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Docile Descendants and Illegitimate Heirs: Privatization of Cultural Patrimony in México

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ABSTRACT

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Archaeological ruins in Mexico, although juridically mandated as national property, are, in practice, sites of multiple, coexisting claims on ownership, custodianship, and inheritance. Focusing on more than a century of interventions by US/Mexican cultural agencies, foreign archaeologists, and private sector interests, I demonstrate how de jure policies and de facto practices of privatization have affected patrimonial claims to and understandings of “ruins” vis-à-vis 1) state policy regarding cultural materials, 2) jurisdiction and access within archaeological zones, and 3) scientific investigation and international cultural tourism.

While the neoliberal state contemplates the relinquishment of territorial control over national properties through privatization, my ethnographic and archival evidence clearly supports the claim that for at least a century, the state has merely assumed—through it laws, policies, and institutional management—that sites of monumental cultural patrimony were within its firm grasp all along. In order to demonstrate this claim, I create micro-level spatial genealogies of two archaeological sites (Chichén Itzá and Chunchucmil) and their several associated living communities (Pisté, Chunchucmil, and Kochol). The results of this study show how, at the local level,
the overarching concepts of “national cultural patrimony” or “World Heritage” signal only two forms of patrimonial significance, both based on archaeological heritage’s privileging of the “ancient” over and above the modern or contemporary. At Chichén Itzá, federally employed site custodians understand the site as an inheritable family patrimony. At Chunchucmil, local residents consider the land coterminous with the archaeological heritage site as their *patrimonio ejidal*, or ejido land-grant heritage. In both cases, Maya people have been historically constructed, by archaeology, the state, as well as the private sector, as docile descendents and illegitimate heirs. The cultivation of Mexican nationalism required Maya people to be “docile descendents” playing a political and cultural role in the appropriate role in the Nation’s articulation ancient ruins to Mexican modernity. Under emergent conditions of neoliberalism, they are joined by private sector entrepreneurs in becoming “illegitimate heirs” in their attempts to reterritorialize the nation’s patrimony.
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# Table of Contents

*Abstract*  
*Acknowledgments*  

Introduction 1

Chapter One  
*Patrimonio and Privatization*  42

Chapter Two  
*Cultural Patrimony as State Territory in Modern México*  96

Chapter Three  
*Chichén Itzá: a Genealogy of Private Sector Intervention*  146

Chapter Four  
*“Mi Chichén”: Custodianship and Patrimony at a World Heritage Site*  199

Chapter Five  
*Henequen, Hotels, and Haciendas: (re)Patronage in Northwestern Yucatán*  255

Chapter Six  
*Territorial Patrimony: Archaeology, Ejidos, and Space-Claiming Techniques*  316

Conclusion  
*Archaeology, Development, and “Descendant Communities”*  368

*Bibliography*  390
Introduction

The year 2002 was declared the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage. This followed on the heels of the biggest crisis to cultural heritage in recent memory—the Taliban’s destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhist statues in Afghanistan. To this threat, the international community, led by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) answered with outrage. The United Nations year-long celebration of anticipated the next major heritage crisis—impending armed conflict in Iraq. In early 2003, a group including the Society for American Archaeology delivered a list of 4,000 cultural heritage sites in Iraq (a small percentage of the more than 100,000 sites of cultural and historical importance in the region), asking them to be spared during escalating armed conflict. Examples such as this dramatically illustrate what is at stake when one group’s exercise of power over a heritage site clashes with the universalized ideals promoted by World Heritage. Other cases are not nearly so dramatic or publicized, yet do reveal the tensions and even conflicts between local or regional and national or international interpretations and significances of different sites. While the whole world’s eyes might be turned to a crisis in one region’s heritage, other nations around the world are struggling to maintain minimal standards of protection and conservation as well as public support for countless sites within their own national territories. World Heritage, or Patrimony of Humanity as it is called in Mexico, promotes the ideal of the importance of sites with “outstanding universal value” to not solely the nation in whose territory they are to be found, or to the descendant cultural group they pertain, but to each and every living person on the planet. At what point does the universalism of World Heritage efface both national(ist) agendas and/or the local particularities of a heritage site? What
roles do communities who live nearby or even within heritage sites play in not only their conservation and protection, but also in their promotion? If a heritage site is supposedly meaningful to the whole of humanity, does signify differently (or, perhaps, stop meaning) for the sites resident or neighbors? How might a small group of social actors stake a claim in what belongs, in a sense, to a nation or even the whole world?

This study is based on the premise that archaeological ruins in Mexico, although juridically mandated as national property, are, in practice, sites of multiple, coexisting claims on ownership, custodianship, and cultural inheritance. The project focuses on a century of interventions by Mexican cultural institutions, foreign archaeological research, and US/Mexican nongovernmental organizations I set out to demonstrate how de jure policies and de facto practices of privatization have worked and how they have affected local Maya communities in terms of the ownership, use, and tenure of land within archaeological zones in Yucatán. The project also investigates how local patrimonial claims to and understandings of “ruins” are situated in relation to 1) state policy regarding the ownership and custodianship of cultural materials, 2) issues of jurisdiction and access within archaeological zones, and 3) the ongoing efforts of US and Mexican interest groups to develop archaeological sites and to promote both scientific knowledge of ancient Maya civilization as well as international cultural tourism.

Heritage is a set of values, meanings, and practices that are differently constituted at local, regional, national, and international levels of social agents and institutions. Distinct regional and even local (site-specific) understandings of Maya cultural heritage exist in tandem and tension with both the Mexican nationalist discourse on cultural heritage and UNESCO’s criteria of universal cultural value. For local Maya
communities, heritage is part of an everyday experience and common-sense knowledge. The archaeological ruins, especially for those employed in their preservation, forms what Bourdieu (1977) calls a “habitus,” or cultural environment. For regional and national institutions charged with preserving and promoting culture, heritage comprises material spaces of intervention, such as archaeological ruins, used to produce symbolic meanings that forge identity, belonging, and community at regional and national levels. For international agencies, heritage is a set of policies and practices that create and regulate humanly built cultural spaces.

International cultural and scientific organizations, private property owners, and usufruct land-grant holders have different stakes in archaeological sites. For the UNESCO and its associated organizations, a World Heritage Site must be preserved and promoted according to a standard of universal cultural value, over and above particularities of culture area and national boundaries. National agencies, in turn, appeal to and support abstract notions of “cultural good,” bolstering these with specifically nationalist ideologies. Living communities surrounding or, in many cases, located within archaeological sites negotiate these ideals and mandates according to the dynamics of the everyday life of the archaeological heritage site. While it could be argued that these stakeholders basically negotiate contradictory state versus private interests, I argue that this does not adequately characterize the contemporary situation. While the neoliberal state contemplates the relinquishment of territorial control over national properties through privatization, my ethnographic and archival evidence clearly supports the claim that indeed, the state has, for at least a century, merely assumed—through it laws,
policies, and institutional management—that sites of monumental cultural patrimony were within its firm grasp all along.

In order to demonstrate this claim, I create micro-level spatial genealogies of two archaeological sites (Chichén Itzá and Chunchucmil) and their several associated living communities (Pisté, Chunchucmil, and Kochol). These oral and archival histories highlight 1) the history of archaeological development, and the ends to which this development has been directed (e.g. tourism); 2) the status of private land ownership and communal land tenure in the property comprising the official archaeological zones; and 3) the relationships between the zones, specifically in terms of their value as both natural and cultural resources, and their neighboring communities; and 4) the roles of Maya workers and their families in the historical development and daily maintenance of these zones.

The results of this study show how, at the local level, the overarching concepts of "national cultural patrimony" or "World Heritage" (or Patrimony of Humanity) signal only two forms of patrimonial significance, both based on archaeological heritage’s privileging of the "ancient" over and above the modern or contemporary. At Chichén Itzá, an internationally famous site which has undergone archaeological and touristic development since the early twentieth century, federally employed site guards and custodians understand the site as an inheritable family patrimony. The care and protection of Chichén, they claim, is "in our blood." At Chunchucmil, local residents (some who are excavation laborers) also articulate a strong connection to the newly declared archaeological zone. However, for these agriculturalists, it is the land, not the ruins, that constitutes patrimony. The land coterminous with the archaeological heritage
site is their *patrimonio ejidal*, or ejido land-grant heritage they have held since the federal government distributed land to indigenous people in the 1930s. In both cases, local Maya have been historically constructed, by archaeology, the state, as well as the private sector, as both docile descendents and illegitimate heirs. The cultivation of Mexican nationalism required Maya people to be “docile descendents” playing a political and cultural role in the appropriate role in the Nation’s articulation of vestiges of ancient civilization to Mexican modernity. Under emergent conditions of neoliberalism, these docile descendants are joined by private sector entrepreneurs in becoming “illegitimate heirs” in their attempts to reterritorialize the nation’s patrimony.

Using a multi-sited ethnographic approach, I conducted research in and around the archaeological sites of Chichén Itzá and Chunchucmil, both located in Mexico’s Yucatán Peninsula. This research investigates the formation and contours of the network of organizations, institutions, and actors who participate in the heritage apparatus in Yucatán, Mexico. In addition to contributing ethnographically-derived empirical knowledge of the traffic in the discourse on heritage in this geographical region, the study provides an occasion for methodological innovation in anthropological fieldwork, speaking both to the practice of ethnography as well as to the emergent field of “ethnography of archaeology,” as well as a much-needed substantive addition to understandings of heritage issues in a variety of disciplines.

The Maya area has been defined through anthropology and ethnology, archaeology, history, and cultural studies. The anthropology of the Maya is rich and diverse. In regards to the Maya area as a whole, cultural anthropological research has given greater priority to communities and cultures of Chiapas, México, and southern
Guatemala (or what is called the “highlands” of the Maya culture area), while archaeological attention has generally concentrated on Belize, the Peten area of Guatemala, and the Yucatán Peninsula (i.e., the “northern” and “central” lowlands). The late 19th and first half of the 20th century was a period of major restoration projects sponsored by US-based institutions and the national anthropology institutes of host countries. In the state of Yucatán, archaeology restored sites – such as Tulum, Chichén Itzá, Uxmal, Labná, Kabah – that have since become major points on the tourist network routed on Cancun and Mérida.

This study significantly contributes to anthropological studies of the Maya area and Mexico, as well as to ethnographic perspectives in the study of heritage sites. The cultural anthropology of the Maya has centered on the ethnographic description of Maya communities as relatively autonomous cultural traditions. Particular research questions and issues have become associated with specific regions and areas during the course of the 20th century. In Guatemala, maintenance of cultural community has always been central issue, both before (Watanabe 1992; Warren 1978) and after the civil war (c.f., Carmack 1988; Manz 1998; Montejo 1999) and, since the 1980s, in terms of revitalization (Fischer and McKenna Brown 1996), pan-Maya cultural nationalism (Warren 1998), ethnic-racial identity (Nelson 1999), and the emergence of native Maya intellectuals and anthropologists/ies (Menchu and Debray 1984; Stoll 1993, 1999; Warren 1998). Work in Chiapas, México, has focused on the maintenance of traditional solidarities through culturo-political mechanisms in the face of political-economic domination (Cancian 1965, 1972, 1992; Collier 1975; Favre 1973; Perera 1982; Vogt 1976) and, since 1994, on the Zapatista rebellion (Collier 1994; Gossen 1999).
In Yucatán, the institutional anthropologies of the state, such as Culturas Populares and the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, and one strand of US ethnography starting with the work of Robert Redfield, have concentrated on describing traditional or folk culture (c.f. Pacheco Cruz 1934; M. Redfield 1935; Redfield 1941, 1950; Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934; Villa Rojas 1945); an increased concern for the survival and propagation of Maya language in both spoken and a written/literary forms has led to a dozen Spanish-Maya publications in the 1980s and 1990s. In contrast, the INAH social anthropology and a second branch of US anthropology have been concerned with the political economy of Maya communities, specifically the henequen monoculture (Kirk 1975; Shuman 1974), traditional crafts, (Littlefield 1976), gender (Elmendorf 1976; Re Cruz 1996), and state-sponsored economic diversification (Labrecque and Breton 1982). This work, with the expansion of tourism in the 1980s, has led to studies, especially in the states of Quintana Roo and Campeche rather than in Yucatan, of the interface of Maya community and ecology, sustainable development, ecological conservation, and tourism (Faust 1998; Acopa and Boege 1998; Haenn 1997, 1999a, 1999b; Murphy 1998). A third line of research has studied the social history of archaeology in the Maya world and México (Andrews 1977, 1981; Barrera Vásquez 1980; Bernal 1992; Diaz Berrio 1990; Litvak et al 1980; Lorenzo 1984; Morley 1943; Mosley and Terry 1980; Patterson 1986; Schmidt and Patterson 1995), which is contextualized by a larger field of inquiry concerning the history of archaeology and the role of the disciplinary practices of archaeology in the interpretations of the past (Hodder 1991; Leone et al 1987; Trigger 1985, 1989, 1995). From Redfield’s 1932 essay, “Maya Archaeology as the Mayas See It,” a less prominent line of study continues to question the historical interface between
Maya communities, anthropologies, archaeologies, and tourism (Sullivan 1989; Castañeda 1996; Castañeda and Himpele 1997). The present study falls into this trajectory as both an empirical addition to the field and the furthering of an interdisciplinary theoretical framework. While the profusion of poststructuralist thought in 1980s stimulated a wealth of anthropology of science, it did not translate into establishing a field of the “anthropology of archaeology.” Clearly, sites for this kind of research have existed since the development of both as social sciences. It is perhaps, then, not for want of “location” but for lack of a methodology flexible enough to accommodate both ethnography and archaeology. Thus, my research, in form and substance, attempts to explore this relatively unexplored space of overlap between the two.

