be a potential obstacle. It might be that the subjects don't have enough time to delve deeply into their own life experiences. The researcher will need to be efficient as an interviewer and extract the key information needed in order to complete the data collection on the first attempt. For this research purpose, the face-to-face interview with the subject under studywill be used as a primary data source even though additional contextual material might be available that could be used to describe the setting for the case.

Narrative Approach

Describing a life is somewhat like walking in the forest and trying to find a clear path that will show a meaningful way for us and others. It is no longer possible to follow the paths taken by previous generations. There are too many external and internal changes that have been made from one generation to the next. Also, the conditions surrounding role and gender have undergone changes. To talk about our life has a certain balance and diversity, a certain kind of coherence and fit. Talking with others and understanding the hidden and unrecorded path we choose to take could be a task that only professionals can master. Conrad, Grant, and Lattuca (2001) highlight the complexities of

the narrative approach to research. They mention that is a form of social action that embodies the relation between narrator and culture which entails not only collecting and interpreting the narrative but ascertaining how the narrative was shaped by the culture. This means that a narrator takes responsibility for making things relevant by telling the story in a clear and meaningful way. This is done through questions the researcher asks, which make a difference in the quality of the information collected. Life stories embody what the researcher needs to study, for example, the subject's story and the social world that this subject shares with others. It includes the use of cultural resources and a proven way of dealing with cultural constraints. Through the use of narrative the researcher can come to know the way the subject has been marked, shaped, and/or held back by the given culture (Creswell, 2003) The narrative approach, for the research purpose outlined here, is a key factor in getting the information the researcher is seeking. The next step is the way in which the quality of this research will be proved.

Internal Validity and Reliability

One of the challenges of qualitative research design is to test its quality. Kidder and Judd (1986) summarized four tests common to all social science methods.

The first test of research quality is validity: The researcher must select the specific types of changes that are to be studied, relate these to the original objective of study, and then demonstrate that the measures selected for these changes reflect the specific types of changes made. This research studies minorities who earned a bachelor degree in Mexico. That will be the characteristic of the subject sample. The researcher's objective, as mentioned above, will provide a chain of evidence that proves that discrimination exists in Mexico. The characteristic of the participants will be aligned with the original

objective of this study.

The next test of research quality is internal validity, which establishes a causal relationship in which a researcher tries to determinate whether event x led to event y. The internal validity applies only for explanatory or causal studies. As mentioned, this research will be descriptive and interpretative and is not concerned with making causal claims.

External validity deals with the problem of establishing whether the study's findings can be generalized, as generalization is not automatically assumed. It is necessary to replicate the findings where the theory has specified that the same results will occur. This research objective is a contribution to the body of knowledge regarding social minorities and discrimination that is denied in Mexico.

As Creswell (2003) explains, a good qualitative study must have rigorous data collection procedures, the qualitative approach to research must been framed within assumptions and characteristics of this type of study, use a tradition of inquiry, and have a single focus, among others. Qualitative research could be seen as a broad exploration in which the findings suggest a wide range of variables that the researcher has not anticipated. This leads the researcher to consider some of the methodology's limitations. As Patton (2002) mentions, "Personal narratives, family stories, suicide notes, graffiti, literary nonfiction, and life stories reveal cultural and social patterns through the lens of individual experiences" (p. 115). It is important to have in mind that the findings of qualitative studies cannot be generalized as a reality. It is just like taking a picture of a person, which is only an image of an individual with a special identity and that identity may or may not transcend the medium in which it was represented. The researcher is

conscious that these findings may represent the first baby steps for further research regarding this topic and, as such, it will not be assumed that the results are generalized.

Target Population

As Creswell (2003) states, it is important to find the correct subjects who will freely contribute with an openness and willingness to share information. For this reason, the selection of the study subjects will be by convenience sampling. As explained before, securing interviews with appropriate respondents was aided by professionals who work with minorities in Mexico and have access to, and the trust of, possible respondents.

It is hoped that respondents freely decide to be or not to be interviewed. Because of the nature of the research, at least eight subjects were interviewed. The researcher looked for participants belonging to a variety of minority groups in Mexico. For this research purpose, the words subjects or participants will be used interchangeably.

Interviewing Subjects Who Are Minorities in Mexico

Without a doubt, interviewing minorities in Mexico seems like a difficult task to achieve. As explained before, one of the research assumptions is that maybe these minorities, in reality, do not feel any different or see themselves as belonging to a minority group. The researcher knows from experience that each interview will be a challenge to surface accurately and interpret the subject's narrative and that her interview abilities will be tested with each interaction.

It is also important to keep in mind that the interview and transcript preparation will require great sensitivity, since from the very start of the research through the final report, talking about one's minority status is an especially sensitive topic for the participant in both his or her own life and in how the participant's life is viewed by

others. This exploration of a facet of Mexican culture and the sensitivity of the subject requires the utmost efforts to protect the confidentiality of the subject.

The researcher explained to the subject the objective of the interview and then asked him or her to respond to those questions with which he or she felt comfortable. Also, if the subjects, at any point, did not want to continue, they were free to withdraw from the research without consequence. The researcher is committed to constant awareness of the ethical code related to human subject protection.

Protection of Human Subjects

This research follows Pepperdine's IRB guidelines, which defined minimal risk as "…the probability and magnitude of physical or psychological harm that is normally encountered in the daily lives, or in the routine medical, dental, or psychological examination of healthy persons" (Protection of Human Subjects, 2005, p. 46).

The consent to participate in this study on behalf of the subjects is voluntary and during the interview participants received a written document in which they were informed of the following: (a) the purpose of the study; (b) methods being used; (c) the reason for selection of participants; (d) benefits of the study; (e) potential risks, if any; (f) the required time commitment; (g) confidentiality; and (h) a statement indicating that participation was voluntary and that participants may withdraw during the process. After reviewing and accepting these elements, the subjects could share his or her experiences. Therefore, this study posed minimal risk of harm to the subjects and was classified for exempt review and subsequently approved by the IRB (see Appendix A for Completion Certificated).

Data Collection

When using the phenomenological approach, data collection occurs through interviews, observation, and physical artifacts. The researcher selected audiotape recording because she considers it is less intrusive than videotape and it is easier for the researcher to concentrate on the topic and the dynamics of the interview. As Kvale (1996) mentions, there are at least two requirements for an audiotape recording of an interview and the subsequent transcription. The requirements are: (a) that it was in fact recorded, and (b) that the conversation on the tape is audible. The researcher first asked the subject for permission to tape the interview and then worked to ensure that the tape recorder was functioning and that the voice of the subject was registered properly.

The protocol followed in the interviews was as follows (see Appendix B for Informed Consent):

1. First, the researcher initiated the conversation seeking to establish rapport with the subject. The researcher thanked the person for his or her time and collaboration. Another important point covered was the confidentiality of the information and the IRB guidelines; at this point, the subjects who agree, signed the consent form. The researcher asked the subject whether it was all right to record the interview and make written notes. If the subject agreed, the researcher then checked whether the equipment was working correctly.

2. The researcher initiated the conversation with the following question: What is it like for minority group members to live in a country where diversity is denied? The objective was for the ensuing narrative to flow without constraint as this question was answered.

3. In case the objective in the previous question was not met, the researcher

    asked more direct questions that covered the following aspects: (a) Tell me

    about your first years in school; (b) Who were your first friends?; (c) What

    were your teen years like?; (d) Share with me your experiences at the

    university?; (e) What was your first work experience like?; (f) Have you ever

    been denied something that you had a right to have because you are part of a

    minority? (such as having access to a public place, belonging to a group or

    club, among others); (g) in case the subject pertained to a group with physical

    disabilities, I would ask: Tell me about your experience to go from one place

    to another; have you ever had difficulties to access a building?

4. In each question, the researcher sought to delve deeper through the responses

    obtained from the subject with prompts such as: (a) tell me more; (b) go on;

    (c) how did it happen? Special attention was placed on stopping when the

    subject showed discomfort with a particular question. The researcher

    proceeded to the next question.

5. In each scenario that was exposed about the participant's life, the following

    questions were asked: (a) What was a highlight experience in that phase of

    your life?; and (b) What challenges did you experience?

6. For closing, the following questions were asked: (a) Is there something else

    you would like to add regarding life in this community?; and (b) Is there

    something that you would have liked to have been different?

7. The researcher ended by asking the subject how he or she feels and expressed

    gratitude for her or his generosity in sharing experiences.

8. Immediately after each interview, the recording was checked and notes were taken regarding the subject's attitude that was observed. The purpose of this was to ensure the quality of the recording and to ensure thatthings that might be important during the interview were not forgotten or not included.

9. Afterwards, the recorded interview was transcribed.

Kvale (1996) wrote:

Decisions concerning style of transcription depend on the audience for which a text is intended. Also, if the analysis is to be in a form that categorizes or condenses the general meaning of what is said, a certain amount of editing of the transcription may be desirable. (p. 170)

Regarding the reliability of the transcription and its validity, the researcher employed two persons who independently read the interpretative construction of the subjects' interviews and expressed the reliability of the findings. As Kvale (1996) explains:

Transcriptions are not copies or representations of some original reality. They are interpretative constructions that are useful tools for given purposes. Transcripts are not contextualized conversations; they are abstractions, just like topographical maps are abstractions from the original landscape from which they are derived. (p. 165)

In this case, the researcher was careful about what constituted a useful transcription for her research purpose.

1. The analysis methodology includes the identification of main themes shared during the interview and categorizes them through the weaving of phrases that

describe the essence of the experience that was lived.

2. Once the categories of the main themes or essence of the experiences lived were identified, the researcher asked two colleagues to read the findings in order to ensure the reliability of the data. Inter-rater reliability assessment is often recommended in studies involving measurements to assess raters' ability to implement classification procedures consistently (Gwet, 2010).

3. At the end, a summary was made of the interpretation of the data that facilitated the conclusion of the research findings.

Role of the Researcher

The trust of the subject is necessary to make progress and to achieve this researcher as interviewer must be very respectful and empathetic. This means taking special care with sensitive personal areas and upholding a professional commitment to human subject protection. Researchers "need two attributes: the sensitivity to identify an ethical issue and the responsibility to feel committed to acting appropriately in regard to such issues" (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990, p. 424). As mentioned, the subject had, at all times, the reassurance of only having to talk about those things that did not exceed his or her comfort level. To reiterate, the subject was always free to withdraw from the research. With the methodology explained here, the researcher obtained the pertinent information and knowledge about minorities in Mexico that she sought.

Ethical Issues

Interviews are interventions (Patton, 2002). The narrative technique is a reflective process that could affect the person being interviewed because it could leave them knowing things about themselves that they were not fully aware of before the interview.

The researcher needs to be clear that she is not there to give advice or provide therapy; the objective is gather data, not to change people. The interviewer must proceed with an eye toward minimal risk for the interview subject.

The consent to participate in this study needs to be voluntary and during the interview the subject received a written document in which they were informed of the following: (a) the purpose of the study; (b) methods being used; (c) the reason for selection of participants; (d) benefits of the study; (e) potential risks, if any; (f) the required time commitment; (g) confidentiality; and (h) a statement indicating that participation was voluntary and that participants may withdraw during the process.

Summary of Chapter III

This chapter presented the researcher's logic for selecting a qualitative-phenomenological methodology approach for this study. It also presented the intended target population, data collection techniques, reviewed validity and reliability issues, as well as the data analysis steps that were taken. The researcher also reviewed the guidelines required by the Pepperdine University IRB designed to protect the human subjects who participated in this study.

Chapter IV: Data Presentation and Summary

The information was obtained during interviews with eight subjects belonging to minority groups: (a) Two belong to a gay and lesbian group, (b) two belong to a differently-abled group, (c) two are from an indigenous group, and (d) two represent members of a non-Roman Catholic religious group in Mexico. Their answers serve as an information base, allowing us to think about the central question of the study: What is it like for minority group members to live in a country where diversity is denied? The following information provides the evidence needed to give an answer. The study questions and results are all presented in this chapter.

It is organized as follows: there is the original (a) demographic data, and (b) all the information is ordered in categories. In addition, a summary is included highlighting the most relevant findings from the data presented. This serves as the basis for conclusions reached in the final chapter.

Participants' Demographic Data

All the interviews begin with a review of the purpose of this investigation as well as a clarification of the IRB guidelines previously established. These are followed by questions related to the demographic information. This section summarizes participant demographic data, including field of work and professional career.

The data in Table 1 suggests that the subjects interviewed are mostly young and fall in the age range between 20 to 29 years. However, many of the ages are in the 50 to 59 year age range. However, the greater number of participants interviewe dare in the 30 to 39 year age range.

Table 1

Age and Minority Group of Subjects

Age Range	Subjects	Differently-Abled	Indigenous	Non-Roman Catholic Religion	Gay and Lesbian
20–29	3	1	1		1
30–39	4	1	1	1	1
40–49	0				
50–59	1			1	
Total	8	2	2	2	2

Table 2 shows that none of the subjects is a business owner. All are employees who work in the following types of organizations: Nonprofit, For-Profit, Government, and Education and Religious Organizations.

Table 2

The Field of Work of Subjects

Subjects	Field of Work / Organization				
	Non-profit Organizations	For-profitOrganizations	Government	Education	ReligiousOrganization
Differently-Abled	1	1			
Indigenous			1	1	
Non-Roman Catholic Religion	1				1
Gays and Lesbians		1		1	
Total	2	2	1	2	1

The information presented in Table 3, Final Education Level of the Subjects Interviewed, shows that the participants' educations range from a bachelor's degree to doctoral studies. It is interesting that in the sample, only the indigenous are those who have baccalaureate (bachelor degree) studies. In the other minority groups, only one has a master's degree.

Table 3

Final Education Level of Subjects

Subjects	Degree		
	Bachelor	Master	Doctorate
Differently-Abled	1	1	
Indigenous	2		
Non-Roman Catholic Religion	1	1	
Gays and Lesbians		1	1
Total	4	3	1

In Table 4, Socioeconomic Level of the Subjects, the low level pertains to descriptions that describe their situation when material things, including food and housing, were scarce.

Table 4

Socioeconomic Level of Subjects

Subjects	Socioeconomic Level		
	Low	Middle	High
Differently-Abled		1	1
Indigenous	2		
Non-Roman Catholic Religion	1	1	
Gays and Lesbians			2
Total	3	2	3

The participants' families experienced circumstances in which there were struggles and difficulties making ends meet; sometimes they had to rely on relatives to survive. The middle level pertains to descriptions in which the basic needs were met, but they still had to struggle to pay for education and luxuries. The high-level families are those tha thad enough to fulfill many of their material needs and enjoy activities, go on trips, enjoy education in private schools or universities, and so on. Based on these descriptions, three of the subjects belong to the low level; two are at the middle level; and three are on the highest level.

In summary, the demographic data presented in Tables 1 to 4 shows that the ages of the subjects interviewed range from 20 to 59 years of age. This evidence reveals that they were born in the decades of the 1950s to 1980s. Another factor regards the subjects' field of work: two of them were in non-profit organizations, two worked in for-profit organizations, one was employed in government, two in the field of education, and one in a religious organization.

Another factor in this summary is that the subjects' final level of education ranges from the bachelor's degree, representing most of the sample, to doctorate (Ph.D.) studies. There are indigenous peoples in the sample who have only attained the grade of a baccalaureate [*licenciatura*] and the gays and lesbians achieved the highest graduate degree level.

The final observation of the demographic data is that all of the subjects, those in the lower socioeconomic level as children, currently remain there. Interestingly enough, of the three subjects who were on the high level in the past, two are now at the middle level. Those who in the past were at the middle level remain there.

Data Collected During Interviews

As was mentioned above, in the study it was decided to use qualitative inquiry, which focuses on the meaning of things in context. This requires a data collection instrument that is sensitive to the underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data (Merriam, 1998).In addition, by using the phenomenology approach, the researcher can look at the essence of experience related to a phenomenon and then apply data analysis using statements, definitions, and general descriptions of that experience for a better understanding. The researcher's objective here was to get to know, via the

narrative approach, each of the chosen subjects, and try to see how they experienced differences in a country that denies the existence of differences.

The subjects' narratives are looked at in order to explore the perception they have of themselves as members of a minority, how they see themselves in different family interactions and socially, how they identify their challenges, and how they were able to overcome adverse circumstances. In some cases, there existed others who are identified; they would help by pushing the subjects to achieve their objectives in life.

After the interviews, the information was categorized in order to identify emergent topics. In summary, the observations that emerged as topics in the life history narratives of the subjects interviewed really revolved around (a) family and social networks, (b) attitudes toward learning, (c) the approach taken when facing challenges, (f) perception about how others are treated, and (g) a variety of assorted considerations.

The information presented illustrates each incidence of behavioral conduct with examples written in block format. This data was selected from various conversations recorded during individual interviews. Next the information was classified and structured in categories determined by the researcher and then validated by independent raters.A final summary of the topics is included at the end.

Starting Point: The Past

For the methodology selected for the research, a questionnaire was not prepared. The inquiry starts with the provocative question: How was your infancy as a subject belonging to a minority group in Mexico? The objective of this question was that the narrative would be linear, starting at childhood and continuing through maturity. This was important so the subjects were able to share, in some kind of order, those moments

that were for him or her significant and also to facilitate discussion.

The participation of the researcher was kept to a minimum; the modus operandi was for the subjects to talk about what had been significant in their lives. In all the interviews, special care was taken to motivate the participants so they could talk with only a few interruptions. The purpose was that they were sharing this discussion about their history in story form.

For the report, the researcher assigned a code to each one of the subjects. With this the researcher extracted topics surfacing from the interview. The code is made up of the letter that identifies whether the participant is a man (M) or woman (F); Male or Female).This is followed by the initials for Physically Disabled (PD),Indigenous (I), Non-Romanic Catholic (NRC), and Gay and/or Lesbian (GL).

Table 5 presented below describes the codes utilized to identify the subjects and also to facilitate reading the narrative.

Table 5

Codes Used to Identify Subjects

Code	Meaning
FPD	Female Physically Disabled
MPD	Male Physically Disabled
MI	Male Indigenous
FI	Female Indigenous
FNRC	Female Non-Roman Catholic
MNRC	Male Non-Roman Catholic
FGL	Female Gay and Lesbian
MGL	Male Gay and Lesbian

In order to familiarize the reader with the life of the subjects, a brief outline is presented so that no information is given that could possibly put at risk the confidentiality of each identity.

FPD: She was born in a middle class family. Her physical problem was present since birth. Her vertebral column did not develop and she reached a height of approximately 1meter. Her legs did not grow either and this permanently left her in a wheel chair. She studied in private schools. She always maintained good academic performance. She considers that her strongest support in every aspect had especially been from her mother; in other words, someone whom she considers "her angel."

FPD attended a university that had stairs and there wasn't any access for persons with special abilities or handicaps. Her mother had to assist her and carried her from one classroom to another. She also did this when FPD studied for a master's degree. Fortunately, the institution permitted her mother to enter classes with her daughter. Also, the company where FPD works in the area of social responsibility has permitted her mother to accompany her, even when her daughter has to go to the company's plants. This includes going to other cities in the country and they even pay the lady's trip expenses.

In summary, FPD is a person who makes friends easily. She has a good sense of humor, is responsible, and does not see her physical limitation as an obstacle in the achievement of her objectives.

MPD: He was born with a lack of pigmentation in the retina. His family has done well in terms of economic resources. He had a happy childhood and his brother was and continues to be his best friend. Considering that he did not have his sense of sight, his hearing developed in such a way that it helped him to adapt easily to his environment. He has always been conscious of his talents and demonstrates a confidence in himself superior to the average. He talks about that, despite considering that his brother is more

intelligent than he is. His brother never accepted going out when they were going to have exams because "he had to study." As a result of his auditory memory, he has the ability, that even without studying, he is able to remember word-for-word the explanations of the instructors. He even learned to ride a bicycle and was taught how by his brother. He works in a nongovernmental organization, is married, and feels happy and fulfilled. He has an excellent sense of humor. If there has been any problem for him it has been the obstacles faced in order to reach his goals.

MI: An indigenous man born into a family of very scarce resources. He explained that he always had to work. Since a child he had to help his mother make rag dolls to sell in Mexico City. He considers that she was his biggest help and support in order to survive. Of all the subjects interviewed, it is perhaps this subject who had the biggest learning problem. For example, his motivation for learning how to read was having the power to understand what was said by the cowboys in the comics. While he was young, he moved from the city and could see that his cousins were doing well selling seeds (*semillitas*) in the street and his maximum aspiration was to be a seed seller. He failed when in his intention to be a street vendor. He looked for work in a supermarket and then decided to continue with his studies in high school. However, he mentions that he learned there were neighbors working as police and that everything went well for them. This really motivated him to enter the state police school. Afterward, when he had completed his training as a policeman, he entered the university to study the bachelor of Science degree in Criminology.

He finished his major field of study. He recounts how in one of the conferences that were given at the university was on the subject of the indigenous peoples in Mexico.

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He came to know the director of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista [National Indigenous Institute]. The director offered him a scholarship order to study the bachelor's in Education, specializing in teaching indigenous children who migrated from the country to the city and had difficulty adjusting to the educational system. One reason was because many of them did not speak Spanish. He accepted the study and at present is in a primary school working as a teacher. He says that the economic situation not being very good, and he is not doing well economically and is living in poverty. However, he said he finds a lot of satisfaction in his work. He pointed out that he was the first in his family to attend the university.

He talks about what happens in his neighborhood (an indigenous community that emigrated to the city). They make fun of his education and they say that going to college doesn't have any value when he doesn't even earn sufficient support to maintain the family. He does not feel inferior for this. He is working in the community with the youth in order to keep them from falling into alcoholism and drugs. In addition to the work in the school that gives him a lot of satisfaction, he is living with a lady with whom he has two children. He hopes through his work to give his children a better world.