At the same time I am identifying this gap, it is worth noting the recent work accomplished mostly by archaeologists that addresses issues of nationalism, the state, the publics of archaeology, and ethics. Historically, cultural heritage, and particularly archaeology, has been a key element in constructing national identity relationships between archaeology and the state (Abu El Haj 1995, 1997; Bartu 1997; Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Meskell 1998). Archaeological zones, insofar as they constitute cultural patrimony, are, according to the Mexican Constitution, inalienable possessions of the national community. Ancient remains, visible across the national landscape, have historically been drawn into the service of the State in its attempts to develop a coherent Great Tradition to serve as a rallying point for the country’s diverse populations. Since the time of the Conquest, legislatively speaking, all archaeological zones and monuments have been considered part of the national cultural patrimony. Under colonialism, archaeological properties, like all land, was a territory of the Spanish Crown. Ruins,
thus, formed a part of the Spanish royal patrimony. For the independent Mexican state, the properties were transformed into national cultural patrimony, the material embodiment of the developing nationalist project.

The question of who owns and/or has rights of access to archaeological ruins in Mexico reached a point of national debate in April 1999, when a senator from the northern state of Nuevo Leon proposed a plan to amend the Constitutional mandate that all archaeological monuments are national property. The amendment proposed opening up these resources of cultural patrimony to private concession. In response to this proposed “privatization” plan, various social and political actors and institutions publicly voiced their objections. Perhaps the most vociferous opposition came from the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH). The INAH is commissioned to protect and promote cultural heritage as well as permit and supervise foreign archaeological research. All foreign archaeological projects are obligated, by law to receive project approvals and excavation permits from this agency. Through institutional ethnography of the INAH’s state office in Yucatán, I examine the different sorts of relationships between the INAH (manifest as both state and federal institution) and foreign archaeological projects in Yucatán. How has the political lobbying for the privatization of archaeological zones complicated the balance of legal agreements and political interests between the INAH and community organizations? Further, as more archaeological sites are “discovered” and initiated into the process of becoming official archaeological zones, the INAH claims that its resources are strained beyond their limits, thus opening a space for these transnational NGOs to share in the protection, preservation and development of archaeological zones. The western ideals that lay the foundations for Mexican
archaeology as well as the preservation and promotion of cultural patrimony, and indeed the project of nation-building, contribute to the conditions of possibility for the current private-sector stewardship and development plans rapidly springing up around Yucatán.

In this dissertation, I explore how current endeavors on the part of archaeologists and local communities to both develop and preserve cultural heritage promote “alternative privatizations” of archaeological zones. I argue that these “alternative privatizations” are not exclusively new phenomena, but have historical precedents dating back over the course of nearly a century. Privatization might be effected through property ownership of the land, which contains ruins, through the establishment of private economic enterprises within the official territory of these national properties, or via state-sponsored intervention into the federal jurisdiction of archaeological zones. All of these forms illustrate the competing interests in archaeological zones, and at the same time speak to the competing meanings produced by different social actors regarding archaeological heritage.

This “privatization” debate sparked my initial interest in studying cultural patrimony in Mexico. Already carrying out fieldwork in the town of Písté on issues of history, memory, and genealogy, I turned my attention to the local participants in the protests, the custodios of Chichén Itzá, federal INAH employees. These workers, some of whom were second and even third generation archaeological zone guards and caretakers, were one crucial link between an international tourist destination and World Heritage site, national politics, and feelings of ownership of the ruins—ruins that sit, quite literally, in their own backyards. It didn’t take much investigation to realize that this group of thirty-four men and two women, most from Písté, constitute a special
enclave within the larger community. Other residents and on-site personnel regard them with both open and veiled hostility. This is due in large part to their steady, salaried employment, their strong unionization, and their entrepreneurial activities inside the archaeological zone, from which they receive exclusive economic benefits within a national, public space. This complex, very local politics of patrimony and privatization signaled the import of an ethnographic study of the meanings of living in and around runs in Yucatán that moves well-beyond the implications of the usual suspects in studies of heritage sites: archaeological science, the nation, and tourism.

The Need for Ethnography of Heritage Sites

Writing in 1996, Michael Herzfeld states, “Studying the local politics of heritage-that is, ethnographically-is still in its infancy” (122). Now several years later, his observation retains validity. While ethnographic studies are still few, their import, and even necessity, is even greater. Studies of heritage sites around the world are not ethnographic by discipline or design. They have concentrated on the politics of museum representation, specific tourism issues, or on conflict and contestation among various users of the heritage spaces. Among these important works we find several exemplary studies. Colonial Williamsburg (Greenspan 2002; Handler and Gable 1997) is a prototypical site for studying the articulation between heritage- and meaning-making processes in a heritage museum setting. Barbara Bender’s (1998) study of contestations over the meaning and usage of Stonehenge pays close to attention to the site’s competing users, their practices, and beliefs. Castañeda and Himpele (1997) deal with a similar
subject through a different angle and medium in their ethnographic film portrayal of New Age tourists attending the Spring Equinox event at Chichén Itzá.

Only a handful of studies ethnographically focused on the living communities coexisting with heritage sites. Herzfeld’s (1991) *A Place in History* focuses on the constitution of history in the town of Rethemnos in Crete. The author examines, in part, interventions of archaeology and its practitioners in the daily lives of residents, whose homes are targets of historic preservation. Castañeda (1996) ethnographically and discursively analyzes the archaeological zone of Chichén Itzá as a “Museum of Maya Culture,” a monument to archaeological science and the State. Though it is not within the scope of this study, his line of inquiry suggests further investigation regarding the living Maya communities who are in many ways connected to Chichén. From these studies, a sense of “everyday life” of a heritage site begins to emerge. My study complements these works through a production of the sociocultural/historical significance beyond its “cultural heritage” designation. What does the site mean for local people—both Maya and non-Maya who live around or even inside its borders? How is the site both sacred and mundane? How can ancient ruins be both a natural feature of the landscape and the humanly built environment of an ancient people? These questions go beyond the “Who owns the past?” issue with which Heritage Studies has thus far been concerned.

I have for this reason taken on a dual role, approaching heritage studies as an ethnographer, while investigating archaeology as a cultural anthropologist. These dual roles are thus featured in a multi-sited study of the meanings of archaeological heritage and its development and promotion in two areas of the Mexican state of Yucatán. Multi-sited ethnography has become a buzzword among particular groups that comprise
what I label "New Ethnography." Genealogically speaking, New Ethnography arose in the mid-1980s with the publication of such works as *Writing Culture* (1986) and *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (1986). It also carries a theoretical orientation, associated primarily with the rise of serious research-oriented academic engagement with the ideas of post-structuralism and postmodernism. In the course of this dissertation, I promote New Ethnography as an important interdisciplinary research technique. I choose the term "technique" over the more common "methodology" in order to move away from the prescriptive agenda for conceiving and carrying out research and its subsequent style of reportage, in order to explore the performative aspects of the research endeavor.

At the same time, also in terms of methodology, my hope is that this research may provide a model for collaboration between ethnography and archaeology, two fields of anthropology that are most commonly thought of as being rigidly distinct in terms of theory, method, and subject matter. However, through my research I have found that in many research sites, there is a compelling overlap. It is this overlap that can be effectively addressed by a concentrated effort between the two fields (indeed, two disciplines) to develop and enact collaborative research agendas.

I am skeptical of the assertion that ethnography must be deeply involved with "communities" understood broadly as populations that exist within spatialized fields. Whereas ethnography historically relied on a rather closed and bounded concept of community in order to create discrete units of study, the idea has in recent years opened up to include disparate peoples across wide geographical spaces who may or may not be in physical proximity to one another. For instance, an ethnographer might study communities of internet users, the gay community of a large metropolitan area, or even a
group of people somehow identified as a global community. Archaeology shares this
dependence, so to speak, on a variety of communities. For archaeology, communities
might be designated in terms of the ancient inhabitants of a particular site under
investigation, contemporary inhabitants of a geographically coordinated community,
neighborhood, village, or town coterminal with an archaeological site. Additionally,
they might include the community of researchers themselves, who live and work together
often for long periods of time.

It seems that while ethnography is trying to both explode and redefine the
category of community, archaeology has, in one specific sense, only recently discovered
it. I am referring here to an emergent body of literature concerned with the public(s) of
archaeology. I therefore look to the specific literature on landscape to find ways in which
to methodologically and thematically link archaeological sites with their inhabitants. In
her study of the inhabitants of a settlement located just next to the Acropolis,
Caftanzoglou (2001) finds it necessary to develop a definition of community that retains
a sense of spatial location, of space as socially constructed. She defines community as “a
group of people who share a sense of togetherness, of common origins, and deep ties to a
specific inhabited territory” (22).

I began this study, fortuitously, at a moment when new currents in archaeology
were beginning to bring to the forefront relationships that excavation and investigation
projects have with local communities (Ardren 2000; Bender 1998; Gazin Schwartz and
as well as with the social anthropology/archaeology of landscape (Ashmore and Knapp
1999; Bender 1993; Cosgrove 1997; Feld and Basso 1996; Hirsch and O’Hanlon 1995;
Lekson 1996; Rossingnol and Wandsnider 1992; Tilley 1994). Social archaeology is also deeply involved with questions concerning the ethics of archaeological practice. This approach or attitude is, in part, indicative of a reflexive turn within the human and social sciences, as researchers have begun to feel their ethical obligation to "describe the ways in which moral positions and norms take shape in diverse, broad, and conflicted spaces of social life" (Marcus 1999: 20), dealing with ethical questions regarding the handling of human remains, ownership and/or custodianship of artifacts, looting, and site preservation and responsibility to future generations.

*Maya Archaeology as the Mayas See It: A New Problem-Based Approach to Heritage*

Almost from the time they stepped off their boats, the Euroamerican settlers of North America have offered explanations of the archaeological remains they encountered. Some of these explanations, from the very earliest days, accord fairly closely with modern archaeological understanding. Other explanations ranged from the ridiculous, to the self-serving, to the racist, through the plainly fantastic. These latter explanations always discounted the contribution of Native Americans, sometimes to the point of denying any relationship between pre-Columbian archaeology and contemporary Indians. (Downer 1997: 25)

A question that haunts the first decades of archaeological and ethnological investigations in the Maya area is that of the relationship of the contemporary Maya people found living in Yucatán, highland Chiapas, Guatemala, Belize – the relationship of these "Modern Maya" people to those who had built the great ceremonial centers of Chichén Itzá, Uxmal, Palenque, Mayapan, the ruins of which cover the landscape of this region.

A 1925 article in National Geographic Magazine features several photos of Maya men, presumably laborers, not only against the background of the ruins at Chichén Itzá, but also "interacting," in a sense, with various pieces of fallen architecture. In the article,
“Chichén Itzá, an Ancient American Mecca” written by Sylvanus G. Morley (often referred to as the father of Maya archaeology), along with various images of maps, building structures, are these images of Maya people, used as human scale models to point out the architectural interests of buildings and artifacts. In one image of a Maya man reclining against a stone column on the Colonnade of the yet-to-be reconstructed Temple of the Warriors. The title of the photo reads, *Past and Present*, and the caption tells us:

Two hundred thousand Maya toil for foreign masters today in the henequen fields of Yucatán, all memory of their former significance gone as completely as if it had never been. ...With such a glorious past, it would seem as though his future might be made of greater promise than this. With proper educational facilities, with fair agricultural opportunities, and intelligent help over the rough places in the road, he must travel from his own simple past to the complicated world to today, and there is every reason to expect that he may again fashion for himself a destiny worthy of his splendid ancestry.

National Geographic is not the only place to find such texts. Sergei Eisenstein’s *Que Viva México!* shot in 1931 features a series of shots taken at Chichén Itzá in the Prologue sequence. The on-screen text reads:

Time in the prologue is eternity.
It might be today.
It might well be twenty years ago.
Might be a thousand.

For the dwellers of Yucatán, land of ruins and huge pyramids, have still conserved, in feature and forms, the character of their ancestors, the great race of the ancient Mayas...The people bear resemblance to the stone images, for those images represent the faces of their ancestors.


What do these two points of view share? Both see contemporary Maya people, whether “conserving the character of their ancestors,” or with a “vanished significance,” as a
remnant, a trace. These kinds of images, which feed the popularized trope of the "Lost Maya," clearly present a problematic of temporality based on the terms of ancient and modern. What if one was to study Maya heritage without assuming to know the relationship between contemporary residents of Yucatán and representations of ancient Maya civilization? Or to not presume that there is descent-based relationship at all?

In 1932, Robert Redfield presented a paper to the meetings of the American Anthropological Association entitled, "Maya Archaeology as the Mayas See It." Redfield was working in multidisciplinary research milieu courtesy of the Carnegie Institution of Washington. By 1924, the Carnegie Institution received permission from the federal government of México to carry out excavation and restoration projects at the Maya area archaeological site of Chichén Itzá. In addition to the archaeological work, the Carnegie sponsored geographic surveys, botany studies, physical anthropology investigations, and linguistic studies of the region, using Chichén Itzá as their base. Redfield, like Eisenstein and Morley in National Geographic, juxtaposes Maya people and ruined buildings. He begins the piece:

The Maya Indians of present-day Yucatán can be said to dwell in the ruined house of their ancestors. The walls of that house- more literally, the ancestral public buildings and roadways – obtrude themselves in shattered remnants upon the builders’ lineal descendent (299-300)

It is no wonder Robert Redfield chose Yucatan for his laboratory for studying modernity, specifically in the form of the folk-urban continuum, a conceptual model that describes the arrivals and influences of modernity in Yucatan. Redfield asks a provocative question rife with countless overtones and undertones of race and civilization, of the realtionships between the ancient, the traditional, the folkloric and the modern, and of the relationship between the archaeologist and the native. He initially frames his pice much as I have
framed this essay-dwelling on the images of Maya people and buildings in ruins.

According to Redfield, "it is the archaeologist, not the Indian, who sees the grandson living in the broken shell of his grandfather’s mansion; certainly the Indian attributes to the situations no quality of pathos. The ruins are not, for him, a heritage" (300). Contemporary scholarship, whether studies of the social and political contexts of archaeology, the heritage industry, or Cultural Resource Management: these perspectives tell us that indeed the ruins are a heritage, or more accurately stated, are produced and consumed as heritage.