FI: This is an indigenous woman who leaves home to do domestic service work. Her family has very limited resources. She mentioned that her father was an alcoholic and he didn't provide them with a very good life. She says that living life in the city, outside of the surroundings of her ranch, inspired her to aspire to a better life. She had the good luck to find work in a house where her employers encouraged her to continue studying and they convinced her that she was intelligent.

She considers them the most important persons in her life. They allowed her to

work and study and they helped her defray some of the expenses of her studies. She finished her bachelor's degree in Social Service and returned to her village where she worked in the local government.

Her greatest satisfaction is that with her work she is transforming the community. She says that she was always helping out her brothers and she can see that they really want to have a better life. She has a good character. She sees adversity as a challenge and considers that she is capable (i.e., able to move forward despite any problem).

FNRC: She is a family woman, very humble, who lived during her infancy in a small town. Her family was dysfunctional; her father was an alcoholic and her mother did not take care of them. She talks about when she was a little girl, there came a group of North Americans who arrived in her village and set-up living quarters. The leader of the group was a pastor of an Adventist Church. They built their housing and did a census of who lived in the village.

They started delivering food packages with basic consumables and in exchange they requested that on Sunday they would go and "get together" with them. The village started attending the get-together on Sundays with the family and from there they were indoctrinated. She says that she made friends with the daughter of the pastor who taught her English and in exchange she taught her Spanish. FNRC recounts that because of her adverse family situation, she spent a lot of time with the pastor's family where she felt very comfortable.

She says that one day her mother was gravely sick and they took her in a wheelbarrow to the village health center. She had a tumor in her womb that caused her sharp pains and bleeding. The doctor of the place told her family that they had to take the

lady to the city because the situation required an emergency operation. He said that if they didn't do this, she would probably die that same day.

The pastor and his family suggested that no, they would immediately take her and that God, by means of prayer, would save her. FNRC says that's the way it went; her mother lasted two more days thanks to the prayers given by the pastor and his family. On the third day her mother finally bled to death "because God had it planned that way in his infinite wisdom", according to the words of the subject.

In a short time, the pastor and his family had to return to the U.S. and they talked to the father of FNRC who accepted the idea that she could go with them legally. She explained that they gave her legitimacy according to the terms of "adoption" with all the legal papers.

In the United States, she studied in high school and did her university studies in computer systems. She married the son of the pastor, whom she met in the U.S. He had not traveled to Mexico with his family, but had stayed behind studying in order to be a pastor of his church.

Together they returned to Mexico and they were the leaders in their religious community. She collaborated professionally with her husband in this setting. She mentioned that she is happy even though they have not had any children, but "this is because God wants it that way."

MNRC: According to his comments, he was born into a middle class family and enjoyed a happy childhood in which his family was always very supportive. His father was the director of the Mormon Church. The subject was dedicated to his studies and did not have problems.

He felt marginalized from his university companions more because of his religion than because of being a foreign student in a private local institution. He had a business orientation and decided he could always achieve what it was that he set out to do. He and his family had a good life. He is optimistic and always looks for the positive side of things even when faced with adversity.

He commented that he participated in the church committee. He talked about a time when they wanted to build a temple in one of the municipalities, which was one of the most traditionally Catholic in the state. In spite of that, everything was in order, the building permit was denied, and they ended up having to build outside of the city.

He considered this to be "a gift from God" since the construction project was larger than the one they had originally planned, and he said that the community felt like going to church was like taking a walk on the weekend.

In addition, he mentioned that inside the municipality they would not have been able to construct the temple in the same architectural form in which it was eventually built. He is an intelligent man, very secure in his professed faith, and he considers his family the most important thing in his life.

FGL: She was born in a family with resources. She lacked for nothing in her childhood. She says she had a good infancy and she always managed to do well academically in school. Since she was a little girl, it was always easy for her to make friends. Her sexual awakening and confusion was something that happened during adolescence. She considers that it was because of her intelligence that she was able to hide her preference and thereby avoided generating any problems in her life. It wasn't until she left her community to go to a big city to study at the university that she was able

to live her sexual identity openly.

It was there, in a small circle of women who had the same sexual preference, where socializing was common without any problems. When she finished her degree program, she left the house where she had been staying and went to live with her partner. She says she didn't give any additional explanations to her parents.

She studied for a master's degree and found work in a business where she is very successful. Her next plans are to go independent and start a company together with her partner with whom she feels very stable.

Even though her family knows her partner, and they know they are living together, they comment that they really aren't aware of her sexual preference. She says she isn't certain whether, should she tell them, if they would understand.

FGL is a person with high self-esteem; she is very sure of herself, brilliant professionally, and has lots of faith in the future.

MGL: Of all the subjects interviewed, he had the most economic resources. He is the only one with a doctorate degree. Because of his father's work, he lived in Paris during his infancy. Since childhood, he was aware that his body did not respond to the things other boys found appealing. During his infancy, he had a nanny who understood him; she was his nurse and was Mexican. His parents had taken her to Paris with them to live.

He talks about the admirable way his mother dressed, the jewels she used, among other things. Returning to Mexico, he felt rejected by his classmates in school because they decided he "spoke effeminately" because of his French accent. From the time he was little, he liked learning new things. His character is described as something serious and on

the gloomy side.

He is a very studious man. Because of his experiences, he is fluent in Spanish, English, and French and he knows a little German. He comments that in high school, he saw examples of how his schoolmates lived a double sexuality. Many of them got married and continued leading a double life. Nevertheless, they were seen socially as heterosexual.

He rejects the double morality and his irritation can be seen even talking about it. He observed that it wasn't until he was in the master's program and with therapeutic support that he had achieved having a formal partner with whom he could live.

He said that sexuality of individuals belongs to the ambit of their private life and that is how he chooses to maintain his live. However, he added, he wouldn't have any problems being more open about it if it became necessary.

He pointed out that he has a group of friends that he gets together with in his house for relaxation during the weekends. His parents passed away without ever knowing about his sexual preference. He has a sister with whom he has a good relationship, but they are not very close. He feels satisfied with what he is and with what he has achieved. He knows that in Mexico, it is difficult if not impossible to have open public expressions about homosexuality, as it is in other countries. Nevertheless, he considers that it really isn't any problem for him because this is part of his private life.

In the following, the emergent topics and subtopics are presented that have surfaced from the stories narrated by the subjects.

Emerging Theme 1: Family and Networks

For the purposes of this research, theme one will be defined as the *Family and*

Social Networks and includes things such as subjects' perceptions, respect for how they perceive themselves in their relations, as much as with their families, which is principally the nuclear family. This includes father, mother, and brothers as well as their friendships or other people who have generally been important in their lives.

It was decided to do the analysis in three sections. In the first section, there are, in general, family and social networks that were classified as 1.1 family network responses, 1.2 social networks, 1.3 negative memories of their family, and 1.4 negative memories of their friendships.

Section 2 follows the linear narrative, including the networks identified during their educational process. The following divisions were made: 2.1 personal and family networks during primary school, 2.2 personal and family networks during secondary school, 2.3 personal and family networks during high school, and 2.4 personal and family networks at the university and during the master's program. Section 3 is included. This is important for the networks in subtopic 3.1,which is the importance that networks have had in their lives. Finally, 3.2 includes those conclusions in regard to the subjects' future. Following are the responses:

1.1 Family networks. I was never alone. I was always with people including my family or friends. For instance, in school I participated in the sports class. I threw the ball to my companions so they could make a basket. I consider that it was because of my family that I was given the self-confidence that I now have as a woman. (FPD)

[Recalling her primary years at school and the support she received from her family before becoming an invalid.] In the elementary school those first three years she was on the first floor; and so it was that my mother or my father took us to school and there my sisters would come to take me to my classroom. The teachers always treated me well. (FPD)

She is an angel! [Referring to her mother] My very best friend! We easily made friends. During the free hours at mealtime I would be doing my homework and she would look for the books and then she would help me by reading and underlining; and in this way she

indicated what would be useful for me. It was a multiplication of talents. We discussed the reading assignments. We analyzed the different authors and we laughed when we weren't in agreement on the different assigned readings. Each of us would vigorously defend her point of view. At the conclusion she always used to say: "it's your homework, I don't even know why I'm getting involved." The teachers were always friendly. (FPD)

[Remembering support from family and friends during her convalescence after an operation that didn't permit her to attend classes in secondary.] My sisters had the responsibility of talking to the teachers or with my classmates in order to ask what they had seen in class and what the homework was. Some of the teachers acted very well because they sent me everything they said I had to study and how they would evaluate me. Others, as they taught the class, continued giving me the homework that was assigned. They continued giving my sisters the homework assignments. My companions went to the house in the afternoon and there we worked in teams. My mother always offered them cake or homemade cookies she had prepared. Fortunately, the quality of my life changed. (FPD)

[Referring to the relationship with his brother.] I was very friendly but my best friend was always my brother. We told each other everything. He was ahead of me one year in school and he always told me how things would be with the teachers.

My parents had a family business and things went well for them. Both worked together. My brother and I are great friends. I think that the fact that we are almost of the same age facilitates communication for us. He studied Engineering. The two of us are married and our partners and children get along well together.

[In regard to the support received from his parents in his professional projects.] My parents motivated me and they helped me by listening and giving me their opinion about my plans. (MPD)

[Reflecting on the admiration of the family.] A cousin who was in high school was the model to follow. He was the first in the family who studied a professional career. My uncle was a driver on Route 100 and I saw that he bought everything. They took good care of him. It was probable this that inspired me. It was in order to make some progress. My mother also told me a lot about this…that she wanted me to study in order to get ahead in life. On occasions we stayed awake all night until the sun rose without any rest making rag dolls. Sometimes we didn't sleep because we were studying and working at the same time. (MI)

I come from a traditional Mormon family since my great-great grandparents. I consider that I had a normal infancy; my father was a pastor in the Mormon Church in the city. My grandfather was also a pastor, but in the U.S. We are three brothers and we all get along fine. Our family and community have always been very close. I can't remember having had any problems because of my religion because the school that I went to was also Mormon. (MNRC)

We are two sisters. We get along well. She got married and has two children that are my adoration. My nephews are beautiful! Returning to my infancy, I didn't have any big

problems. It was very friendly. I was a normal little girl playing tricks, but I was also responsible with my studies. My sister is older and I loved to dare her to do tricks since she was a little more afraid than I was.…I always convinced her and it was funny because she used to have regrets and she always did something to give herself away; she would take all the blame for the trick and throw all the blame on herself! Of course my mother wasn't slow and she would know that the intellectual leader had been me.…The punishment was the same for both!

[Remembrances of her relationship and the influence of her parents on her.] My father was a great reader and conversationalist. He really loved the table talk after dinner to chat. We discussed questions of general knowledge, things like the influence of the tides, and we lived in a beautiful house at the edge of the sea. My parents had acquired it with a lot of sacrifice. The dialogues of my father fluctuated more about feelings and those of my mother were deeds. She was pragmatic and didn't enjoy coming into contact with emotions. Due to this, I recognized that I enjoyed the polarity between them. I admired my mother and her behaviors that were so executive and assertive and on the other side, I felt strongly attracted to the sensibility of my father and his way of looking at the world. My sister told me that I was a little crazy because I liked these things between adults. Well anyway, she didn't like these kinds of things. I think that these family discussions that I experienced in my home gave me the tools in order to convert myself into a woman who professionally became successful. As the case may be, I think I have something of each one of my parents that helps me feel complete. (FGL)

1.2 Friendship networks. [Remembering her childhood and the arrival of a group of North Americans at her ranch.] I wanted to know how to speak like they did. I made friends with a little girl more or less my age. At this time I was something like 8years old going on 9. I told her that I would teach her Spanish if she would teach me English and in this way we made friends. (FNRC)

[Memories of the employerin order to have trust in herself.] She showed me many things about everything in the kitchen. Something that surprised me a lot is that they would always ask me to sit and eat with them. At first it was really embarrassing for me, but not so much later on. Her husband was a teacher. He was very intelligent and said things that made me think a lot. It always motivated me to share whatever it was that they were thinking about and they told me that I was an intelligent young person. It was he and his wife who were the ones who encouraged me to study. (FI)

They asked me [her employers] how it had gone for me and what I had learned. It surprised me that everything I had learned they already knew about it and they even talked to me about other subjects. When I had to do homework many times the man would have the books so that I could find the information. He showed me how to look up things. Also, he showed me how to read intelligently like he said. To search, look in the right place. He said to read and then think about what you have read, and then come to conclusions. He said to not always agree with everything that the books said and to develop my own point of view. I really liked the school and to be with them!

[Remembering the help of her employers in order to work and study at the same time.] When the lady saw me hurrying with the homework she would say things to me like: "Today there is no more to clean upstairs and you can go do your things. There were

leftovers from yesterday and this is what we will eat." The man also, sometimes at night, would say,"In order not to struggle with the food when I return from work, I will purchase something in the carry-out food kitchen." Anyway, I would do a good job of cleaning and then I would continue with my homework.

[Remembering her friend who had had the most impact.] I started to get together with a girl from Veracruz. She was very happy; she loved to go and dance. She had many male and female friends. I was very serious compared to her. I liked it that she respected me and she didn't ask me to do anything that I didn't want to. I liked her companionship even though she was very friendly with the boys and she was very well-balanced. She knew what she wanted and she also studied. (FI)

[Referring to the importance of having good relationships.] For me what helped me was the contact, to get to know persons, the friendships, to be getting involved in community service; it was like I knew the people. (MI)

When I finished my degree program my employers asked me…what else was going to follow in my life? So they would decide to help me. I told them that if I had the opportunity, I would like to return to my village. There I would be able to continue with my work in the municipality and I could make improvements even if it was just in a few things. I explained that I saw the labor market in Monterrey was difficult. But over there, in my village no one really wanted to go. They told me to go ahead, forward, "adelante." They accepted what I wanted.(FI)

[Recalling her friend and the support from her family.] Shara now spoke Spanish well and I did more or less okay expressing myself in English. The parents of Shara had also been assisted in this process since they spoke to me about simple things in English and I was then forced to answer. When I responded they even applauded and told me that I was quite intelligent and learned very quickly. (FNRC)

1.3 Negative memories of the family. When I finished primary school I advised my parents that I wanted to go on to the secondary. My father told me that I had to look for someone with whom to get married, that I couldn't study because I was a woman and that we only existed in order to clean house and have babies.

[Remembering from when sheleft the ranch and got to know the houses of the city working as a maid-housekeeper where there were conveniences that shenever imagined.] In the nights when I was going to sleep I would think of my family. I would worry about the situation in which they were living, but it was a time when one couldn't really feel bad when one didn't know of any other way of living; everything looked like it was really just normal.

[Recollections of when she started to earn money working as a maid.] I now earned more, but I didn't listen to my aunt and saved money for my expenses for what I was going to need in school. She [her aunt] got angry and said that I couldn't be a bad daughter…that on the ranch there was a lot of necessity. She said that if my brothers needed shoes, or medicine…I would be sure to know what it was they needed! But also, I knew that my father drank a lot and that he took money from my mother. Sending all the money was not the solution to their problems.…and it could have probably even caused

more. (FI)

My parents were really good especially my mother. My father drank a lot of mezcal. When he was drinking he would get aggressive but my mother controlled everything, especially around us. He used to go to sleep and my mother asked me to take my brothers out of the house or make sure that that they didn't make any noise. It wasn't easy since sometimes it was cold outside or raining and the kids didn't want to cooperate. (FNCR)

[In respect to the worry of his family in order to help him look for a heterosexual partner.] My parents looked to help make me dates with young women from high society. My sister introduced me to her friends and they practically jumped on me. I had good friends but it was impossible for me to have any romantic contact with them. I was able to appreciate their beauty and intelligence, and it was clear to me that many of them might possibly be excellent companions for whatever man, but not for me! (MGL)

It wasn't easy living at home. My father was always angry and my older brothers also hit us and yelled at us for no reason. Even my mother would scold them. She would start crying or complaining about everything with my aunts and neighbors. She really didn't take care of us. It wasn't really a good family environment. If we went to school or not it was all the same. Sometimes maybe we would go, but at other times no; and she used to pinch us and she ordered us to go feed the chickens. (FNRC)

1.4 Negative memories of the friendships. [Referring to the double moral standard of his friends.] My body couldn't stand it anymore. I wanted sexual activity at whatever cost. I didn't even want to admit it to myself about my homosexuality. I didn't trust anybody in order to do it. I also rejected my friends who I called "perverts." I wasn't able to tolerate within my own nature the double morality. (MGL)

[Remembrances of his infancy in respect to his dialect.] My language was in a confused process since there are still terms that do not agree. As children, from the door of the house and inside, we spoke the Ottoman language. And from the door to the outside we only spoke Spanish. In fact, there were children who made fun and used to say, "Don't hang out with him because he speaks English." Also, I had a problem with lice and they used to say "lousy Indian" ("piojoso") and this really made me shy. Yes, it hurt me. There were classmates in elementary school that carried "magic" books [referring to coloring books] as well as the free textbooks. And these made me curious especially since they bragged about them and like to show off. (MI)

[In regard to his her socialization in the university.] I took advantage in order to do homework in the library. Some of my companions also did it there and it made me feel good when they asked for my opinion. Some of them tried taking advantage of me and would ask me for my homework so they could copy it. I never allowed that! It took me a lot of work to do it and they wanted it given to them easy. (FI)

Of course, some friends who played football begged me to help them do their homework. I told them I would explain it to them, but that I didn't want to contribute to their lack of

ability. It was good to be explaining to others. What wasn't understood from the teachers, they understood easily from me. It was in this way that I came to decide to study Education at the university. (FPD)

I know that some of my companions were envious of me since during the recess they would go buy soda pop and *Fritos* and I would stay to talk with the teachers. They told me that they thought I was really aloof because the teachers gave me more attention than the others. Another thing that affected me is that at the beginning I did not change my manner much, which was a simple dress and to comb my hair. They used hair dye and fashionable cuts. They used makeup and some even wore miniskirts and high-heeled shoes to school. Not me. I didn't even consider it. They said to me that they were going to take me go shopping for clothes and they wanted to me to pluck my eyebrows and use cosmetics. Of course I didn't pay any attention to them! This was how I was and anybody who didn't like it didn't have to come and see me. (FI)

[Remembering being discriminated against in the U.S. when studying in high school.] What affected me most and what I felt there was something that made me feel inferior and it was language in high school. Also, some teachers gave me dirty looks because of my skin color even though they also looked like good "*Mexicanotes.*" But at the same time they were very much Gringos, even though they didn't speak English very well! The notion that all are the same must be demanded in the world. Anyway, we are all manifestations of God in many different ways, but in the essence or spirit we are all equal and this is what really counts. (FNRC)

2.1 Personal and family networks during primary school. [Remembering his friends.] When I graduated from primary school I had liked it a lot because I had many companions and we all got along really well.

I had the intention to continue with some friends that I made in the primary but at the finish, they didn't continue. It fell to me to share with one in particular that at the beginning we really didn't speak well together, but later we became quite good friends. (MI)

[Memories from his primary school in Paris.] I had a good infancy. I remember that. I attended a school of well-to-do people. In the school there were only children. I always got along well with them. (MGL)

2.2 Personal and family networks during secondary school. I had two friends in the secondary who were from Veracruz. They were like brothers to me. If they were abused by others in any way I came in on the defense. We took care of each other and they invited me to their house. The youngest of them knew English. They liked the Beatles and sang their songs in English. I liked their songs, but I had never heard of the Beatles. (MI)

2.3 Personal and family networks during high school. High school was a good time. My friends carried me with everything and the [wheel]chair up the stairs. The football players were really bad [expressing this not with anger, but with an expression as

if it was like a "good memory."] They told me that I was their good luck mascot for the team. I went to the games to cheer them on and my mother came by for my friends in the Surburban. (FPD)

[Remembrances of his relationship with men and women in high school.] That's the way I lived in high school. I didn't reject the men in any social relationships. It was all very friendly since I liked all sports and was always able to talk to them in their own language. I was on occasions the only WOMAN on the baseball team at the high school and I was pretty good. If I saw that certain companions saw me as different, it was because I was acting like this, even though I wasn't exactly rejected, but I really never did love my femininity. But it was a visible sign that I wasn't a man but inside that's the way I felt. (FGL)

In high school it went okay for me. I had friends who were boys and girls and there weren't any preferences. I saw one or another brunette, but we never talked about ethnicity topics. And my family saw me as someone who was enjoying a lot of success in life and they were really proud of me. (MI)

2.4 Personal and family networks in the university and master's program. [Remembering his times in the bachelor's program.] My mother had to organize everything at home in order to come and be with me. Certainly during this time there were more than enough who wanted to work in class with me as a team. Well anyway, it was a guarantee of good grades and having a good understanding of things. We got together at home. They saw my mother more as just another companion. They even talked about her as "tu"[you] in the personal sense. I felt very comfortable. I finished the major without any incident. (FPD)

In the university I had great interaction. I quickly found a partner. It was not difficult. I knew my world had really opened up and all at once I was surrounded by lesbians. It was open because when we were in a group, in private places, nobody was judgmental. You could be with your partner just the same as if you were heterosexual. One was able to express loving physical and verbal manifestations and nothing happened. And at the same time it was closed because you had to demonstrate that you were discrete, dignified, and trustworthy, since being discovered was for someone from the upper social class a detail of possible high personal cost. It was a good time. (FGL)