My reading of this passage has changed a bit since I initially encountered it well-before my extended ethnographic fieldwork in Yucatán. Reading it over again, near the completion of my dissertation project, I am struck by not only its continued significance in direct relationship with my own research, but also by its utter, almost blasphemous, irony. "The ruins are not...heritage." Here, Redfield is admitting the territorializing interventions of archaeological science in the field of cultural heritage, pulling the veil off the role of archaeological science in the machinic assemblage which makes both archaeological zones and (makes them) heritage sites. However, and I emphasize this important caveat, for Redfield, the ruins are not heritage for one key reason: the local Maya do not possess adequate historical or scientific knowledge of the ruins; for them, their knowledge is relegated to the category of an unsophisticated brand of folklore. I distance my own interpretation of "The ruins are not...heritage" in the chapters that follow for very different reasons. The primary among these is historical. At the time of Redfield’s research and writing on Yucatán (1930s-1940s), the Mexican state was only beginning to systematically incorporate "ruins" into the nation’s patrimony, in both a
material and ideological sense (see Chapter 2). Therefore, it follows that for no one could the ruins really be “heritage” if the legal and institutional frameworks which are responsible for the transformation of ruins into heritage were not yet firmly in place. A second way in which my interpretation apparently agrees yet strongly differs from Redfield’s is tied to the specific genealogies of the archaeological zones of Chichén Itzá and Chunchucmil. The case studies of these two sites evidence other supporting reasons for which the ruins are not heritage. In the case of Chichén Itzá, patrimonial claims are based not upon the ruins themselves, but on local family usufruct rights to the heritage site complex, in which the ruins are only one (albeit important) feature. In the case of Chunchucmil, local Maya assert patrimonial claims over the land upon which the ruins sit rather than on the structures in an of themselves.

Certainly, and I am agreeing with Redfield, the concept of “ancient ruins’ is not a single, organized idea in Maya culture” (300). But from a contemporary perspective stemming from a series of institutional, societal, political, and economic developments indeed, the concept of “ancient ruins” has come to be organized in specific ways through claims on the part of the Mexican state, international organizations such as the UNESCO, and by local Maya communities to create an array of “knowledges” intertwined with the polysemic idea of “ancient ruins.” Thus, my research focuses on the juridical practices of a complex network of social and political actors and institutions, including the UNESCO, and various Mexican state agencies and non-governmental organizations. These actors and institutions orchestrate the designation and regulation of Mexican cultural heritage, patrimonio cultural, through juridical practices which, I argue, are eminently spatial practices. An ethnographic investigation must be able to realize
heritage-making as a process implicated in the wider issues of global political economy, state sovereignty, and supranational practices of territorialization.

_Thoughts on a comparative model for research_

This background shapes the research and writing of this dissertation as well as the choices to geographically focus the _in situ_ field study. The problematic at the center of this study concerns the contrasts between the archaeological sites of Chichén Itzá and Chunchucmil, and their neighboring communities of Pisté and Kochol/Chunchucmil, in terms of 1) the history of archaeological development, and the ends to which this development has been directed (i.e. tourism); 2) the status of private land ownership and communal land tenure in the property comprising the official archaeological zones; and 3) the relationships between the zones, specifically in terms of their value as both natural and cultural resources, and their neighboring communities. Pisté (pop. 4,000) is a predominantly Maya community located within the municipality of Tinum (pop. 9,548). The town is situated near two main highways, located 120 kilometers southeast of Mérida, and 200 kilometers from Cancun. A local airport has brought tourists to Pisté and Chichén Itzá since the 1920s and an international airport has recently opened. As a tourist service center (with hotels, restaurants, and souvenirs), Pisté is an economic center of a mini-region consisting of eleven neighboring municipalities. The archaeological zone of Chichén Itzá, located two kilometers from Pisté, was named a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1987. While hundreds of sites throughout Mexico are declared official "zonas arqueológicas," Chichén Itzá is one of the few actually mandated as such through presidential decree. As a major national and international tourist destination, the
site receives nearly one million visitors per year. Chichén Itzá is the third most heavily visited archaeological attraction in México.

Chunchumil (pop. 951) and Kochol (1,237) are located within the municipality of Maxcanú (pop. 18, 771). Like Pisté, they are predominantly Maya communities, though smaller and with a much lesser degree of economic activity. The two towns are located six kilometers from each other and more than twenty kilometers from the municipal seat. Situated between the towns of Chunchumil and Kochol is the archaeological zone, which officially carries the name Chunchumil.¹ This zone covers approximately sixteen kilometers of ejido land. Ejidos are federal lands granted to rural communities in the 1930s to serve in agricultural production. The ejido serves as the backbone of social and economic structures throughout Yucatán and Mexico. Currently, Chunchumil has no large architectural structures excavated or reconstructed and many ejidatarios (participants in the cultivation of ejido land) use this land, even the site center, for the cultivation of corn and other crops.

Still in the process of becoming an official zona arqueológica, the boundaries of the site have been demarcated by the INAH, and a US-based archaeology team has been granted permission to work here. The excavation work at the site currently employs approximately twenty laborers from Kochol for two-week rotations. The archaeological project directors, of whom I was a guest in 2001, maintained that the residents of Chunchumil demonstrated an active interest in the development of the site as a basis for a community program of sustainable tourism where presently there is none. Rather than

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¹ For the sake of clarity, I will distinguish between the archaeological site of “Chunchumil” and “Chunchumil Pueblo” though as we will see shortly, the name of the site is an issue of local contestation (particularly on the part of residents of Kochol) and no one really refers to the town as “Chunchumil Pueblo.”
twentieth-century tourist development as in the case of Pisté and Chichén Itzá, these two towns are former henequen haciendas, in serious economic decline for several decades. Archaeologists, mostly from US institutions, have been working at the site of Chunchucmil, Yucatán for several years. The site has proven to be a challenge for researchers, not just in an intellectual sense, but also in the everyday organizing and carrying out of excavations and other on-site work. The Project's relationships with surrounding communities who hold communal farming rights to the land upon which the archaeological zone sits are strained and tense, particularly in the case of Kochol. The underlying causes for these tensions are multiple, but most have deep historical roots that predate the archaeological project. Their roots are based in the history of the regional political economy and the prominent role played by land, as well as the tension between *de jure* and *de facto* “ownership” (on the part of both private interests and the State) and usufruct rights (of local residents). Before the establishment the *ejido* system in the 1930s, settlements such as Chunchucmil and Kochol were henequen haciendas, valuable fiber-producing plantations relying on the labor of Maya people through a system of debt-peonage. Through a federal program of communal land distribution, the indigenous populations were “liberally” endowed with a free relation to land. It is in this manner that these former subjected peoples were putatively enabled to participate in the Mexican nation re-imagining itself as modern and progressive—as a nation in which indigenous people, once a “problem,” could now, with their land, be self-sufficient. This system, dependent on huge state and federal subsidies, left little room for new agricultural or industrial initiatives on the part of the Maya people. Neoliberal reforms in 1992 have
made possible the privatization the *ejido*; some of these land parcels are coterminous with the archaeological zone.

Though this ethnographic research touches on many social agents and actors, both Mexican and international, the focus of my work is on two specific but not identical groups. The first, the INAH *custodios* at the site of Chichén Itzá, I have been working with since the summer of 1999. The second group is made up of residents of the former hacienda and contemporary town of Kochol who are employed as rotating seasonal workers in Proyecto Pakbeh, a US-based archaeological project carrying out excavations in the Classic Maya site of Chunchucmil. In the ethnographic study of the archaeological zones and their nearby contemporary Maya communities, I am concerned with the involvement of local residents in not only the Mexican and US (as well as other foreign) archaeological projects that have been carried out in these sites, but also with the interventions of the Mexican state in the development of these sites as tourism destinations. How have Maya people from these communities assumed positions as "heritage workers" in archaeological zones understood as local, regional, national, and international cultural patrimony? Historically, how has this form of labor affected the local economies and how are these workers positioned in the contemporary tourism industry vis-à-vis the community as a whole?

In the course of the following chapters, I demonstrate that local level heritage is understood and experienced differently between Maya communities according to their proximity to different archaeological zones with particular histories of excavation and positions within the regional economy. In 1999, I conducted initial research, questioning the complex relationships between local Maya communities and state-administered
archaeological zones. This pilot study demonstrated that people in Pisté/Chichén Itzá have personal ties to the archaeological zone based in a history of their or their family's participation in the excavation of the ruins. Since the 1920s restoration of Chichén Itzá as a tourist site, archeo-tourism displaced both cattle ranching and agri-business from the area. In contrast, the archeological ruins of Chunchucmil and Kochol have only begun to be excavated since 1998 and are located on former haciendas devoted to henequen production. These are now communal ejido lands devoted to agricultural production. Personal ties to the ruins were not evident, in terms of the discourse on cultural patrimony. Preliminary research in Chunchucmil and Kochol demonstrated that local understandings of cultural heritage are connected to a different experience of the ruins as part of natural/forest world rather than part of the world of anthropology and tourism as in the case of Pisté and Chichén Itzá. The two sites thus provided a compelling case for comparative study.

In order the bring the ethnographic and historical analysis of these two very different sites into a meaningful comparison, I have developed a comparative study that takes as its baseline criteria not an exact set of shared circumstances, but rather, a set of ethnographic homologues. For example, custodios at Chichén are not the same kind of social actors as the excavation laborers at Chunchucmil—not socioeconomically, neither in terms of education, nor in their knowledge of the bureaucratic apparatus structuring the everyday life of a heritage site. But what they share is experience of living and working amidst ruins. Thus, the sites are linked through conditions such as this, as well as through the questions I bring to each “place”: labor in the production and maintenance of
cultural heritage, their experiences with tourism, and the presence and degree of private initiative development in the area.

The 1999 privatization “scare” mobilized many, especially those in the National Institute of Anthropology and History (the federal agency which has jurisdiction over archaeological zones) into vociferous opposition, against the selling-out of the nation’s patrimony to private investors and big-business enterprises. While the “privatization” proposal, to date, has not passed into constitutional amendment, it provided an occasion and a strong motivation to critically analyze the relationships already existing between private sector interests and heritage sites in Yucatán. Wasn’t it a contradiction that many who were so opposed to privatization were the same individuals who already (and in some cases, for generations) personally benefit from heritage resources? Further, how could privatization be a new issue while the two most developed sites in Yucatán (Chichén Itzá and Uxmal) are on privately owned land, bought by a wealthy Yucatec tourism entrepreneur beginning in the 1930s? I developed a working concept of “alternative privatizations” as an attempt to account for the local level, site specific practices through which both Mayas and white Yucatec and/or Mexicans have been able to work both through and underneath Mexican constitutional legislation in order to benefit in a range of ways from the “benefit stream” which comes forth from the ruins (usually related to international tourism apparatus). I argue that these “alternative privatizations” are not exclusively new phenomena, but have historical precedents dating back over the course of nearly a century. While not necessarily blanket economic policy, privatization of cultural heritage exists both de facto and de jure in the everyday operations of many archaeological zones. The privatization might be through property
ownership of the land which contains ruins, through the establishment of private economic enterprises within the official territory of these national properties, or in one particularly complicated case, state privatization of federal resources (while privatization is usually synonymous with state divestiture, this is a case of the state of Yucatan creating a state agency specifically designed to divert income from the federally jurisdictioned archaeological zones directly to the governor’s coffers). All of these forms play deeply into distinguishing and analyzing the competing interests in archaeological zones, the spatiality of these “neoterritorialities,” and at the same time speak to the competing meanings produced by different social actors regarding archaeological heritage.

Alternative privatizations are not much different from alternatives to privatization. Long plagued with insufficient resources and always under the fire of strong labor unionization, the State and its agency of cultural patrimony has lost control, so to speak, of Mexico’s cultural resources. In the wake of more than a decade now of neoliberal reforms, the Mexican State has divested just about everything that won’t raise too many eyebrows. Nearly everything, that is, except petroleum and cultural patrimony, oil and archaeology. In places of resource scarcity, changing economies (away from agricultural, toward the service sector supporting the tourism industry), uneven development, and incomplete modernization- such as Yucatán, who isn’t going to be taking advantage of the cash cow (which, incidentally, is also the sacred cow) sitting right there in their midst? The growth of NGOs and other non-profit “Cultural Foundations” and civic associations further complicate the puzzle of just what is the status of the nation in maintaining the nation’s patrimony. The research problematic, is, then, to figure out who was doing what, why, and the justifications or rationales for these private-interest
activities while simultaneously discerning the legalities and illegalities (or formalities and informalities) of the use of the archaeological zone as a sustainable (endlessly sustainable) resource, with an eye towards the local communities.

*Persistence of Maya Culture: The Importance of Comparative Study in Yucatán*

"You're not even from here, and you've been to more places in Yucatán than I have!" As much as I was traveling in the course of my fieldwork (Mérida-Pisté-Mérida-Maxcanú-Kochol/Chunchumil) it didn't occur to me until pointed out by people in Kochol and Pisté the "distance" between the two. "Well, it's not too bad," I would answer. If one times the buses right, the whole trip (always via Mérida) might only take four hours. "And besides, going from pueblo to pueblo, I usually stop in Mérida anyway, and often to spend the night." Look at any map- they are on different sides of Yucatán. These reactions demonstrated that Yucatán is far from homogenous and that mine was a particular kind of comparative study—rendering it *not* a comparative study, if you will. It is a multi-sited ethnography, though not in the strict sense of the physical aspects of field research carried out in geographically discrete areas. Rather, I mean multi-sited in a deep sense. In his essay, "Ethnography in/of the World System," Marcus states, "Multi-sited research is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument for ethnography" (1998: 90). Each geographical or geo-political site I worked in carried valences of another site—whether traces of the historical or memorable, or even through my person as a researcher/traveler/resident, going between
one and the other. Within each of my two research populations there exists at least one person with knowledge of the other place. Manuel is a mostly monolingual Maya-speaking day laborer from the former henequen hacienda of Kochol, a community redefining its economic infrastructure in the past 5-10 years through the development of export crops of papaya and habanero peppers. He knows of Pisté from his experience in constructing the Mérida-Cancun highway in the 1980s. He never visited Chichén Itzá.

Amongst the custodios at Chichén Itzá, two know of Kochol and Chunchucmil. One is Don Marcelo, a former INEGI employee, who worked with social scientists in various mapping and demography projects. For this work, he traveled throughout Yucatán. The second is Don Julio, who worked as a bus driver for several years on routes between Mérida and Campeche. It was Don Marcelo who knew specifically of Kochol and the pig-raising industry that has made it locally (in)famous.

I told various friends and informants in Pisté whom I had met and grown to know over the course of several summer fieldwork seasons where I spent those weeks I disappeared from Pisté. Most of them assumed I was doing work at the university in Mérida, but I explained that I was doing a comparative research project requiring my presence in two other towns. “I am also working in the archaeological site of Chunchucmil- a group of archaeologists just started excavating there.” “OOOhhhh. Hmmm.” Some nods, but for the most part, quizzical looks. “Chunchuc-¿cómo se llama? went the more typical response. It became a common follow-up to a greeting on the street. “Oh, you’ve returned to Pisté from...what is the name of that place?”

“It might as well be Mars!” I exclaimed to an anthropologist colleague of mine, “And it’s just the other side of the same state!” In my time living and working in these
communities, I came to realize that residents of these towns, through cable and satellite television, usually knew more (and definitely more than myself at the time) about national and global events and issues than the regional. Local newspapers are sold and avidly read in Pisté, while in Kochol and Chunchucmil, the rare copy encountered in someone’s home was usually several days old. How different was the perspective of the inhabitants of each place toward the other from mine? I wondered, especially as people from Pisté began to ask what might be considered “anthropological” questions about the communities of Chunchucmil and Kochol. For instance: they must all speak Maya there, not like here in Pisté, where the Maya language is mixed with so much Spanish. Do the women all wear huipiles? Do all of the men make milpa? Questions of Pisté ensued from the “other side” of Yucatán as well. Assumptions of Pisté as a more “developed” pueblo back-grounded what turned out to be very similar inquiries: “In Pisté, they must speak very good Maya,” given that Pisté is a large town with better educational opportunities, and on the whole, perceived as more sophisticated.

For the next several months, each of the two sites I researched served as a catalyst for asking questions of the other. I would regularly mention Pisté to my more recent acquaintances in Kochol, in order to explain something about myself and what my work was about. The people of Kochol wanted to know what effects tourism has brought to Pisté. They also wanted to know how the people of Pisté learned languages, such as English, to improve their skills and thus their marketability in the tourism industry. Some comments directed toward Pisté circumvented the most commonly held opinion of Pisté as an unattractive, tacky tourist town, an empty receptacle of zero-degree culture (Castañeda 1996): “The people in Pisté must speak Hach Maya, especially because it is
near Valladolid,” said one Kochol resident. The term “hach” (very) or “verdadero” (true) Maya is the name given by many contemporary Yucatecs referring to the Maya language of the antiguos, or the ancient Maya. Along the same lines, another Kochol resident speculated that in Pisté perhaps the people knew how to write Maya. He lamented they weren’t able to do so in his community. Each town has an image of the other, whether that image is of a place or of a set of practices (in a sense, a repertoire) that make up what is commonly understood as Maya Culture. This repertoire is comprised of language, certain customs or traditions, food, and celebrations and kinds of work activities and the ways in which they are done. It also consists, in a deeper symbolic sense, of material cultural artifacts, most significantly, ancient Maya ruins. In the following chapters, we will see, implicitly and explicitly, how residents of Pisté, Kochol, and Chunchucmil use this image of Maya Culture as a standard to judge their own lives and their cultural heritage. Furthermore, we will see that this standard is treated with a certain ambivalence—sometimes sought after and embraced, and at other times, rejected or denied.

The image of Maya Culture I refer to here emanates from specific sources, and yet is not solely determined by these sources or methods of deployment. In other words, its genealogy might be traced, but as a text, it circulates beyond its origins. Castañeda (1996) demonstrates that in the case of Pisté and Chichén Itzá, Maya Culture is constructed through discourses of archaeology and the state. He writes, “It seems that the category of ‘Maya culture’ has become embodied with meanings and references—with a life all its own—that takes the notion beyond any temporal, spatial, and social anchorage” (13). Isn’t it, then, the task of contemporary ethnographers working in the Maya area to
find those anchorages? It is necessary to empirically contribute to a project of not only re-evaluating the realities of daily life experiences of Maya people, but also the methodological strategies and theoretical frameworks employed in their description and analysis.

Whereas Chichén Itzá is historically situated in the milpa, or corn-growing, zone of Yucatán, Chunhucmil and Kochol are in the heart of the henequen zone. The two zones represent quite different histories within a geopolitical region often homogenized when speaking of “the Maya” or “Maya culture.” This regionalization will be discussed further throughout this study. Robert Redfield’s seminal ethnographies such as *Chan Kom: A Maya Village* (with Villa Rojas; 1932) and *A Village that Chose Progress: Chan Kom Revisited* (1950) have defined the Yucatec Maya culture-civilization, yet focus specifically on the milpa zone, excluding the hundreds of Maya settlements on the henequen haciendas in the Northwestern area of the Peninsula. Comparative work between the two “zones” has not significantly contributed to the canon of the anthropology of the Maya of Yucatán. When not explicitly participating in the homogenizing project of Redfield’s continuum model, ethnography in Yucatán has been so “local” as to isolate the particular area or community under study. One near-exception to this might be found in Re Cruz’s *The Two Milpas of Chan Kom* (1996), a study of the movement of workers between Chan Kom, in eastern Yucatán, and Cancun, on the Peninsula’s eastern coast in the state of Quintana Roo. I say “near-exception” because the study relies on the concept of Maya Culture of the milpa zone. It has been the chore for ethnography in the henequen zone to thus relate their work to the dominant Maya Culture of the milpa zone. Where ethnography is beginning to question the category of
Maya Culture, there is room to also question how cultural description and analysis has followed regional historical and socioeconomic distinctions.

Anthropology is certainly not the only culprit in the problem of using otherwise determined categories as appropriate for unquestioned redeployment. Government agencies such as the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI) and nongovernmental cultural foundations, along with local institutional academic production, and popular media representation consistently pose certain areas of Yucatan as centers of "culture." This usually takes the form of identifying some areas more traditional (former milpa, or corn, zone) than others (former henequen zone).

The Maya communities outside of the henequen zone are, generally, more traditional and more strongly conserve the language and personality of the culture. In fact, of the 44 municipalities considered "indigenous municipalities," more than 30 percent of the total population are Maya speakers. (CONAPO 1993)

The *raison d'etre*, the modes of agricultural production and their attendant socioeconomic systems, for the differentiation of the two zones of Yucatán no longer exists. In a study of local understandings of cultural heritage, these "inherited" distinctions are discourse for critical analysis. Although not full-scale ethnographic "community studies," this study does present a degree of comparison that is greatly needed in the ethnography of Yucatán, particularly as the region, easily influenced by the rises and dips in the international market via the tourism industry, is changing so rapidly.

*The Haecceity of the Local(s)*

The most common construction of holism in contemporary realist ethnography...is the situating of the ethnographic subject and scene as a knowable, fully probed micro-world with reference to an encompassing macro-world- "the system"- which, presumably, is not knowable or describable in the same terms that the local world of an ethnographic subject can be (Marcus 1998: 33)
A haecceity has neither beginning nor end, origin nor destination; it is always in the middle. It is not made of points, only of lines. It is a rhizome. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 263)

Rescuers of “the local” in the face of globalization have attempted various projects demonstrating that the local can be complex, too. Various authors have sought to find the global in the local, the local in the global, or even the combination of the two—what Marcus (1998) calls the “glocal”. Although multisited ethnography is not conceptually bound to the limited notion of a “local” site as a geographical space with borders and bounds, one dimension of multi-sitedness is topographical. In other words, the “sites” are hinged to a specific terrain, whether this is conceptual, discursive, imagined, or practiced. I contend, though it might sound somewhat old-fashioned in this era of globalization, that the task of ethnography is to apprehend the local. I would argue that this is not reverting back to traditional ethnography, but it is picking up on the old promise of the ethnographic. In other words, ethnography has not quite figured out the local. It was not discovered until after the “global” leaving the local seriously taken-for-granted and undertheorized. While the global became a concept, the local has remained a place. The global is a complex web, and the local is a similarly complex node within it. I use the term haecceity to emphasize the importance of what makes a particular “local” unique unto itself; to isolate those qualities which distinguishes it from any other. Even as I stress the haecceity of the local, there is an important place for the “global” in the present study. The global here is a set of conditions specific to the setting in which I carried out my field study. Therefore, the global is not a given, but a changeable set of influencing circumstances, called “global” because it transcends the specificities of regional or national scope.
Studying local cultural heritage amidst the globalized phenomenon of designation and promoting heritage sites as patrimony for all of humankind requires a special attention both in analyzing and theorizing the relationship between the local and the global. Because I am concerned with uncovering the mystique, so to speak, of ancient ruins, I turn to theories of everyday life and practices (de Certeau 1984; Lefebvre 1991). A crucial component of the analysis of the circulation of heritage discourse on a local level is a commitment to an understanding of the spatiality of the archaeological zone as place in which these discourses are produced, manipulated, and redeployed with relation to the space or place itself. In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre suggests a comprehensive analysis of the 'spatial dialectic' of identities, activities, and images that are associated within a given place. Like de Certeau, Lefebvre is compelled by the role of everyday activities, even the banal and mundane, which are significant practices tied to local, regional, national, and global processes. An analysis of the archaeological zone- or heritage site- in terms of its spatiality relies on discussions of space, place, and territorialization (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Feld and Basso 1996; Lefebvre 1991 [1974]). The comparison is further inflected in my consideration of archaeological zones as “heterotopic spaces” (Foucault 1986), and the use of ethnography, archives, and institutional observation to compare competing epistemologies of ruins. I found in the course of my studies that archaeological heritage serves as only one “location” of patrimonial discourse in Yucatán. I argue that “location” which subsumes and masks other, competing notions of patrimonial discourse is the archaeological zone. Methodologically, how might we, then, query this seemingly transparent space? I propose the creation of a “provenance” of each archaeological zone, a methodological
bricolage drawing from multiple empirical and theoretical sources, ranging from Lefebvre on the social production of space, to Foucault’s genealogical method, to Deleuze and Guattari on processes of territorialization.

This study takes as a primary “location” of study two different archaeological zones in Yucatán, and for this reason, I look toward theories and analyses of space. This echoes a growing scholarly concern amongst social theorists, cultural geographers, and others which has emerged along with critiques of the intensification of capitalism and the contradictions of modernity. According to Lefebvre (1991), “With the advent of Cartesian logic…space has entered the realm of the absolute. As Object opposed to Subject, as res extensa opposed to, and present to, res cogitans, space came to dominate, by containing them, all senses and all bodies” (1). Non-Cartesian understandings of space, on the other hand, highlight lived experience, relationships between spaces, and the situatedness and heterogeneities of sites or localities (Elden 2001: 117). There are two specific expositions of theoretical/methodological treatments of space that I rely upon in my understandings of archaeological zones. The first comes from Lefebvre’s The Production of Space (1991 [1974]). “If space is a product, our knowledge of it must be expected to reproduce and expound the process of production. The ‘object’ of interest must be expected to shift from things in space to the actual production of space” (36-37; emphasis in original). He further calls for an approach analyzing “not things in space but space itself, with a view to uncovering the social relationships embedded in it” (89). Lefebvre thus concerns himself instead with how social space is produced. Social space is "not a thing but rather a set of relations between [objects and products]." His formulation “(social) space is a (social) product” calls particular attention to the condition that space
is not an empty abstraction (27). Rather, he points out, distinct productions of space correspond to different kinds of social and productive arrangements.

The second theoretical/methodological source I draw upon in my understanding of archaeological zones is from Foucault. Foucault considers the question of space on multiple occasions throughout his writings and lectures. Three short pieces in particular highlight Foucault’s consideration of space: “Space, Knowledge, and Power” (1984), “Of Other Spaces” (1986), and “Questions on Geography “ (1980). However, one could easily argue, following Elden (2001) that “the norm for Foucault is to use space not merely as another arena to be analyzed, but as a central part of the approach itself” (3). Asylums, hospitals, and, of course, prisons are not treated as abstract institutions, but as spatialized locations in which specific techniques of power are both produced and utilized. The exercise of power in a spatialized realm is best materially exemplified in Foucault’s work through the Panopticon (1979).

Foucault also provides us with a methodological inspiration complementing a consideration of space: genealogy, defined as “the union of erudite knowledge and local memories which allows us to establish a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically today” (Foucault 1980: 83). Genealogy runs counter to the linear, regularized production of historical knowledge. While history relies on origin, genealogy assumes a heterogeneity of origin in a multiplicity of coinciding factors. It investigates, as Judith Butler elucidates, “the political stakes in designating as origin and cause those identity categories that are in fact the effects of institutions, practices, discourses with multiple and diffuse points of origin.” As a method, genealogy examines the not a search for origins or a chain of causality, genealogy instead isolates points of
coincidence in power/knowledge as “problems” to be unraveled. Colwell (1997) begins with the distinction between genealogy and history in order to demonstrate the process of former:

...genealogy does not invent, discover or emphasize new or different events nor does it re-interpret events in order to discover hidden or sedimented meanings that have been neglected by the tradition. It is the attempt to counter-actualize the event, to return, in one form or another, to the virtual structure of the event in order to re-problematize the event. The goal is not to find a new solution, to ‘fix’ history, to offer a better or truer history or account of the past. The goal is to make the problem problematic, to make it a real problem once again, a problem we no longer know the answer to but for which we are compelled to find solutions (Colwell 1997: ¶26).

It is through genealogy that we might arrive at a “history of the present,” in this case a history of the present-past as represented or signified through “heritage.” Genealogy and ethnography go hand-in-hand in the examination of local, flexible, and provisional discourses of cultural patrimony, both within and without institutional ordering. In order to bring Foucault’s genealogy to a new arena of study, I suggest a new use for an old term that currently circulates in the language of archaeology and heritage: provenance. A provenance, or “record of the ultimate derivation and passage of an item through its various owners” is most typically used in establishing the authenticity of a work of art or artifact (OED 1989). Here, I employ the term in reference to the archaeological site as a whole, as a social space. In this application, the provenance of the archaeological site is a kind of genealogy. This kind of examination moves us toward the provisional establishment of a “history of the present” of Chichén Itzá and Chunchucmil. Historical contextualization, specifically as generated through the creation of genealogies of the sites, bringing them together with their surrounding communities, begins to bring to light the changing patrimonial regimes existent in these heterotopic spaces. These theoretical
contributions, among others to be introduced in the this ethnographic study, provide
deepen understandings of the ways in which local people interact with "heritage" to
produce and reproduce the "present past" (Hodder 1983) of the contemporary world.