[Memories of her first relationships when she lived in Canada studying the master's degree.] I looked here and there and found groups of people very similar to me. There were educated adults who had the same fears that I did. I started having girlfriends and boyfriends and we functioned as a support group. At the time this was also the door for initiating myself with a partner. In the group we had lectures about homosexuality, its risks, the socio-cultural problems, et cetera. My first partner was a total disaster. It was a combination of fears that transformed themselves into a fearful relationship. In one way or another unconsciously guilt (*culpas*) was aimed at the person with whom you were being initiated into the socially prohibited. And you punished yourself by negating pleasure and a healthy coexistence. We terminated. Later there were more partners until

finally a person arrived who was the designated one. And now we have been together for 12 years. (MGL)

3.1 Importance of the networks for the subjects. The most valuable in the lives of the subjects. The most important thing in my life is the family that God gave me. Without them I don't know what would have happened to me. I know that the woman was the one who had converted me; I totally owe everything to them. It is for sure that they always really motivated me but they also got me used to achieving it. (FPD)

Of the most important in my life—it was and is my family. Having had some parents and a brother that loved me and respected and gave me equal treatment really determined my life. This has helped me to have solid pillars in order to build my own foundation. My wife is everything to me and so are the children. She works in a business but she is always standing by ready and willing to help me in my work. She feels proud of my accomplishments and she tells me that my work is very significant. (MPD)

[Remembering her graduation going out with her employers.] I think dear God (*Diosito*) has always been with me since I couldn't have had better luck. They were with me at the degree award ceremony. Afterwards they took me out to eat to a nice restaurant. Even though at that time I had more family working in Monterrey they were the ones closest to me. My parents did not understand very well the way that I lived. Also, I consider that I was quite closed with my thoughts and I shared very little about my plans and dreams with the others.
    I gave the most important part of my life to find employers that motivated me to study and they helped me do it. (FI)

Of all the most important things in my life was having been known as the Eli family's little girl. They came first of all to make me know God. They gave me a life that I never would have achieved with my family. I am working in a place that is important since I work with the community in order to avoid abuse and family violence. Now as a woman I know, that if I would have stayed with my family I would have suffered from many different kinds of violence myself, whether physical, psychological, and/or spiritual. Having a profession also gives me the possibility of helping my husband. I know I don't earn much but the satisfaction of my work does more for me than not getting paid any money. (FNRC)

About the most important in my life: I think it was leaving my city. This gave me the freedom needed in order to live what I felt without any big threat. Having a stable partner now that, if in the heterosexual world the relationships are difficult, in the homosexual circle they are really a challenge. What's more since there is always that need to fight with the partner and with oneself and the fears of being discovered and judged….One needs real guts in order to live in a society closed to diversity. (FGL)

3.2 The subjects' perception of the future. [In respect to their perception of the future.]I couldn't be a good daughter if I didn't think of myself as a better person. Today, I have better possibilities for helping my family more. To assist my brothers who want to

study. To teach them that there is another world over-out there beyond the backyard gardens where the jackals live. That the future is not just to get married and to have children and put together a few dollars doing odd jobs. I think that having studied and more than that, what I studied gives me a lot of responsibility toward those who are mine and with what's left over, for the others. (FI)

[Regarding their perception of the future.] I don't see it.…I am blind, [laughter, excuse themselves]…I always like to joke about this…right now talking seriously about my being and to live revolves around living the present with passion and commitment to what I am and what I do. The future is determined in large part by actions in the present and attitudes toward life that continue surfacing. Problems always exist and in great measure they are those that we create, they are not the numbers of fortunate actions that haven't been planned. (MPD)

I'm not worried about the professional part. I know that I am very good and including the fact that we are now thinking about founding our very own firm [she and her partner]." (FGL)

Regarding the emergence of the family and social networks, in all the subjects there is something perceived such as an appreciation for their family and social networks. In one way or another, all of them agree that there have been important people in their lives that have motivated them to make something of their lives. Except for a subject who is perceived to be withdrawn in general in his social environment, they are persons with a high ability to relate to others.

The subjects are aware of family values or of their own values that they have developed over the period of their lives. In so far as the negative experiences in their networks, the perception of the subjects in relation to these was not significant. Whoever externalized it, it was for them more like an experience that helped them make some progress toward better decision making during the building period of becoming persons.

The subjects, in general, demonstrated a great ability to build relationships during their early development in school. They liked to talk about a future that was optimistic, a time when they could think about their family networks as the important things.

Emerging Theme 2: Learning Attitudes, Academic Achievement, and Relationships with Professors and Colleagues

As was mentioned previously, one of the sample characteristics is that everyone has at least university study at the baccalaureate level. They take a certain attitude toward learning, like having the predisposition or motivation to learn academic questions. The second subject is divided into the subtopic of 2.1 attitude positive toward learning. There is 2.1.1 negative attitude toward learning. In addition, there is 2.2 academic performance, and 2.3 relationships with professors and companions. There is also 2.3.1 negative relationships in the academic setting.

2.1 Positive learning attitude of the subjects. In the classes things go okay. Yes, I like to study. (FPD)

In school I was always a good student. I was enthusiastic about learning new things. I am eternally curious; I always want to know the why of things. Since I was a child, I would get depressed because whatever question that was asked and an answer given, it would always be followed by the interminable, why? And even now as an adult it takes effort not to be asking—but why? [laughter] (MPD)

2.1.1 Negative attitude toward learning. Since a student, I was average neither being one of the worst nor one of the best. I didn't like school very much. My maximum goal was to learn to read because my aunt had the ability. Anyway, I had an uncle who passed away a short time ago. He had a collection of *Kalimán* stories about The Lone Eagle. And for me what was really significant was this little worm that called my attention to learn how to read. (MI)

2.2 Academic performance. I finished my degree program without any incidents. Good grades. Good relationships. Because of my good academic results as a student, the same university where I studied offered me a scholarship in order to continue with the master's. Like my parents and brothers, they always encouraged me to continue on ahead. Two years were required for the master's. (FPD)

I finished my study program with really good grades. I didn't fail any subjects and I had a good time. (MPD)

In terms of grades I had really done okay. I was one of the first places in primary and secondary school; in high school I dropped a little but it was never anything serious. (MNRC)

I had trouble with Mathematics. I liked History, Geography, and Civics a lot, and I even loved Literature. I never imagined being able to read books that didn't have cartoons. (FNRC)

My grades in school were outstanding. It wasn't difficult for me to do well. I didn't study very much and I still did better than my companions. (FGL)

In school I was good. In addition to the normal studies, I took piano and riding classes. (MGL)

2.3 Relationships with professors and classmates. Secondary school had its ups and downs. There was a sister [nun] who was very strict. She always liked to talk about discipline and she would turn to look at me and say "without exception"like if at some time I had been asking for special concessions. The only difference between her and me was in the mobility of my legs, well, and in character. I have never been bitter like her. I don't understand why a religious person in addition to being an educator, would need to demonstrate being unnecessarily rude. In spite of the fact that she was the strictest she was less respected than we deserved as a teacher and as a human being. It was always demanding but I was never worried about winning it. I recognize that we are at a difficult step. My companions wanted to roll-up their skirts in their belts so they would look shorter. And the sisters [*monjas*] passed by with a ruler to ascertain that we had the exact centimeters below the knee [laughter]. Well, I didn't have that problem.(FPD)

It was a good time even though if there I had teachers who made life difficult for me. They dedicated themselves to being especially critical of my work. I didn't see it as a problem; for me it was a challenge. However, my companions were upset because of the attitude of these teachers. It was only a pair of them. One of them never permitted me to use my special Braille computer for taking notes. He said that he wasn't sure what I was doing with it and that it was a distraction for the other classmates. And everybody would say that no, that he should leave me alone and he would demand silence and then he continued with his class. My companions always offered to dictate their notes to me but in the majority of cases it wasn't necessary because, well, I could remember almost everything. (MPD)

The treatment from the teachers was always respectful. Some were Mormons and others were not. We never touched on religious topics inside the school. Neither do I have any memory of friends with a religion different than Mormon who would ask questions about any aspects of my church. (MNRC)

I always maintained good relationships with my teachers and classmates. (MNRC)

2.4 Negative relations in the academic setting. Neither was the university a place where I felt uncomfortable for having a religion different than Catholic. I felt maybe a little more if it could be said closed minded, or lack of openness or just being a part of Regiomontana society. It was probably more because of being a foreigner than for

my religion. But I couldn't have considered either as a problem. (MNRC)

[Memory of his return from Paris where he did part of his primary school.] We returned to Mexico. I entered school with the *Legionarios.* I believe that we arrived when I was in third or fourth grade in primary. I didn't have any trouble since being in Paris where I was in an English school. And with the Legionarios the classes were in English. However, my English was with a French nasal accent. The children would laugh at me. They also said that I was very "finito"[delicate] and that the French were all gay. I defended myself saying that I was Mexican and more than any of them since my father had been in the service of the country. This was something seen with pride outside of the country.

This advice was given to me by my nurse when she saw me return from school frustrated because of the poor treatment I had received. But even more than that, it really didn't work. The harassment was so stupid that finally my parents had to go in to the administrator and request that I be given some respect. I hated my school and the bunch of Mexican jerks. In Paris I never had to live like that and I wanted to return! (MGL)

Well, some teachers a bad attitude toward some with different sexual preferences, for example, when I failed, one of the teachers, when handing out the grades would tell a student, "Here take it, and I don't want you crying like a baby." I could see that my companion returned a look that could have killed. (MI)

[Remembering about the reaction of their companions with the teachers that offended the students.] When the teacher would leave all that could be heard were the bad words from this group for the teacher. At the bottom of it all, he really deserved what they had to say. I got along well with everybody, but I didn't make any strong friendships. (FI)

The responses in respect to the emerging subject of attitude toward learning reveal that the subjects are somewhat motivated to learn; the group's academic performance in general goes from the average to outstanding.

Even though some mentioned having had some problems with certain subjects materials, or persons, these details were not insurmountable as part of their academic life. The attitude of the subjects was that of confronting the challenges and making progress by moving forward.

The relationship with their teachers, in general, was good and there were those who said they had felt they had demonstrated an attitude of making progress, especially when threatened by someone. It is interesting to note that with all the subjects, when they

mentioned some teacher who showed special rigor directed at them, the subjects received

the back-up support of his or her group of friends.

Emerging Theme 3: Life Attitude

Attitude toward life, just as the name indicates, are the actions that the subjects

demonstrate in the face of the events in their life. It is their attitudinal position in the day-

to-day, face-to-face challenges in their environments. It is their great capacity to adjust to

circumstances that are continually presented.

[Recalling how he faced up to what it was like being in a wheelchair all the time.] Maybe because I was always seated and quiet; anyway, I developed the ability to know how to listen and entertained myself with what they were telling me; or to give words of encouragement to whoever needed it.

Looking at the rest of the world surrounding me, I consider that I have had a normal life, since I have done what I wanted to do. This included the living together day-by-day experiences. I normally fought with my brothers but we were always quick to reconcile.