Chapter Previews

Chapter One begins with an old question that is taking on surprising new answers
in light of the contemporary conditions: how do we define the wealth, or patrimony, of
nations? In the wake of México’s ever further-reaching privatization programs, nearly
everything that won’t raise too many eyebrows has already been privatized. Everything,
that is, except oil and cultural patrimony. I use a comparison of two "subsoil" resources,
petroleum products and archaeological materials, to demonstrate that the wealth of a
nation is intimately connected with the nation’s knowledge of itself, as well as the
production of nationalist sentiment on the part of the country’s diverse populations.

Chapter Two establishes the juridical configurations of cultural patrimony in
Mexico as well as in the international arena. The goal of the chapter is to read the history
of the development of legal frameworks and institutions, namely the National Institute of
Anthropology and History (INAH), concerning cultural patrimony as a spatialized and
spatializing practice enacted through the strategic territorial elaboration of a patrimonial
geography of the nation. I also consider in this chapter the sui generis heritage
management and protection regimes promoted by UNESCO and subscribed to by the
Mexican state. In order to explore the implications of the historical context of cultural
patrimony legislation on national and international levels, I present the case of the
"privatization crisis" in which threatened the Mexican nation’s custodianship over
cultural patrimony.
Chapter Three presents a case study in the genealogy of cultural sector privatization of archaeological heritage in the case of Chichén Itzá, a key site in the Mexican national cultural patrimonial landscape privately owned for decades. Over and against the dominant popular representation of the crisis of possible privatization of 1999, I utilize local and state governmental archives, oral history, and ethnographic interviews to argue that the protests to the contemporary threat of privatization fail to acknowledge that the modern history of Chichén Itzá is shaped by different interests competing for control over the archaeological zone. I argue that these “alternative privatizations” may read as counterpoint to the juridical frameworks posed in Chapter Two—in other words, that they represent “business as usual” within the archaeological zone which is based on extra-legal interpretation of the laws and policies governing cultural patrimony.

Chapter Four presents an in situ ethnographic study at Chichén Itzá of the social actors who participate in the local-level negotiation between the laws, policies, and ideologies presented in the second chapter and the historical circumstances outlined in the third chapter. The subjects of the ethnography emanate from a simple question: What are the daily activities of maintaining a World Heritage archaeological zone and who does this work? These questions help to fill in the larger framework of local, everyday perspectives on cultural heritage. The main group of research subjects for this chapter is the custodios—guards, wardens, and groundskeepers—of Chichén Itzá. This analysis discerns the strategies and tactics employed by the family groups of the custodios as they insert their interests into the social, juridical, and economic matrix undergirding the everyday functioning of the archaeological zones. The gender analysis focuses on the role of “masculinity” in the production and circulation of patrimonial claims. This
chapter demonstrates that while within the larger discourse of national cultural patrimony and World Heritage, local meanings of the site of Chichén Itzá are produced through their manipulation. As such, national patrimony comes to signify and justify family patrimony.

Using oral and written historical sources, Chapter Five introduces the study’s second case. This chapter narrates how it is that land itself serves as the community and patrimony for the people of Kochol and Chunchucmil. For them, the archaeological ruins, possibly a rich resource indeed, are no more than secondary in importance to the land upon which the sit. Oral histories from the residents of Chunchucmil and Kochol focus mostly on the decades of henequen cultivation. Nearly every informant gives details of life under the debt peonage system, the social and economic backbone of the hacienda. These histories shed light on another kind of patrimony—the insurmountable debts to the hacienda store, which were passed from father to son as a terrible inheritance. From this local, historical perspective, we will see how economic systems are intricately tied with social systems and how management of land resources was dependent on an equal management of labor resources.

Chapter Six questions the identification from without of the residents of Chunchucmil and Kochol as communities descendent from the ancient Maya, and how this plays into the interpretive strategies of local people in understanding and assigning significance (whether cultural, historical, economic, or even political) to the ruins. I interrogate the “politics of patrimony” for people who explicitly do not consider themselves descendant communities of the ancient Maya. Rather from the standpoint of the politics of identity, this chapter considers the multiple “territories” which comprise an
archaeological zone, and how they are created and recreated on an everyday basis by local residents, representatives from governmental agencies, and foreign archaeologists.

In conclusion, I consider the territories of archaeological zones from one more perspective: through the assemblage of archaeology and development. Until recently, archaeological development has focused strictly on the monumental landscape, leaving local communities outside of consideration. Now archaeologists and other stakeholders in the management of heritage sites are shifting interests toward Maya communities. This brings us back to one of the initial problems this study set out to investigate: what are the relationships between Maya communities and the ruins they live within?
Chapter 1

Privatization and Patrimony

In January 2003, the Mexican Secretariat of Tourism (Sectur) announced plans to create La Cartografía de Recursos Culturales or Cartography of Cultural Resources, designed to identify and locate the tangible and intangible cultural resources on a map of the territory of Mexico. The project was designed to create a foundation of information for touristic development, artisanry production, and cultural industries in Mexico. Originally presented in the proceedings of the Indigenous International Tourism Forum which took place in the city of Oaxaca in March 2002, the project represents the participation of several agencies: Coordinación de Patrimonio Cultural y Turismo of the Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (CNCA), the Secretariat of Tourism, and UNESCO, among others. The mapping project has among its objectives the fostering of linkages between the promotion of cultural tourism and the protection of the tangible and intangible national patrimony. The project is aimed at exploring both the "means" and "methods" through which the material as well as spiritual benefits of Mexico’s fall upon not only the communities to which the patrimony most directly pertains, but to all of society. The mapping project has the goal of "showing the tangible without sacralizing it so it may remain accessible, and to highlight the intangible without objectifying it or making it mundane so that its values and uses are understood and appreciated,” according to Sari Bermúdez, CNCA president.

"As this is a national project, of course it will include the participation of everyone involved at each level of the project in order to carry it out,” said López Morales, the Cartografía project director, in a newspaper report to La Jornada. She
added that this work "will present contexts which take into consideration the environment, natural resources, population, infrastructural services, and the cultural landscape. The map will incorporate these, along with heritage registry, thematic databases, and a digitalized map framework with information coordinated to a geographic information system. The map will additionally present bas relief, communication lines, and hydrological information along with vegetation and climatic indicators." When the newspaper reporter asks, "What would happen if one of the communities disagreed with the promotion of cultural tourism behind the map project?" Bermúdez responds: "What we will do here...that is to say, these are simply the maps. Tourism policy corresponds to another agency. I think that the community has the last word. Tourism cannot be taken to a place where the local inhabitants are against it. Our specific task is to create the map and to locate culture upon it" (Paul 2002). Indeed, in this case, just as Baudrillard (1983: 2) claims, the map precedes the territory.

What is the role of cultural patrimony for the State? I begin with this example of the project of the *Cartografía de Recursos Culturales* at length because it addresses so many of the issues that surround contemporary understandings of cultural patrimony. Mapping, in both a conceptual and practical sense, seeks to spatially define across the national social, cultural, and economic landscape a particular set of characteristic features, practices, or productions that are through this process defined as "resources." The notion of locating cultural resources, or, in the words of the CNCA President, locating culture itself, is one tactic in a strategic plan of resource exploitation on a national scale. While the *Cartografía* project promoters and participants claim to be merely the mapmakers, the technicians removed from questions of "policy" and
community interaction, one author points out, “The limitations of the map-medium are more than ‘technical’ and non-controversial; the questions involved are more than merely a matter of which projection or scale to select, and with such choices seen as ‘technical’, rather than as involving wider issues” (Black 197: 17).

*The Cartografía de Resursos Culturales* represents a strategic manner of identification of resources articulated to regions in an actively imagined, constructive and productive process. The representative power of such a map works to invent territory and, in turn, the cultural accoutrements thereby defined as resources. In the course of more than a century of nation-building, Mexico has sought to align both natural and cultural resources along the interests of the nation. The map of cultural resources is an inherently political document and serves to both produce and reproduce politics, working at the intersections of patrimony or heritage, on the one hand, and the ongoing tension between privatization and nationalization, on the other. The intensification of the coincidence of these phenomena (how they are becoming “mapped” onto each other) provides the occasion for this study of the different forms in which the private sector has intervened in both formal and informal senses in Mexican cultural patrimony over the course of the past several decades.

According to Black (1997) statist mapping is crucial “as the cartographic propagation of nations depends on a clear-cut identification of peoples and territory” (17). A national cultural resources mapping project fits within a governmental rationality defined through a problem of knowledge, constituted by the questions of how to know the state and its interests, as and of how the state might know itself. In order to properly or effectively govern, the state needs to know not only its territory, but also what and how
things lie in its territory. Mapping is one way of producing knowledge of the spatial disposition of "things." As a datum, the map allows the state to see its strengths and weaknesses, its vulnerabilities and what is at risk. It also allows for the delineation of economic regions, the construction of areas based on a notion of cultural type or style, and also provides a universal perspective from which to link the points on the map through routes and circuits, the basis for the elaboration of itineraries utilized in travel and tourism promotion. Lefebvre’s description of maps which identify "beauty spots" such as historical sites and monuments: "this kind of map designates places where a ravenous consumption picks over the last remnants of nature and of the past in search of whatever nourishment may be obtained from the sign of anything historical or original" (1991: 84). Resource mapping is one practice in the process of the extraction of raw materials from nature. Indeed it is, following Lefebvre, a strategic logic in the representation of space (84; 233).

In this dissertation, I present two archaeological zones for comparative study: Chichén Itzá and Chunchucmil. Each zone is situated alongside contemporary Maya communities, the residents of which have, in addition to different claims on the ruins as sites of Maya and/or Mexican heritage, differing stakes in the ruins as resources. While in both cases the ruins are "patrimony" for local communities, different local political economies, histories, and social contexts shape the ways in which the archaeological zones have—or have not—become commodified in various forms. In Chichén Itzá, the ruins most clearly represent a source of economic benefit to surrounding community residents, though in the past decade the kind and degree of these benefits, as well as the particular social network to which they apply, has changed over time. The case of
Chunchucmil is quite different. As a site with very little archaeological development and little to no tourism infrastructure, Chunchucmil serves as a patrimonial resource to local residents not for the presence of ruins, but for the importance of the land upon which they sit. Currently, the only identifiable economic benefits served by the presence of ruins in the communities surrounding Chunchucmil fall outside of the parameters of the signifying regime of cultural heritage discourse. The ruins are not, for these communities, cultural patrimony, but *patrimonio ejidal*—ejido heritage. In this subaltern signifying regime, the value of the ruins is secondary to that of the land itself in terms of local agricultural production.

Thus, this chapter questions the status of cultural heritage as a resource and the importance of this on local, regional, national and international levels. I begin this discussion through defining the natural and cultural resources in Mexico and the roles of the state and the private sector in the ownership and management of these resources. Through this discussion, we will see how both natural and cultural resources figure as national patrimony (despite the involvement of the private sector) as well as how resources come to signify the wealth of the nation, thereby contributing to a sense of national identity and belonging. Second, I consider these national resources through the lens of the growing trend over the past two decades of state divestiture of resources. While cultural patrimony has not yet actually been privatized in México, reforms have taken place in banking, telecommunications, and the electrical energy sector. While privatization programs have dramatically affected these industries, raising the alarm of both workers and consumers, these industries do not contribute to the same discourse of essential or inherent embodiments of national identity. A parallel case to that of cultural
patrimony is that of the petroleum industry. Archaeological materials and oil products are both "subsoil patrimonies," resources in which both the state and civil society in México have great stakes. Part 2 of this chapter presents the cases of the nationalizations of oil and archaeological materials in order to compare and contrast the value of these resources to the state, and to what degree—and most importantly, when and where—these resources are becoming privatized. While full-scale privatization may not yet be in effect, hybrid state/private sector arrangements seem to be the predominant trend as the state attempts to retain its sovereignty amidst the forces of neoliberal globalization. I use the case of oil as an analogy to archaeology for the similar role it plays in the dynamic of nationalization/privatization that has characterized Mexico over the last century. Indeed, as Brown (1993) warns, "Those contemporary observers who believe Mexico's current policies of privatization and free trade to be the wave of the future might take heed of that nation's historical experience with the oil companies" (2).

In conclusion I consider the fate of patrimonial resources within a framework of new configurations of territory and sovereignty under conditions of economic globalization specifically as manifest through neoliberalism. What would be issues concerning patrimony of a nation as the state is supposedly moving away from territorial sovereignty toward divestiture, deregulation, and an increased regional or even global market orientation? Is Mexico "losing control" of its national patrimony (Sassen 1996)? If a sovereign nation's wealth is its patrimony, what happens if the nation cedes control of those resources?
Part 1: *Defining the Wealth of a Nation*

In a 2000 radio address, former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo claimed that the twenty-one monuments and six archaeological sites designated by the UNESCO as World Heritage ranks Mexico among the ten nations of the world with the greatest historical wealth (Los Pinos 2000). Of this boasting assertion I ask two questions. To what does this turn of phrase, “historical wealth,” specifically refer? And, how is historical wealth situated in the array of resources, both cultural and natural, at the disposal of a nation?

In his famous treatise, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith refuted the idea commonly held within mercantilist systems that the wealth of a nation is measured by the size of a nation’s treasury. He argued that the collusive relationship between government and industry is harmful to the general population, and that through the doctrine of laissez faire, or free markets, the economic welfare for the entire population would be promoted. Echoed by Hume, Smith promoted the idea that the less that government interferes with business, the more prosperous the nation will be.

In the rise of mercantilism, the wealth of nations was seen as the endowments of their people, their natural resources, and their ability to develop those resources. Expansion of the political and economic power of the state and benefiting the citizenry, especially those engaging in resource extraction, economic production, and trade, were the *raison d'être* of the modern nation-state. The continuation of hybrid forms of mercantilism in the present, labeled neomercantilist by some, focus on the "natural" wealth of nations—natural resources and the environment—as the key to prosperity (Roodman 1998). However, judging not only from former president Zedillo’s assertion
above, but also from the effects of the ever-growing tourism industry in Mexico, which achieves even greater effect concentrated on the regional level, cultural resources too serve a key function in considering the wealth of the nation. As we will see in a close examination of the case of the nationalization of resources, both natural and cultural, in Mexico, certain kinds of these resources have, in the process of becoming inalienable possessions of the nation, become key commodities for the nation in its internal as well as global market orientation.

*Cultural vs. Natural Resources*

From colonial times onward, "patrimonial" resources (meaning both natural and cultural) have been of great concern first to the Spanish Crown and later, to the Mexican state. Within a national landscape, the division or categorization of resources into "natural" and "cultural" operates at both a logistical or common-sense level as well as at an ideological level. While "national resources" are vital both to nations’ economies and in their identities, how, historically and ideologically, has the nation served as "owner," steward, or guardian of the wealth providing resources within its territory? These resources may be "natural" such as minerals, forests, marine resources, or rice agricultural lands. Natural wealth is typically articulated to that which can be identified, extracted, and exploited from the natural environment, composed of land, flora, and fauna (Schrijver 1997: 16). The resources may be found in the population of a territory instead of the land itself, specifically through the form of "human resources," or the labor power of the population and its capacity for reproduction. Conceptualized in terms of resources, each form of patrimony has economic, political, and symbolic definitions.
In general a resource is a person, asset, material, or capital directed toward specific ends. Natural resources are resources occurring in nature that can be used to create wealth. Obvious examples include oil, coal, water, or land. A renewable resource is a natural resource that can replenish itself over time, while a nonrenewable resource is one which cannot be reused. These definitions are similar to sustainable/nonsustainable. In Mexico, a variety of institutions are involved with the management, exploitation, and preservation of natural resources. However, the Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT) is the federal agency most closely identified with the handling of natural resources. SEMARNAT operates as the state environmental protection agency. This young (established by President Zedillo at the close of his term in 2000) has as it general mission the protection, restoration, and conservation of ecosystems, natural resources, and the environment toward the promotion of sustainable use and development. Not only is this agency responsible for identifying and protecting through legislation areas and resources targeted as valuable, at risk, or otherwise sensitive, but they handle all concessions, authorizations, and licenses regarding water, forests, ecological exploitation, beaches, and so on. There is, however, one very telling limitation to the SEMARNAT’s jurisdiction. Article III of the institution’s Funciones de la Secretaría states: “to administrate and regulate the sustainable use of the natural resources corresponding to the Federation, with the exception of petroleum and all hydrocarbons (liquid, solid, or gas) as well as radioactive minerals” (SEMARNAT 2003 my italics).¹

¹ Clearly, there is a parallel/comparative case study here between cultural heritage and natural resources via their institutional organization, legislation, and their place in nationalization/privatization projects.
Cultural resources, on the other hand, are ascribed with a different set of characteristics, import, and institutions through which they are managed. Cultural resources may include archeological, historical, architectural sites, and other places of particular significance. As such, the defining of cultural resources is intimately connected to place or location, and the identification and definition of the resource itself is based on spatiality, and especially the delimitation of the resource’s situatedness, or its “site.” The spatialized nature of cultural resources is apparent in the vocabulary typically employed in both legal and other discourse of cultural patrimony. Take the following definition of cultural heritage, for example: “the set of cultural properties of diverse nature localized in a territory, corresponding to a determined society or group, to which it is related through history and which are accumulated and inherited” (Durán Solis 1995: 35; my italics). Cultural materials become resources when they are defined as heritage.

There exists an important distinction between the legal definitions of natural resources and those criteria embedded in local and/or usufruct models of defining the values of those materials which are to be found within the land. No general definition of “natural resources” exists in international law, and definitions in national constitutions and legislation are highly context-specific. “A resource is any tangible or intangible which may be used in an economic manner or to create economic value, and which is not a manufactured product or tool” (Trumpy 1986: 184). Other definitions, via negativa, describe resources which are not natural, including shipwrecks, sunken aircraft, archaeological and historical objects. Thus, the common distinguishing factor of a natural resource is the condition of its natural essence, rather than occurrence—meaning

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2 Chapter Two offers a thorough set of legal definitions.
that it is not formed through the intervention of human beings. Yet, the intervention, or interference, perhaps, of human beings is, for others, exactly what makes something a resource. The discourse on Mexico’s national patrimony includes both natural and cultural resources. Mexico is rich in natural resources such as oil, coal, various metals, forests, and the like.

“The wealth contained in natural resources can emerge only through the action of society...they acquire their status as resources when mediated by the actions of man, and are transformed into elements useful to society” (Garza 1998). Thus, a resource is only a resource if and when (and by whom!) it may be exploited. Resource, that is, as distinguished from any number of naturally occurring materials. For example, although air is necessary and naturally occurring, is not typically defined as a resource. In a dry climate, water, where it occurs, will most likely be counted as a resource. Whereas in a rainforest, varieties of tropical plants destined for pharmaceutical exploitation are resources. Where the same plants go undiscovered, are they still a resource? It is important thus to distinguish actual resource from resource potential. This distinction is connected to that between resources as things, versus value of those things. The lack of nuance in definitions of resources available to us further complicates the defining of cultural heritage, and specifically of archaeological materials, in resource terms. In the name of specificity, the distinction between natural and cultural is useful. At the same time, it obscures the very real similarities between the two, particularly as we will see in the comparison between petroleum and archaeological materials.

Though they might be slippery in definition, resources are increasingly the target of control, on the levels of very local to the international arena. One key concept that has
gained in importance in international law beginning in the post-World War II period is the issue of “permanent sovereignty over natural resources” (Schrijver 1997). The issue was taken up by the United Nations in the preparation of various forms of legislation and international recommendations that would allow de-colonized states to assert and strengthen their sovereign positions in the international economic and political area as well as to further social and economic development. In a mode resonant of liberal capitalism, legislation toward “permanent sovereignty over natural resources” encourages, indeed mandates, a nation’s right to “benefits arising from the exploitation of natural resources and to provide newly independent states with a legal shield against infringement of their economic sovereignty as a result of property rights or contractual rights claimed by other states of foreign companies” (Schrijver 1997: 3). Though the concept of sovereignty over resources arose relatively recently, we can trace the development of the articulation between resources, both natural and cultural, and ideas of state sovereignty.

It has been the case in Mexico that cultural resources at the regional level lacked the ability to provide the funding that its counterparts in natural resources could. Until, that is, certain cultural resources began to be identified as “tourism resources.” Following the natural/cultural resource distinction, tourism resources incorporate both. A hypothetical tourist itinerary demonstrates this incorporation. For instance, a popular tourism route in Yucatán might include an arrival to the beaches of Cancún, a swim in one of the region’s many freshwater cenotes, and archaeological ruins at Tulum or Chichén Itzá, and a stay in the colonial city of Mérida. Each of these “destinations” narrates a particular history of becoming-resource. Cancun, for example, is an obvious
resource hybrid: in 1974 a team of Mexican government computer analysts picked Cancún for tourism development for its ideal mix of elements to attract travelers.

Cenote is a term used by the Maya for any subterranean chamber that contains permanent water. They have long been used as sources of drinking water, sources of "virgin" water (tsuy ha) for religious ceremonies, as burial and/or sacrificial sites, and so on. Naturally occurring topological formations they are, but as we will see in a legal battle over the Sacred Cenote at Chichén Itzá (Chapter 3), cenotes have long been used by Maya populations, both ancient and contemporary, in such a way that suggests the strong plausibility of identifying them in terms of the cultural aspects as well. Robles García (2000) identifies reconstructed archaeological monument zones as just one piece of “the system of tourist resources of the country, along with other cultural and natural attractions such as historic centers, ethnic elements or ‘folklore,’ artistic events, beaches, or forests.” Tourism interpollates cultural patrimony into its network or industry, positing its material embodiments as consumable, or endlessly consumable commodities. However, it is important to decouple cultural resources from an instrumentalized relationship with tourism.

From this discussion, we may begin to query the “resource problematic,” as it pertains to the economic and symbolic transformation of regularly occurring items found in or upon the landscape. It is based in the complex relationship between the natural and the cultural, territorial legislation, and usufruct principles. The problematic of defining resources also carries as a hallmark feature the question of the degree of human intervention in the transformation of a material into a resource. “Resources are not; they become; they are not static but expand and contract in response to human wants and
actions” (Zimmerman 1951: 15). We say “natural resources” but resources are actually distinct from nature. While resources (think of air, water, minerals, oil) are naturally occurring, they are not “resources” unless produced as such through human intervention.

Part 2: Subsoil Patrimonies: Articulating the Natural and the Cultural

In the Conquest period, Spanish arrived in Yucatán only to find an area completely without the riches they had imagined. Whereas English colonists on the North American continent claimed the land as rightfully theirs, their Spanish and Portuguese counterparts were more interested in subsoil mineral reserves. “Iberian settlers believed that all valuable mineral reserves—gold, silver, emeralds, and diamonds—in the New World had become theirs once they had firmly established themselves” (Seed 2001: 57). Seed attributes this difference to the Iberian concept of subsoil deposits as formulated in Islamic jurisprudence. The English, “would not have thought to separate ownership of surface and mineral deposits” (Seed 2001: 58).

The basic text which pulls together resource legislation with nationalist ideology is Article 27 of the post-Revolutionary 1917 Constitution, still in effect (with some modification). The introduction reads: “Ownership of the lands and waters within the boundaries of the national territory is vested originally in the Nation, which has had, and has, the right to transmit title thereof to private persons, thereby constituting private property. Private property shall not be expropriated except for reason of public use and subject to payment of indemnity.” This article, which declares that anything in Mexico's "subsoil"—which includes minerals and petroleum—belonged to the nation.
While archaeological materials can be considered subsoil deposits, Article 27 does not make specific reference to these human ("manmade") artifacts amidst the seemingly exhaustive list of "natural" materials governed by the legislation.

In the nation is vested the direct ownership of all natural resources...which are in veins, ledges, masses, or ore pockets, form deposits of a nature distinct from the components of the earth itself, such as the minerals from which industrial metals and metalloids are extracted; deposits of precious stones, rock-salt and the deposits of salt formed by sea water; products derived from the decomposition of rocks, when subterranean works are required

The establishment of Article 27 followed the liberal ideology of the revolutionary period, in which assertion of national sovereignty, articulated through the territorial and productive control of the nation's wealth or resources was of paramount concern.

Though independent since 1821, Mexico, like other Latin American emergent nations, suffered a post-colonial situation of intense and ever-increasing foreign intervention in their struggling economies. Wells (1998) and Brown and Linder (1998) refer to products, henequen³ and oil, respectively, as targeted resources in the "second conquest of Latin America." This Second Conquest occurred between 1850 and 1930 as "closer economic ties among Western Europe, the United States, and Latin America abruptly transformed Latin American societies (Topik and Wells 1998: 1). The economic ties were based in the export of raw materials by Latin American governments seeking to both promote economic development and contribute to post-independence state-building agendas. The second conquest, as "an invasion of foreign capital" (Brown and Linder 1998: 174) ended in the 1930s as a wave of nationalization, figured as both ideological sentiment as well as policy legislation regarding the economic ordering of the nation in

³ Henequen was the primary export crop of Yucatán and indeed the nation. It will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.
relation to its territory and resources, swept the region from Mexico to Argentina (ibid: 139-140).

Both colonial and post-Independence legislation have sought to distinguish, define, and protect subsoil resources in México. The following section provides a comparison between archaeological resources and other “subsoil” resources, namely, oil.

Oil and Archaeology

"In third-world societies, commodities have become profoundly charged symbols, social things that carry their worldly life inscribed in them” (Coronil 1997: 36). There are two key resources in Mexico that have yet to be privatized (completely, that is): oil and cultural patrimony. These two resources, representing the fields of both the natural and cultural, have come to be identified as key components to the wealth of the Mexican nation, economically, historically, and culturally. The coalescence of oil and archaeological patrimony as ur-symbols of the Mexican nation can be traced through two foundational stories. The first is the Mexican national mythology of the ancient past, which incorporates the legacies of multiple ancient civilizations. Archaeological remains, as the material embodiments of this mythic past, have been utilized within the nation to rally diverse populations into a vision of a unified nation. “Official culture’ has taken a great leap across the centuries to search for the foundations of the modern state in ancient Mesoamerica” (Bartra 2002: 6). The second foundational story is that of a historically embedded yet relatively recent reassertion of the post-revolutionary Mexican State’s control over its territory and resources through nationalization programs, the most notable of which is the nationalization of the petroleum industry in 1938. Significantly, the two foundational stories merge in this very same year, as archaeological patrimony
(and Mexican cultural heritage in general) became consolidated as national property through the creation of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH). It is crucial to note that these “nationalizations” were reassertions of territorial control rather than fresh assertions of the nation’s control over its wealth, both natural and cultural. While the following chapter is devoted to the legislation and institutional network, both national and international, regarding heritage properties, the following section sets out the case of oil, with comparative references to archaeological remains, as a parallel demonstration of the articulation between two kinds of resources, both found below the ground, and their relationships to the state.

“Maya Crude”

No one can challenge the status of petroleum as Mexico’s most valuable natural resource. Mexico’s state-owned oil company, Pemex, holds a constitutionally established monopoly for the exploration, production, transportation, and marketing of the nation’s oil. Since 1995, private investment in natural gas transportation, distribution, and storage has been permitted, but Pemex remains in sole control of natural gas exploration and production. Mexico is a major non-OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) oil producer. The Mexican oil industry was nationalized in 1938 by President Lazaro Cárdenas through their establishment of Petroleos Mexicanos, better known as PEMEX. PEMEX today is one of the world’s largest oil and natural gas companies. México is purported to hold the second largest crude oil reserves in the Western Hemisphere, 26.9 billion barrels. Only Venezuela holds more. As of 2002, PEMEX supplies approximately one-third of the government’s revenue, and ranked as the world’s fifth-largest oil producer (Weiner 2002).
One interesting historical case that implicates both subsoil patrimonies through a third form of resource wealth is found in the transformation of rules, regulations, and policies directed toward mining. Most important here are the particular ways in which surface ownership was articulated to the subsoil. Under the dictatorial leadership of Porfirio Díaz, this issue became increasingly important after the discovery of rich petroleum resources in Mexico. The Mine Law of 1884 initiates a change regarding subsoil domain. This legislation relies on a concept of vertical ownership, meaning that what was found in the subsoil pertains to the owner of the surface, and these owners were foreign petroleum interests.