I am different because there isn't anybody like anybody else. Everybody in the broad sense means we are in it together. In being more different I am fortunate. There are people who are physically complete but they aren't happy or really actualized; but for me, yes I am. I prefer to have this difference more than many others would. Also, I think that the opportunity to have studied and especially in the places where it took place, made a difference. I wouldn't be working like this, like the job I have, if it hadn't been for my studies. How good that God gave me a head for studying and that it's something I like to do.

My brother was more determined to study and I made fun of him. I called him chicken, since he didn't want to play because he was studying. I thought that I had more confidence in having success than he did. Anyway, he is very intelligent but he didn't believe it. We always went together until in high school, because in our courses of study we no longer followed the same plan at that point. Since a child, only once they showed me where everything was in the school and I learned everything to perfection and I moved myself around easily. Even when I didn't know where the places were, the cane could take me there and it helped my sense of hearing.

Also I remember that I learned to ride a bicycle. I taught myself on the park road close to my house. Of course my brother was right there going along by my side! And he would yell for them to get out of the way. Careful! You aren't blind you're an idiot! Move it along! [Laughter]…he was incredible.
I remember how he came to find employment. When I finished my major I was introduced to the Association Committee president, and I asked him if he would let me direct the association for six months free. That I would promise to do three things:

prepare an annual work plan; generate strategies for bringing resources and duplicate the quantity of present donations, plus organize strong teams. That whatever action prior to being taken would be reviewed by the committee for its approval. The progress of my projects would be measured monthly; if it didn't work out by the third month, they could let me go. But if everything worked okay according to what had been planned, I would be able to remain directing the association. I don't know how, but I had the meeting with the executive board and they accepted my proposal. The person who was acting as director wanted at the time to retire but there was no one who would take the place.…He accepted but he was not very happy since I was a young man maybe 22 or 23 years old.…I worked very hard; I interviewed a lot of people; and I visited universities looking for social service collaborators.

The fact that I didn't feel different does not mean to imply that there doesn't exist open and shameless discrimination in our country. I have always said that whatever offense is like the bell ringing to go to mass.…The person who wants or feels pressure to go, goes. And the other doesn't; they don't even pay any attention. And so for me, I have never taken anything personal. The persons that hurt others not only do it to those who belong to some minority. They are life's attitudes. I have decided not to feel hurt for anything or anybody. (MPD)

I never felt rejected by anybody, well nothing more than by my companions, but I knew that it was envy for the effort that I did well in school.

At work I earned with effort the respect and love of the people as much as with my companions as with the DIF service users. Until they had a party with mole and chicken and rice; they didn't want me to leave.

Doing my job well and above all to be grateful to whoever it was who helped me so much doing well with my job at work and with the results at school. To behave properly so they would feel proud of me. (FI)

My physical approaches were careful, since I feared that they would suspect me of my real intentions. But I let it pass as a fantasy in my mind. Never did anyone suspect anything. They saw me as a beautiful and intelligent girl who maybe looked at the boys of my age a little less.

I don't know if the men in their unconscious understand any more quickly than women do; I know that I had many boyfriends and in spite of never being ugly, forgive the lack of modesty. I did not have problems of emotional closeness during this epoch. (FGL)

Regarding to the subjects' attitude toward life, it can be seen that each of them has

an optimistic outlook, including how some have even shown humorous feelings when

faced with adversity.

In addition, a clear definition of self and high personal-esteem is seen in"who they

are," and "what they could achieve." They value and hold on to the opportunities and

good things that life has given them. What really stands out with all the subjects is

security in themselves as much in their physical as well as behavioral performance.

Emerging Theme 3.1: Challenge Attitude

Here the attitude is being evaluated that the subjects reveal specifically when

facing the challenges that have occurred. Which way would they have solved problems if

it had been them who had done it? What attitude would they have taken?

[In respect to their disadvantages.] I was born with a problem in my vertebra column. My body never developed. The probabilities that I could have died were high and, nevertheless, here I am and I feel happy that that's the way it was.

When it was the time to begin menstruation, my womb and ovaries filled with small tumors that caused me to have strong pain. In the second year of secondary school, they had to operate and completely clean everything out. It was difficult. I was in complete convalescence for almost a month and a half. I passed the time in bed. As it was, there wasn't any time that my parents did not permit me to do any homework. I could move forward with the help of my family and with a good attitude.

The university was almost an hour in the car from home and so it was that my mother practically completed the major study program with me. There were many stairs and there wasn't any elevator. At that time there was no protected environment. My mother always opted to carry me. She called and the university gave her permission to stay there with me all the time. In spite of the problems, speaking and trying to make sure progress was made in everything.

We have come to be aware that there are many people with the same challenges that were faced by my family with me and that they didn't know what to do nor where to look for information or support. I feel that I am useful in my work, that I have responsibilities with the company and in society.

Maybe because of lack of vision but I have a very good auditory memory and I could remember the lessons of the teacher almost exactly, and so it was that I hardly studied…and also, I consider that I have intelligence for understanding whatever it is that is explained to me . (FPD)

[Memories of how they started studying in secondary school.] It was something that I wanted a lot, but I thought that at the time I was working in Monterrey it was impossible. I started the secondary school for adults with them. It was held in the afternoons not very far from home. When it was cold, the *Señora*[Misses]went for me at the exit. They agreed with me that for everything I would have to spend in school on books and everything, they would pay 75% and I would only have to pay 25%. It really wasn't that expensive. Well anyway, if I would have had to pay that when I was on the ranch, even with everything that we earned from the gelatin we wouldn't have been able to accomplish this. I felt very fortunate and content.

Of all my greater challenges my first was to conquer my fears. If you think you

can…you can do it. Conquering my tiredness and not get hung-up on what they said to me whether I was a good or a bad daughter; that I get out of the house…and things like that. (FI)

[Recollections of her studies in the U.S.] In a week they took us to the high school and there they gave me some tests to do and well things didn't turn out too well. They dropped me two years. They told me that I had to work harder in English since the classes were not in Spanish even though many spoke it. I could speak pretty well but I didn't know how to write it. Ah! That took a lot, until I started to cry and I wanted to return to my hometown. Everything went okay except for the language. I think that there, yes, I felt inferior. Well anyway, the teachers looked at me like I was stupid. What happened was that I couldn't express what it was that I thought. And they didn't even let me say a half a word in Spanish. I got very good at numbers since in that area I didn't have to read and write so much. I learned to think in a more logical way. Up until now I'm still not good at writing. The Literature classes I understood even less since it was a higher level of English. In general I suffered in high school even though I was always closeby my girl friend Shara. You could say that I always passed by just scraping by. How much I miss those times in the primary school and secondary where everything was easier. Shara finished high school before I did and entered in a science major to study. When I finished I decided to do my program in Computer Science. It was good since it was basically computer language. I learned to program in various languages and it didn't go too bad. Also, by then I had caught on to the English way. (FNRC)

They offered me to pay me a master's in the U.S. and I accepted to go. At that time I was married and close to the birth of my first son. He was born in Chicago. There were two very intense years of study and I returned to the company in Monterrey. When I returned, there had been changes in the firm and I had to leave. I never got discouraged. My wife helped me all the time and my relatives and my religious community gave me backup support. Soon they found a place for me in the organization where I am working today. I think that I gained with the change since I saw the significance of my work more real toward the social improvement progress that has always been important to me. We live okay, but not with any luxuries, but I really can't complain. I work with passion and love and it also gives me time to actively participate using my church.

It remains clear to me that there isn't any evidence of rejection toward me personally for religion. However, it was my turn to participate in the search for some property for the construction of a Mormon temple. It was decided to build it in a municipality of one of the higher per capita income neighborhoods in the country. All went well until they organized public protests in order to avoid the construction of the temple. It was all argued about an impressive number of situations that were legally solved, like the excess traffic in the zone, lack of parking, and so on. It is certain that underlying was not to permit that our church be built precisely at that spot; this was in a municipality of people very closed in their traditions and for their high social economic level they were able to generate sufficient pressure on the municipal government. So the law in this case didn't matter and they stepped on our rights as citizens of a religious creed who weren't Catholic but something different. I can guarantee that legally we were not infringing on any law or regulation in our petition.…We saw it as an obligation to

desist. God in his infinite wisdom really works and he took us to the outside of the urban area to a marvelous site where we could also increase our original construction proposal. And when passing on the National Highway you can see the majesty of our temple. (MNRC)

On my back, many pimples appeared there and were removed. Fortunately there weren't any on my face, but on my back the problem was quite severe. They took me to all the dermatologists, including one in Mexico City who was a well-recognized specialist. Medicine that was taken, creams and peelings that were painful….As we lived on the coast I felt uncomfortable since I couldn't use any blouses that showed the back or including any swim suits. I felt like everybody was looking at my back. The treatments worked slowly. The aggressiveness of the medications damaged my intestinal flora and I lived with *gastritis medicamentosa*. At that age I thought my life was a disaster. Nevertheless, I was able to overcome it and move forward.

In adolescence I think that the history of being a minority started. In the case of those of us who lived the homosexual lifestyle the topic strongly emerged at this time of the awakening hormones. Obviously the learned patterns that quickly made us conscious that it was what we felt that did not fit into the predetermined social structures. It is a lonely process. You know what you feel and you also know it for having learned what you do not have to say, "Well, it isn't normal," or "It isn't okay." I started to feel my homosexuality during this time. I was able to handle it and with effort and intelligence I managed it.

Of my biggest challenges I think, even though I had not worked at a conscious level, but maybe at an unconscious level, I really enjoyed sharing my sexual preference with my family and to able to live it out in the open but, for what? What would I gain with this? My parents got along well, I know that they loved each other in spite of their differences I had never entered into their privacy.…For what reason did I have that they had to share mine? Maybe it was that at the bottom I wanted to make them uncomfortable? I don't know. Maybe it would be better talking this over in consultation with a therapist. It is for certain that my partner and I have been in other countries on vacation, and we could have gone just like any other pair would have, including holding hands, hugging and…it really felt beautiful.

My worry is more in maintaining my relationship with my partner. It isn't easy to find someone who you can love and that loves you and that life becomes a beautiful adventure together. I think that lesbian women together have advantages over men since they are seen more restricted socially in their sensitive aspect. Including the idea that it isn't the same with two women living together as with two men.…We have to have some advantages! In addition, we are more intelligent and reserved than they are. (FGL)

During the major I kept myself isolated from my feelings, my sentiments and my sexuality. It isn't easy for oneself to come out of the closet. It was when I finished the university that my personal conflicts started. I had to look for help in order to understand and accept myself.

I decided to leave the country and go far from my family and the world that would suffocate me. I applied for a master's degree at McGill University and was accepted. Montreal received me okay. At the university as always, I hid myself in studying and the

intellectual discussions, but there was nothing that touched on feelings. I started to feel a profound permanent sadness. I worked out like crazy and read and read….Nothing worked! That was when I decided to go to therapy. It wasn't easy, and I could never have imagined that talking about oneself could hurt so much…but I accepted the inevitable. It is marvelous to see how the world is put together.

Both of us finished the doctorate and we returned with good job offers to Mexico. In Montreal, our living relationship went pretty well and because of the aspects of culture of freedom and respect it helped open things. Upon our return we decided to live together and on a day-by-day basis confront whatever came up.

With my partner we acquired a house in the country and there we lived together in freedom with our friends. I didn't feel like I was hiding, but neither was I able to live my relation the same as a heterosexual would have; we are conscious of that. I haven't felt discriminated against at any time up to now, but that does not signify that there isn't any discrimination. Never would I take my partner's hand at work or give her a kiss; that was something that the heterosexuals were able to do. (MGL)

In relation to the emerging subject of the attitude facing other challenges, the

constant is that there is nothing to complain about that can be seen. The attitude to look at

a problem as an opportunity is much better. There is not any rebellion. This exists in the

stories related to the search for achievement by persisting, or just as well by looking for

new alternatives. We have to know how to wait for the right moment to act. For the

stories, it is in the Physically Disabled and the Gays and Lesbian subjects who largely

talk about the challenges of resolution in their lives. Also, it can be observed that with the

subjects interviewed, it was the women who more easily talked about their challenges and

how to conquer them.

Emerging Theme 4: Perception of the Treatment of Others Toward Them

The subjects recalled their perception of how others treated them in different

interactions. It was decided to do an emerging topic, as this is seen as the manner in

which the subjects perceive how they have been treated, in a general way, at all levels.

I had a good infancy because they never treated me differently. In spite of that I could only use my hands and of course my head! They always treated me the same as they did with my sisters. I helped with some of the household chores in the house, for example, folding the clothes when they came out of the drier, and among other things straighten up

the bedroom. I went to a school run by the sisters [nuns] close to my home. I always felt comfortable and very well accepted.

[She remembers beginning to work.] The first thing was to identify which would be my work area. If it was required, there would be help from third persons but no, apparently all was in order. My mother would leave me in the mornings and pick me up in the afternoons. When it was my turn to go to the plants, she would go with me. In the company, they offered me support and I told them that if it was okay with them, I would prefer that it was given by my mother. On the contrary, they accepted it with pleasure. They also paid everything for her including when travelling. In a given way that was also now included with me at work since in the discussions that I would give in the businesses with my mother, they would also ask questions about how to adjust to someone with physical differences.

I don't know if it was because of the type of business, but I have always felt okay. Respected and even including being loved by my colleagues. I don't know how it would be in any other environment. Where I found myself everything was great. Including I felt quite fortunate since there were companions of the same major who didn't have any work. (FPD)

I was a child that had everything in my childhood. We are two brothers. We have one year of difference between us. I am the younger one. I was born with a pigmentation deficiency in the retina. I have never felt bad over the lack of sight since you can't miss something you have never had. My parents always treated me the same as my brother. They never overprotected me. I think that a difference of others in the same situation is that I had more resources. Since being little, they taught me the Braille language in private classes. I had access to a lot of literature that my parents got a hold of for me. In addition to this there was a special computer. Among other things, all this has made me very efficient.

In school I never had problems of being rejected…if they played jokes on me like sticking out their foot, but maybe I would have also done the same thing.…The good thing is that with my cane I could defend myself. (MPD)

Well, religion hasn't represented any challenge in my country. I don't get involved with anybody and nobody bothers me. I will never hide my beliefs. I believe in liberty of expression. If I'm asked about my religion, I explain it to them and if not, then I keep quiet. I am respectful of human beings and their beliefs. In general I have felt respected for my religious beliefs.

What has affected me most and where I felt that they made me feel bad was in the U.S with my language in high school. Also, some teachers gave me bad looks because of my skin color even though they also looked exactly like they were good Mexicanotes, but accordingly they were very Gringo-like. They didn't even speak good English! The matter that we are all equal should be required in the world, since we are manifestations of God in a different form. But in the essence we are the same and that is what really counts. (FNRC)

Fortunately at work I received high recognition for my work and I maintained myself very focused. When there was socializing, which I seldom do, I only stayed there the

minimum time. (MGL)

The topic of perception of treatment that they received is mixed, with some comments that suggest difficulties. In addition, these are not perceived by the subjects as any major problem. The reference to these circumstances is referred to by the subjects in a natural way and there is nothing traumatic. They view these as something in the past and they recall it with greater comfort and equanimity. It is interesting that all the subjects talk about problems as if they are things that have been overcome. They do not feel problems at this time in their lives.

Emerging Theme 5: Miscellaneous

In this section there are those reflections taken from questions where some importance was assigned. The topics are varied:

Of my greatest challenges at the professional level there are many. I worry about there being very little sensitivity surrounding inclusion. Many say they understand it but when it's time to make a decision, they don't do it. For example, in some plants after the talks by the managers and directors everybody accepts that they promise to go with the program; but at the time to take action they won't follow-through and do it. Society requires greater levels of consciousness and it is by means of education that change can be achieved and risks taken. For me, that is the greatest challenge: That from where I am I can generate substantial changes. In respect to my personal life, I feel pretty good. I know that my parents will not be with me forever. But also, I know that I am prepared in order to confront problems with the tools that God gave me and from what they have told me. Why should I worry about tomorrow? I see my future as a function of my present attitude and that's something that shouldn't be changed. (FPD)

I feel that I have collaborated by looking for equality and justice and by professionalizing the association. I don't know what the reality in other countries is in that respect, but at least in Mexico, for having a differentiated capacity; many subjects want to be treated with pity not with respect. They want to be subsidized and not to be taught how to be self-sufficient. I am not talking about things from my privileged situation where fortunately I have all my needs taken care of. For months I have been in extreme poverty zones in the country and it has given me an awareness that the radical difference is in attitude and education.
Life in itself is a challenge. I would like it if our country would have more resources for education in the ample sense of the word. Because of the lack of education, hygiene, and health, many children lose their sight, hearing, and even their lives. It

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couldn't be that there exist countries in the 21st century that still live in these circumstances. I feel committed to the idea of leaving a world better than that received by my children and grandchildren. (MPD)

I was never aware of how poor we were until I got to know the houses in the city.

Also, having traveled off the ranch was important. If I would have stayed there, I never would have gotten to know that there are other ways of living and seeing more of the world and life. Having studied makes one conscious of many things.

I have many professional challenges. It is necessary above all to work a lot, especially with people in something as difficult as changing their way of thinking. (FI)

The future will be as God wants it to be.…I am prepared to follow him [God] faithfully. He [God] didn't want Ely and me to have a family. Our family is the community that we serve. There is a lot of need for the word of God and He wants my husband and me to serve him in order to strengthen His reign. This is my mission on this earth to follow God and my husband wherever the Lord needs us. (FNRC)

Mexico is a country of great paradoxes where the legal in practice is left ignored by those who have the obligation of applying it. They influence the personal interests over the social and something called *compadrazgo* is what prevails. We are a great nation in spite of all the continuing anomalies. If there was a national culture of values and respect we would be a real power. Our children learn with deeds the opposite of what we teach them.…This is sad and there are many who work for agreement. For change to be seen, it has to be given from the top to bottom. I am convinced of what each one of us should make of themselves is to be a better person. And if the masses achieve pushing those who direct us, then they have accomplished their work.

I am grateful that I have been given the opportunity of externalizing my life-style in my work. It was painful, generating impotence in our community [in respect to the temple that they couldn't build within the municipality that is the traditional northern Catholic part of the country]. But we are clear we have to look for how to achieve things. In this context, it isn't reached by means of violence, it is only through love and passion that one believes success can be achieved. (MNRC)

[Remembering her adolescence in her sexual awakening.] I wanted to go away from my city, to be alone in order to be able to live the way I needed to. It was clear to me that small town big problems. And now as an adult I have known many boy and girlfriends who have seen the same thing happen as it did for me. It wasn't until they left the city to live alone in another place that they were able to free themselves from the established social norms. (FGL)

What damage does money make without a real education and values! Today as an adult defined in my sexuality and respectful of the same, I see that many of those companions got married but continue playing games in private parties. That this is maybe so, until they give talks at church about what it means to be a partner in present times and the importance and value of being faithful. That really smells!

There is a lack of education about the topics of homosexuality in the family. My

intuition tells me that many do not know what to do, how to act when faced with the information that someone might say about their children. I don't see myself carrying on any campaigns for the freedom of expression of homosexuality. That is not my style. I admire those who carry this fight forward. My sexual preference is only a part of me. I have many personal battles to fight. Before, I would have liked that there were not so many economic inequalities in the world; this maybe because of my professional preparation in economics. Extreme misery seems offensive to me, and so does the robbery of the people's money by the shameless governing parties, among many things. (MGL)

In these reflections, we can perceive the need that exists for improving education and awareness about inclusion, in spite of what they openly perceived as not being excluded. Some of the subjects mention the lack of agreement between what they say and what they do. Everyone in some way looks for a better future for themselves and for their environment.

Summary of Chapter IV

In summarizing the interviews with the subjects the researcher encountered a common trait that was found in all of them such as a characteristic positive attitude when faced with life's challenges. It really can not be detected anywhere that their adverse memories have changed them into angry persons. Just the opposite is true; they recognize in a certain way that in overcoming adversity, they have developed into better persons.

It is noted that with all of them there was someone there; it could have been family or friendship. It was someone who pushed them to have confidence in themselves. All of them, in one way or the other, recognized that they felt fortunate that it was the way it was. Something else that was important is that, in general, only one of the subjects did not display a special sense of humor. All the others, each one in agreement with their personality, demonstrated a very good sense of humor during the interviews. It is also significant that they all think about a better future for themselves and their families.

The only sensible difference between the subjects and sex-gender is that the women were more specific when talking about their personal lives. Even though nobody showed any inhibition touching on personal questions, the men talked about their problems without less detail in comparison to the women.

In the next chapter, the data will be further analyzed in order to draw conclusions, ending with the identification of the limitations of this experience, as well as important implications for further study.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

As explained in Chapter I, interest for doing this study came about because of the generalized assumption that in Mexico diversity does not exist. Foreigners as well as nationals do not perceive any diversity in the country. However, the lack of awareness of this does not negate its existence. Maybe it has not been noticed as something that is obvious in Mexico (i.e., that there are different ethnic groups here just as in other countries).This is apparent even though by means of the globalization process it has become more common to see persons from other countries in businesses, universities, and various public places who have arrived in Mexico for various reasons.

Diversity is a word that is present in the everyday vocabulary of many countries, as is the case in the United States, and it is generally used when talking about ethnic diversity. Nevertheless, Clearfield (2003) mentions:

> Diversity is not relative only to race since it consists of many distinctive characteristics which include ethnic group, sex, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic context, fitness, religion and other differences. Together with these concrete characteristics, there are less tangible differences in the ways of thinking, styles of communication, skills and behaviors, which allow us to achieve our goals and objectives as members of human organizations. (p. 3)

As a nation, the lack of awareness of differences creates a false perception that all is well, to the detriment of social and political progress that might be able to help with easing integration with and justice for minority groups. It is not the absence of either laws or their validity; it is the double discourse in which one is perceived in a certain way, that there is then an authentic preoccupation for the notion of equality and inclusion of justice

for all.