Although explorers drilled Mexico's first petroleum well in 1869, oil was not discovered until after the turn of the twentieth century. Commercial production of crude oil began in 1901. Mexico began to export oil in 1911. After the First World War (1914-1918), the demand for oil increased and it became clear that countries should have sufficient oil reserves to meet their transportation, industrial and national security requirements. Many countries took steps to control their oil reserves at this time.

Article 27 of the Constitution of 1917 gives the Mexican government a permanent and inalienable right to all subsoil resources. The government's efforts to assert this right produced a lengthy dispute with foreign oil companies that was not resolved until the companies were nationalized in the late 1930s. The 1923 Bucarelli Agreements committed the United States and Mexico to regard titles held by foreign oil companies as concessions by the Mexican government rather than as outright ownership claims. In 1925 President Plutarco Elías Calles decreed that foreign oil companies must register their titles in Mexico and limited their concessions to a period of fifty years.
The foreign companies did everything possible to avoid paying the taxes established by the law. In 1936 Mexican oil workers went on strike. These Mexican workers raised some of the same complaints often heard during the Diaz years. Mexican oil workers were paid less than U.S. workers for doing the same job. Mexican workers were denied the opportunity to perform the higher paying technical duties. The foreign oil companies would not seriously negotiate with the Mexican labor leaders. After studying their case, the Supreme Court decided that the increase they requested was fair, and ordered payment to be made. However, since the oil companies did not obey the Court ruling, President Cárdenas decided to expropriate them with a March 18 1938 announcement of the nationalization of all foreign-owned oil properties in Mexico. The foreign companies, namely Standard Oil, owned by the Rockefellers, and the British-owned Mexican Eagle firm were forced to sell their machinery, oil wells and refineries to Mexico. The various companies were merged into a single government corporation called *Petróleos Mexicanos* (PEMEX). For Mexico, oil nationalization was a step back from increasing foreign imperialism and a reassertion of both political and economic sovereignty.

From the time of its nationalization, the Mexican petroleum industry has been the economic motor of the country, currently providing 40% of the total income in the federal budget. The importance of oil to the economy of Mexico has gone from extremely valuable to merely important. Since the debt crisis, the nation has attempted to rid itself of its dependence on oil exporting as its sole source of income. The success of this strategy can still be debated, although it does seem as though oil is losing its importance in the economy as compared with other industries, especially manufacturing. Although
most expect that Mexico will increase its oil production for at least the next two decades, the overall importance of oil in the economy may decrease.

Although it has been mentioned by a few (mostly far-right) politicians, is anyone in Mexico is seriously considering selling off Pemex? Completely, that is. Instead, the possibility of “partial privatization” is ever-increasing. What has already begun is a series of “partial privatizations.” In August 1993, it became known that the government was considering proposals to allow private companies to buy, sell, and distribute imported gasoline, natural gas, and petrochemicals, and to invest in new pipelines. Another space for partial privatization of Pemex could occur in new oil reserves, particularly the deep-water wells in the Gulf of Mexico. Natural gas is another state controlled resource that may undergo privatization reforms. Although the government reiterated in 1992 its longstanding pledge not to denationalize the oil industry, some observers viewed the reorganization of Pemex as a move to improve the company's efficiency and profitability as a prelude to privatization. After all, denationalization would require amending the constitution of 1917.

While current President Vicente Fox has vowed to modernize México’s oil industry by allowing some foreign participation, he faces formidable opposition mostly from the oil and gas industry’s labor union. Despite a campaign rhetoric that hinted at the privatization of PEMEX, Fox has since backed down, claiming loudly and publicly that privatization of PEMEX is not within the plans of his administration. PEMEX has been criticized widely for its features characteristic of almost any bureaucratic agency in Mexico: it is bloated, inefficient, and corrupt. Yet oil, as a national patrimony, seems untouchable by full-scale privatization. The idea of oil as the wealth that flows from the
nation itself is stronger than the criticisms of administrative problems, high-level corruption, or workers who are too powerfully unionized. Meanwhile, from the bottom-up, the social questions of the effects of the petroleum industry remain unresolved. "As the international oil industry explores the frontier regions of the globe for new supplies, it inevitably comes into contact with the native peoples who occupy the world's remaining forests, wetlands, tundra, and deserts" (Gedicks 2001: 41). While certain left-radical critiques of the exploitation of indigenous people comes along with the exploitation of petroleum and other natural resources, these fail to fully account for the complexities of the relationships between indigenous peoples, resources, and the state.

When Cárdenas nationalized the petroleum industry, the Mexican government gained a monopoly in the exploration, production, refining, and distribution of oil and natural gas, and in the manufacture and sale of basic petrochemicals. However, the industry's infrastructure currently lacks the capacity for carrying out large-volume refining petroleum products. Thus, the industry is oriented mainly toward the export of heavy crude, known as Maya.

Archaeological Materials

Under Cárdenas, the subsoil was recuperated from the concessioning policy of the Porfiriato. Though sovereignty extended to include the domain of the subsoil under the 1917 constitution, it wasn't until the 1930s that subsoil sovereignty and patrimony was reasserted. According to one perspective, "Sovereignty over a resource is meaningless unless it includes sovereignty over the value of that resource (Schrijver 1997: 18)." This was indeed the lesson of Mexico's at the crux of the patrimonial reassertion over petroleum. In the case of oil, this "value" is fairly easy to define, especially as it is a strong indicator in the international economic arena. However, in the case of our
counterpoint, archaeological materials, this "value" is slippery and hardly objective. Archaeological materials, too, have an international market, but it is nearly universally illegal, at least on paper, and the standards of value are subject to much fluctuation.

Archaeological resources as quite different from both oil and the materials extracted through mining. But I presented the two cases above as counterpoints to a discussion of archaeological resources as they involve some of the same factors in their consideration. Namely, all three are subsoil deposits. While clearly oil and mining extracts are "natural" resources, what are archaeological resources? How are they managed by the state? What are the politics and economics of their extraction, processing, and market value? What "good" is a resource that practically does not generate revenues? Is it even a resource? I assert that it is a cultural good which is ascribed value from a moral discourse expressed through on the one hand, nationalism, and on the other, an international discourse fed by both archaeological science and historical preservation/conservation organizations.

We begin with the similarities in these two subsoil patrimonies. Petroleum and archaeological heritage have subtly intertwined histories. The similarities can be found in three phases of the resource-becoming-resource": identification, extraction, and utilization. Historically, there were instances in which the identification of natural and cultural resources went hand in hand. The early nineteenth century mineral explorations of foreigners contributed as well to the localization of archaeological ruins (Litvak and López Varela 1997: 185-186). Also, it is known that throughout Yucatán Belize, and Guatemala, that chicle exploitation led to the archaeological finds of nineteenth century professional and amateur explorers or proto-archaeologists. The chicleros had knowledge of the landscape through their constant search for abundant chicle trees. It
was their command of the landscape that led, in a sense, to the first archaeological maps of the Maya region.

Extraction involves the separation of resource material from context material. Extraction continues to involve processes of identification: artifacts are separated from dirt, mineral deposits separated from bedrock, cut or worked stone distinguished from non-worked stone, etc. For archaeological resources it could be argued that resource-value is actually created through the maintenance of the in-situ context. However, even solely for the purposes of investigation, there is some kind of extraction process, even if simply uncovering by digging. This is still an "extraction" from the found condition or context.

In terms of utilization, the "values" of petroleum products and archaeological materials look quite different. While the products of the petroleum industry produce millions in revenue, the actual revenues from archaeological resources is more difficult to calculate. One might attempt such a calculation through numbers related to the tourism industry, but these are much less clear in their relationship to the value of the resource itself.

*Nationalization/Privatization*

Under liberalism, the nation's patrimony— and here I used the prime examples of oil and archaeology— was secured. The move is seemingly antithetical as it redeployed protectionist strategies more closely associated with mercantilism. As an economic policy, mercantilism promotes policies such as regulated commerce, exports over imports, and highly interventionist state action necessary to regulate and enforce these policies. Mercantilism is a kind of economic nationalism with the goal of building a state
that is both wealthy and powerful. The Spanish colonial empire was a mercantilist system of the highest order, as gold and silver were extracted from the Americas, then mines were exploited in both Mexico and Peru, and even land was brought into the system.

While, for the most part, the literature on privatization does not consider the effects of macroeconomic policies on what can be broadly defined as the “cultural sector.” However, prominent in these studies is the “social sector” and how privatization programs attempt to take over the former welfare state’s responsibilities in the realms of healthcare, education, and other social services. Heritage sites are incredibly important, yet often ignored, locations of the politics and economics of state-owned or controlled resources as culture heritage operates within multiple systems of value.

For this discussion, I use the case of Mexico to consider how the political economies of heritage sites are multiple, engaged with process of local development, international tourism, and the increasingly fragmented politics of sub-national ethnic identities. These are intimately tied, though not completely determined by, macro-economic processes. As the neoliberal agenda more firmly entrenched in Mexico, and indeed throughout the world, tri-partite programs of liberalization, privatization, and deregulation have been tactically employed by policymakers to shape new markets in the face of economic instability. Particularly in post-socialist Eastern Europe and Latin America, privatization of state-controlled assets and enterprises has rapidly increased only in the last decade. Case studies, generally by policy experts, economists, and others, write extensively about privatization and its effects, but here I argue that 1) cultural sector privatization is a different animal, so to speak, and doesn’t fit into local, national,
or international markets or imaginings of identity in the same ways as banking, public utilities, or the so-called natural resources; 2) while some analysts and scholars are jumping to post-privatization studies, the “effects” of privatization, specifically as instantiated in particular localities, cannot possibly yet be fully envisioned; and 3) local meanings and uses of heritage sites, while they may be articulated to international moral economies of value, practice other registers of significance, particularly in terms of both the sites resource value and as an aesthetic space.

One notable exception is the ethnographic examination of the conditions of neoliberalism is found in Phillips, *The Third Wave of Modernization in Latin America* (1998), an edited volume providing assessments modernization processes through field-based studies in Latin America. The third wave of modernization is through neoliberalism, defined simply as “the growing reliance on the market for organizing economic and social activities.” The modernization scheme heralded by neoliberalism carries with it characteristics of other modernization processes historically experienced in Latin America, namely, “the imposition of value systems from the North, the development of the market, and the transfer of resources out of local communities and regions” (Phillips 1998: xiii). Yet it differs from post- World War II modernization, preoccupied as it was with the ideological divide of “traditional” versus “modern,” a dichotomy which became spatialized through the classification of the nations of the globe into First and Third World entities. Neoliberal modernization also differs from the post-1960s dependency theory and structural adjustment reform measures that were put into effect in Latin America, most notably in the 1980s, Latin America’s “Lost Decade.” Of all the economic crises of the 1980s, México’s default on IMF and World Bank loans,
known as the Peso Crisis, was the first in a series of such crises throughout the region. Loan payback programs changed the rules of the economic game for many nations, with international banks dictating the rules.

In recent years, throughout Latin America and indeed the world, nation-states are experiencing as the result of unstable markets brought about through dependence on the fluctuations of foreign support and investment and severe capital shortages. “More important than ownership per se is privatization of provision and production of ‘private’ services” (Finely 1989: 9). Once the job of the state, services become the responsibility of the private sector. “The most clear-cut and recurrent factor triggering privatization decisions across the subcontinent has been the overstretched state of public finances, and that impetus shows no signs of coming to an end in any part of the region” (Whitehead 2000: 263)

“Privatization” is a general term that includes a range of policies and practices. In part, privatization programs are designed to rationalize industries and make them more efficient, as well as to provide steady sources of revenue for the state. While some argue that privatization programs promote greater democracy, others consider these agendas so firmly entrenched in the ideology of advancing late capitalism’s move toward creating even greater global inequalities. Most definitions and uses of the term privatization include or allude to the following characteristics:

- hyperinflation, stagnation, and political instability;
- irresponsible fiscal policies;
- isolationist strategies (pre-neoliberal reform conditions- add up to severe economic crisis.)
Privatization is a particularly prickly issue in the handling of "public goods," which include defense, security, transportation, parks, recreation, health, and education (Finely 1989: 5).

Privatization programs have dominated the Mexican agenda for at least the past two decades. This agenda includes, broadly: trade liberalization, encouragement of direct foreign investment, the privatization of state enterprises, the adoption of private property rights, and deregulation of trade. The country's financial problems heightened in the 1970s, leading to the infamous 1982 "Peso Crisis," the result of Mexico's default on loans from foreign commercial banks. The IMF and the World Bank, in their "rescues" of debtor countries including Mexico, imposed structural adjustment plans featuring wage freezes, decreases in public expenditures, and support for exports. This is the root of Mexico's embrace of neoliberal ideology, marked by the decision to moved from a fixed exchange rate to a free market rate. The 1990 "Washington Consensus" laid out the neoliberal path for Latin American economies in crisis (Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, Brazil). According to this plan, economic stabilization followed by structural adjustment policies would remove constraints on markets and promote privatization. Fiscal discipline, tax reform, and the strengthening of property rights for foreign investors were all promoted as modernizing measures, to open up the economies of Latin American as well as post-socialist eastern European "transition economies" to the global market and its forces (Baer and Love 2000: 4; Babb 2001: 10).

In this fashion, privatization has arisen as an essential component of Mexico's economic structural transformation over the past several decades. In the 1980s, Mexico dramatically transformed itself, with considerable influence from international financial
institutions including the World Bank and the IMF, into an open economy in which the state’s intervention is limited by a new legal and institutional framework. “Under the new model, the tendency is for the market to replace regulation, private ownership to replace public ownership, and competition, including that from foreign goods, to replace protection” (Lustig 1998: 1). Under President Salinas de Gortari, the privatization program experienced an unprecedented expansion, involving previously “untouchable” sectors of the economy including telecommunications, pensions and insurance, commercial banking, agriculture, television and radio, ports and airports, potable water distribution, and mining, among others (Salinas-León 1996: 177). These privatizations accomplished an elevation in cash flow for the Mexican government and made the country attractive for foreign investment. “In particular, privatization played a prominent role in enhancing foreign capital inflows and stimulating capital repatriation” (Salinas-León 1996: 180).