One of the best examples of this is found in the Mexican Political Constitution. However, as the day-by-day reality demonstrates, this shows just the opposite in specific cases, as the majority comes to abuse these same minorities, and it is obvious how they are also poorly served and neglected in the way they are legally represented.

Part of my interest in doing this research was the discovery that in Mexico we have not really dealt with the problem of diversity and discrimination with the same intensity as it has been done in other countries. There exist some estimates and approximations in studies of gender and the indigenous, but it is not easy to find any studies in which the topic is broadly approached as a common theme in the country, or at least looked at in an overall, general way.

This study is a modest approximation of the problem that in Mexico, because of the circumstances described, nuances are acquired from the national agenda. The research was done with eight subjects who represent four minority groups in Mexico. Throughout each one of their life stories, they try to give answers to the question asked.

In Chapter II, the most significant of the literature on the subject is presented; in Chapter III the proposal methodological tackles what is examined along with what is explored in terms of the responses to the questions addressed.

In Chapter IV, the information obtained is presented by means of interviews and observation. In Chapter V, an analysis of the data is offered and the conclusions are presented. The limitations and implications for future research are also presented.

Conclusions from the Data Analysis

In two sets of demographic data the following is observed:

Gender. The research had the same number of men and women and even though the differences were not significant, it is interesting to observe that the narratives differed between these two groups.

The women subjects were quite detailed in their narratives. They were explicit in their descriptions of acts, accomplishments, actions, and feelings. Their narrative was fluid, and they spent time on details that to them appeared significant. The men tended to generalize. The narrative was smooth but without going into any details. They described more their actions-accomplishments than their feelings in this respect.

When asking them about their feelings, there was no problem in describing them, and they gave timely responses. The women extended the explanation of their feelings using a vocabulary that was more ample and with much better clarity than the men.

Socioeconomic level. All of the subjects are employed; none of them is a business owner. This means, that they have not had any problems being minority group members in employment. It can be seen in general that all have remained at the same socioeconomic level they were at during their infancy.

Here, the idea seems to apply that the indigenous people in Mexico, even though they constitute little more than one fifth of the population in the country, are for the most part one of the groups that mainly live in extreme poverty.

We can see that there is little or no improvement in the case of the indigenous subjects in this study. They may have acquired a university education and very probably, in other cases, this will not be a good indicator that a better education improves the socioeconomic level in Mexico. Of the eight subjects, three obtained a master's degrees and only one had a doctorate.

Regarding to the demographics of the subjects of this study, there are observed differences that are not significant in the narrative because of gender; all the subjects have remained at the same socioeconomic level in which they were born and all are employed. It would be interesting to design a study for a larger population that would permit studying whether they maintained the same socioeconomic level or if there were changes for minorities in Mexico from infancy to adult life compared with their general educational level.

The results of the information obtained during the interviews are grouped around five emergent subjects with certain subthemes. The analysis of these is presented as follows.

The first emergent topic is that of the family and networks. The definition of the theme is closely related with the nuclear family, including father, mother, and siblings. In addition, there are those persons who in some way were perceived as determining factors in the subjects' lives and who they consider closer than some of their blood relations.

Of the positive remembrances, it was discovered that everyone in some form had someone who valued them as being important during their formative period. In general they perceive their family as a great help, with the exception of the indigenous, who reflected during their discourse, moments when there had been violence or their actions had been blocked in some way during their growth and development.

Regarding to their friendships, there were few negative observations. The majority of these recounted attempts to take advantage of the projects or tasks during their time as students. It is a significant fact that while talking about moments that could be considered negative, none of the subjects revealed any high level of pain. It was just the opposite,

everyone explained these moments as simple events that also served in forward movement and making some kind of progress in their lives.

With respect to the first emergent subtopic of family and networks that is specifically relative to the period of time during their education process, all the subjects referred to having excellent moments. Experiences in their academic life are recalled with special feelings for the time as it was remembered during their socialization process.

The second emergent subtopic of family and networks makes reference to the importance of these stages for the subjects, who had all remembered some person who was an inspiration, a spark, or incentive, inspiring them and strengthening them for moving ahead and making further progress. For some it was their family and for others their partner or some other friendship. There are similar here in that they have an optimistic vision of the future and a hoped-for collaboration in some way that they will be accompanied by their loved ones.

The second emergent subject refers to their attitude toward learning, academic achievement, and specific relationships with professors and colleagues. In general, it was noted that the subjects had a positive attitude toward learning. Only one of them had his or her learning motivation much different than the rest.

It can be seen regarding the subjects that in their relationships with professors and colleagues, they could have had ups and downs, but these were not so significant, as such, because they were lived as simple events that did not have any great importance or significance for each one of them. It is interesting that the subjects who mentioned some problem with the academic authorities always received some form of assistance-help from their companions. The day-to-day problems, in this scenario, are presented by the

subject, much as they would be by another person not belonging to a minority group.

The third emergent subject theme is their attitude toward life and when facing challenges. It is significant that the subjects always managed to maintain an optimistic attitude, inclusively taking life's problems with a sense of humor and always as something valuable or worthwhile that had given them some kind of learning experience or some special advantage.

No pain or complaint was noticed in the subjects, but rather opportunities to find solutions that allowed them to continue making progress. It is in the Physically Disabled and in the Gays and Lesbian subjects where this is especially seen as simply more challenges for solving problems in the future.

For instance, this last group sees it that way in spite of their sexual orientation and they have still managed to achieve a stable relationship as a couple, yet they have not decided to open up to anyone outside their circle of friendships or share any discussion of their situation even with their families. They argue that sexuality, belongs to the private sphere of activity, and they have not considered it as a necessity.

It was decided to do a fourth emergent subject in relation to the subjects' perception of how they were treated at almost every level in their life. Even though they talk about certain problems, nobody has seen this as an obstacle to continue with their life's goals. It is significant that when referring to problems, they speak in the past tense, as if it is something that has been solved and that in their adult lives they have achieved better balance and comfort.

The fifth topic is really miscellaneous and one in which the subjects talk about various points that reflect, above all else, a need for better education for minorities,

despite not feeling excluded.

The data sheds light on the subjects as they considered they have had resources, including materials, networks of family members and friendships, or even having a superior intelligence, among other facets that have facilitated their development at the present time.

In summary, in my research question: What is it like for minority group members to live in a country which denies diversity? It is documented that in Mexico, the existence of diversity is largely denied. In this context, it was something concrete and tangible that I was looking for in this work. Nevertheless, also in the first chapter, I can back up the assumptions that, in the minority groups there are people who, despite discrimination and prejudice, are able to achieve their goals.

It is interesting that the eight subjects in this research have all reached the proposed goals and objectives. It was hoped that one of the main characteristics among the sample would be that everyone should have at least a bachelor's degree. Perhaps, if the sample had not had this characteristic, there probably would have been other types of important findings.

Limitations

As stated in Chapter I, the limitation of the study is that the researcher did not know if the members of minority group even recognized themselves as members of a minority in Mexico. It is possible that some of them may not yet recognize that they do belong to a minority or that their circumstances may be different from other citizens.

This is something presented in the conclusions as a given reality, in fact all the subjects in this research consider that they had circumstances quite different from the rest

of their minority group. It is here where it might be asked: What is it then that can be found in the reading material that explains the results of the interviews with the subjects? Is it possible to affirm that discrimination does not exist in the lives of the eight subjects selected?

There was a moment of doubt, questioning, and maybe even frustration of not being able to find evidence of it in what I had been investigating. I know that in a qualitative study, only eight subjects limits the generalizations of the results. It would be pertinent in future studies to amplify the sample with other types of the same characteristics.

Implications for Future Research

As mentioned in the section explaining limitations of the study, it is not easy to find in the narrative of the subjects any information that in some way proves what is suggested in the study. This does not mean that as a researcher I was being forced to find confirmation regarding my research question. I can simply state, that my listening to the subjects in my study narrate their lives and perceptions, the information they provide at first glance did not appear to be different from that which might be provided by people who might be considered common, or not pertaining to a diverse group. However, in the dialogue, there were also constant elements that would stand out and which provided patterns and a good profile of them.

The constants that I found in the subjects are: (a) they exhibit from their infancy excellent social networks that in some way have pushed or helped sustain them; (b) a strong sense of life has been maintained, in other words there is faith; (c) there exists in the subjects a noticeable sense of humor; (d) they have high self-esteem; and (e) any

problems encountered are really seen as opportunities.

Reviewing the literature I found out these characteristics corresponded to persons who can be defined as resilient. The definition for the term resilience is given by Luthar Chicchetti, and Becker (2003) say it is "a dynamic process that has as result the positive adaptation in contexts of great adversity" (p. 543). Resilience, according to Rutter (1991), is the capacity of individuals to overcome or finish, or in other words, to end up strengthened as a result of stress or facing adversity.

Grotberg (1995) points out that resilience requires the interaction of factors from three different levels: there is social support (I have), abilities (I can), and internal fortitude (I am). All of these elements are strongly reflected in the narratives of the subjects under study.

The value of the study is based on the idea that resilience in the subjects permits a better and easier adaptation to their circumstances. To survive a serious problem means being resilient (Glicken, 2006). However, in the sample of this research, the subjects demonstrate an excellent level of energy-spirit as well as adaptation to their general surroundings, the immediate setting, and their overall environment.

It is not the objective of this research to deepen the topic of resilience, although being able to see this situation so clearly was fascinating. This is especially true with the characteristics described in the literature (Glicken, 2006; Grotberg, 1995; Luthar et al., 2003; Rutter, 1991) in reference to the subjects in the sample.

Thinking about the subject of my research and the findings, there begin to appear questions that would be most interesting for future research, such as: Are there cultural differences in the form of dealing with the problems of resilient persons?

As mentioned earlier, choosing participants who have at least a bachelor's degree as a characteristic was perhaps an element that had an influence on the results. It seems that it could be very interesting to remove this characteristic in order to observe whether there had been any changes in the perception of the subjects in relation to their perception of or the absence of discrimination in Mexico.

It would also be interesting to focus on a study in Mexico, for example, concerning parents of families with children who might have some disadvantage. The reason for this is it could generate a viable affective climate and possibly include their offspring who come with an incapacity of some kind but they would have the chance to see parents who have had to fight for things in life in order to find the right space, acceptance, education, and facilities for their own child or children.

Even so, I consider that the problem of integration and respect for minorities at a world-wide level is an unfinished subject. There are countries that have been working more on research and reformation of laws allowing more equality and justice but there is still much to do.

The evidence from day-to-day life in my country, Mexico, indicates that there is much work that we still need to do, and we must move in that direction applying laws and being congruent in all sectors: government, families, communities, among others. Only in this manner, will we achieve a high level of competence in relationship to this sensitive topic of viable justice for minorities.

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