Between 1983 and 1993 the Mexican government privatized nearly one thousand firms. Under President Salinas de Gortari (1988-94), some of the country’s largest state-owed enterprises (SOEs), including airlines, certain public utilities, and national banks were put up for sale. By end of his term in 1994, the number of SOEs in Mexico was reduced from 1000 to only 80 (Schamis 2002: 113-114). The largest single case of privatization in Mexico was with the state’s divestiture of the financial Banamex-Accival (Schamis 2002:121). Just a little more than decade later, Banamex-Accival was willingly acquired by the multinational CitiGroup, in the largest financial merger ever between the United States and Latin America. Beaucage (1998) argues that Salinismo to be the continuation of a long history of liberalism in México, dating back to Lazaro Cárdenas,
often thought of as the president most antithetical to Salinas. After all, Cárdenas was a
nationalizer, while Salinas will always be remembered for the multi-million dollar
privatization programs installed under his administration, including that of the banking
sector.

In 1992 Carlos Salinas quietly began the dismantling the electric utility industry,
which, along with the petroleum industry, is of one of the two major industries still
considered state-owned enterprises. Constitutional amendments in 1992 as well as
reforms introduced by President Fox in May of 2001 have paved the way for participation
by both Mexican and multinational energy companies. From the 1930's to the early
1990's, Mexico's electric utility industry was exclusively owned and operated by the
State. The Salinas reforms of Article 27 of the Constitution as well as other laws
governing energy production and use in 1992 allowed private sector participation in
power generation through the creation of seven different power producer arrangements.
These arrangements allow a corporation to sign an agreement to construct a generation
facility to supply power to one specific user as well as to export electricity. In May 2001
Fox submitted a modification to the law governing the Electric Energy Public Service
Law (LSPEE) in attempt to expand private sector participation in electricity generation
by reducing restrictions on private power production as well as authorizing the Secretary
of Energy to further adjust such restrictions—circumventing Congressional approval.

Privatization programs have left many Mexican citizens suffering the short-term
consequences without any hope for future benefits. On-the-ground experiences of
citizens along with voices of multiple critics constitute a “backlash” to privatization, not
just in Mexico, but around the globe. Former Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo likens
the "backlash" in Latin America toward neoliberal reforms to a "hangover," "It is a widespread sentiment that privatization, fiscal discipline and the opening of markets to foreign competition have not only gone too far but also failed to deliver the better living standards expected. Over-imbibing reform has resulted, some say, in a severe hangover, which, when it wears off, will leave behind a failed experiment of free markets and fiscal responsibility" (Zedillo 2002). Newly-elected Bolivian president Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada agrees, "Sure, we are suffering from a terrible hangover—but it so happens it's not from the reforms made, but from those not yet made!" (ibid.).

Conservatives like Zedillo argue that the current problems resulting in the actual shrinking of the Latin American GDP are a result of too little reform, not too much. Other critics of the privatization criticism argue for more patience- that privatization, while initially producing an economic downturn, eventually will produce an extended upswing. Without the reforms of the 1990s, Latin America would have experienced yet another "lost decade" like the 1980s.

Part 2: The Anthropology of Property Relations

The sociological and cultural implications of privatization may be read against the backdrop of the anthropology of property relations. In the two ethnographic and historical case studies that are presented in this dissertation, we will see a sustained tension between "land" and "ruins" and how these figure differently as resources- both locally, and for the state. In order to develop a clear understanding of the dynamic relationship between the land and the ruins, I look toward recent developments in the anthropology of property relations. Anthropology, as source for elucidating the tension between the land and the ruins is the anthropological consideration of property, has
recently found a renewed interest in questions or property, ownership and property relations. This arises in relation to dramatic changes that have taken place around the world, particularly under neoliberal policies promoting privatization and decollectivization, to the greatest extent in Latin America and post-socialist Eastern Europe. Also of interest, as evidenced by my own study, is an increased interest in “cultural property” and how claims to its tangible as well as intangible aspects fit within frameworks of ownership rights and claims. Moving away from questions of agrarian practices and land tenure, a newly conceived anthropology of property relations is seeking to find new ways to consider new objects, such as genetic materials, as forms of property (e.g. Strathern 1998). Issues of control and political legitimacy at the intersections of economics, politics, and law in claiming property are increasingly slippery. This is particularly the case with intellectual and cultural property in international arenas (e.g. Napier 2002).

Early anthropological queries of property and property relations are generally concerned with land tenure in agrarian systems. The work of Max Gluckman (1965) showed that anthropologists could develop alternative theoretical frameworks to understand land tenure in tribal societies. With a few exceptions, however, (e.g. Goody 1962, 1977), the subject of property became unfashionable in social anthropology. Of course it did not disappear altogether; among legal anthropologists and in the study of development, interest remained strong (e.g. von Benda-Beckmann 1979). As Hann (1998) points out, “the focus on property must no be restricted to the formal legal codes which play a major role in society, but must be broadened to include the institutional and cultural contexts within which such codes operate” (7). Thus, anthropologists have been
concerned with taking up the task of analyzing notions of property and ownership in their cultural contexts, looking at the formal as well as informal ways in which property is understood, and ownership is enacted.

Hann (1998) presents a more contemporary anthropological perspective on property. Scott (1998), presents the case of Turkish and Greek Cypriots who have been forced away from their inherited lands and property by partition, and are now forced to confront differing political strategies of property evaluation on both sides of the border and how these are played out in real estate markets. The author points out that migrants frequently hold on to the village plots they have left behind, or inherited from parents of grandparents, because they see them not as parcels of real estate but as their patrimony. Property ownership in Cyprus, thus, is an integral part of both personal and family identity.

The anthropology of property relations has dispelled the common practice of seeing property as a thing or object, or even a relation of persons to things. A key in understanding property is that is “property” is not identical with the thing itself which is owned. Property refers to the thing owned as well as the relationship of ownership. The current conceptualization of property in both anthropological and legal analysis has seen it as a social relationship among persons by means of (or with reference to) things/objects (MacFarlane 1998; ;Strathern 1998; Verdery 1998). The, property is at the nexus of three nodes rather than only two. “Property” consistently signals the issue of ownership, a variable concept, composed of bundles of rights, liberties, powers, etc. Christman offers a simple, useful definition: “ownership is a relation between a person and all other persons in regard to some (tangible or intangible) thing” (16).
Property, Ownership, and Indigenous Communities

"To speak of property is to engage with a range of issues of global political economy in the contemporary world (Hann 1998: 2). In the heritage studies literature, "ownership" to cultural heritage properties or resources is often based on claim- whether these claims are enacted by any of a range of social actors, including the state, "user" communities, and local residents. While legal-realist notion of property as a "bundle of rights," a move beyond the realm of legal definitions into political economic and cultural contexts can be taken as further specifying the relationships constituting and constitutive of property. While the following chapter will consider what constitutes the "bundle of rights" in terms of different levels of public and private access to patrimonial resources, here I focus for a moment on how we might conceive of property rights vis-à-vis intangible heritage, specifically that which is considered intangible. Especially in Canada, Australia, and the United States, there is a growing concern over indigenous intellectual property rights (Brown 1998; Brush 1994; Greaves 1994; Hayden forthcoming). Usually framed within a NAGPRA-politics, concern for the rights to claim, own, or on the part of descendent indigenous communities make not only land claims or patrimonial claims to built heritage, but these communities also might claim intellectual authorship of traditions, other cultural productions. Brown points out, "One area in which this issue becomes particularly fraught is demonstrated by Hayden (forthcoming) in her study of the role of traditional knowledge of plants in contemporary biodiversity prospecting enterprises in México.

In a report Indigenous People and their relationship to the Land, which she tabled at the 1997 meeting of the Sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination and
Protection of Minorities, UN Special Rapporteur Erica-Irene Daes stated: "The gradual deterioration of indigenous societies can be traced to the non-recognition of the profound relationship that indigenous peoples have to their lands, territories and resources, as well as the lack of recognition of other fundamental rights.... That indigenous societies are in a state of rapid deterioration and change is due to the denial of the rights of indigenous peoples to land, territories and resources" (1997).

The relation between "indigenous" property notions and those of socialist, post-socialist and post-colonial regimes is a growing concern for the social scientific study of property relations. These concerns give rise to questioning the public moralities of property and issues of collective rights and heritage. Additionally, opens to questioning the relation between "cultural property" and the properties of culture to the definitional powers and taxonomies developed by oil corporations and bio-prospecting companies in constituting "natural" objects as property.

While claims as well as the legislative frameworks that legitimate or deny them sustain a tension between property as a thing—usually land. However, neither thing nor exclusively a form of activity, property is defined by “the rights that people hold over things which guarantee them a future ‘income stream’” (Hann 1998: 4). The analysis of “property” vis-à-vis archaeological heritage in Yucatán thus requires a multilevel questioning. What kinds of relationships are at issue when speaking of property relations vis-a-vis a cultural heritage property? What counts as heritage? How, then, do we understand the kinds of things/objects that can enter into a property relation: what is the role of their status of materiality (i.e. to what degree is it important what kind of “thing” cultural heritage is)? These questions exist within a larger question of how regimes of
value constitute the worth of property and the role of the state in transforming property regimes, particularly the transformations that have been brought about through the concomitant rise of two related conditions. The first is the participation of NGOs, INGOS, IGOs, and the civil organizations participating in the cultural heritage industry. The second is the opening up of the state to these organizations and agents.

*The Commons: Property Rights, Usufruct Practices, and the Ejido*

For agrarian societies, land is not just a means of production: attached to it are meanings and values which define individuals, making sense out of their particular way of living and linking them to a specific cultural environment. Land is simultaneously symbol and referent of a set of social relationships involving ownership and position within a social structure. The possession of land may imply prestige and power over others, whereas not having it may represent subordination and/or vulnerability” (Córdova Plaza 2000: 161).

Perhaps the most salient question in anthropological studies of property is the question of communal versus individual property. In 1968, Garret Hardin formulated his idea of the “tragedy of the commons.” In Hardin’s schema, common ownership opens the door for unbridled exploitation through an open and unregulated access to resources such as air, oceans, fish and other wildlife, grasslands, rainforests, and so on. Because they belong to everyone, no one protects them. If common property means unregulated and unrestricted access to resources, this would found an argument for privatization. This theory is based on the assumption that private owners will behave more responsibly, with an eye toward sustainable use of both renewable and nonrenewable resources.

Recently, this theory has been receiving a deserved amount of criticism, especially from anthropologists and ecologists. McCay and Acheson (1998), for example, present case studies from around the world detailing the contextually specific meanings
of common property, communal activity, and communal tenure and how they are expressed by different groups of people (xv). Whether fishermen of Malaysia or Canada, native hunters of the Amazon, or small farmers in rural Mexico, many different groups of social actors, together with policies and institutions, negotiate meanings, use, and importance of common lands, waters, and other resources in everyday life.

In Mexico, land has always been a focus of property relations, and especially the question of individual versus common or collective landholding. Post-conquest, lands that had been held in common by indigenous groups were, for the most part, transferred into the colonial system as patrimony of the Spanish Crown and the Catholic Church. Thus, throughout the colonial period land was owned and controlled by the Spanish crown. *Terrenos baldios*, or lands that were not seen to be *in use* at the time, were quickly claimed by the Crown. Sabido Méndez describes this process as one that initiated land privatization as the lands that indigenous people considered their territorial reserves were declared *baldías* and thus made subject to private appropriation (1995: 12). In reality, the lands were technically “in use” as they were cornfields (*milpas*) in a fallow phase of an ongoing cycle according to regional agricultural system of *tumba-rumba-quema*, or swidden agriculture. This is parallel to the doctrine of *terra nullius*, or empty land, a doctrine long-challenged by Australian Aboriginals. *Terra nullius* in effect denies claims to territory.

“The Yucatec economic and cultural organization that the Spanish conquistadors confronted was based on communal ownership of land, centered upon agricultural work and articulated to the production system of the milpa, hunting, and the production of cloth, honey, and *cera*” (Sabido Méndez 1995: 9). It wasn’t until after the Mexican
Revolution that the vast landholdings of Mexico’s white elite were appropriated by the state and distributed to the largely landless majority indigenous population. Perhaps the most institutionalized formulation of the “Commons” in Mexico is the ejido system, the basis for rural landholding throughout the country.

Three categories of land can be found in ejidos, though not all ejidos have all three types: tierras para el asentamiento humano, or property for community development; tierras de uso común, or property for common use; and tierras parceladas, or individual land parcels. The property for community development is the part of the ejido where dwellers enjoy their communal life and is inalienable, nontransferable and non-attachable. It includes the urban land where the member's households are located and necessary space for urban expansion. The property for common use is the economical support of the ejido. It includes all land surface, if any, which is not for community development and that has not been parcelled. Individual land parcels are assigned to individual ejido members. This category does not exist in all ejidos, but most of the country's nearly 30,000 ejidos have been parcelled. In case of parcelled ejidos, the owner of a parcel has the right to use it as he wants, and the ejido cannot make use of it unless it obtains the written consent from the member in question.

Land privatization is an essential component of the modernization of the Mexican state and economy, Salinas de Gortari in the final days of 1991 proposed a reform the agrarian legal framework of Mexico. His reform officially declared the end of the distribution of private land to landless peasants, which started after the revolution in 1917 and was carried out in the 1930s by President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940). Under this old system the Mexican state carried out a massive re-distribution of land by which half
of the arable land of the country was transferred into state protected units of production known as *ejidos*. The term ejido, which now means a land reform community, is a colonial one, denoting public land attached to a settlement. Before the 1992 reform of the land law, the ejido land was not constituted as property but as a right for individuals or groups to the usufruct of the land. Under this system, it was illegal to rent or sell the individual land parcels. No private investor was allowed to own or co-own an agricultural enterprise with ejido members. The proposed change of the agrarian law in 1992 consisted of the abolition of such restrictions over rents and sales of ejidos, bringing the land back into the market as a commodity. After the new law's formal approval in Congress in February 1992, its practical implications were soon translated into new agencies and programs designed to reach each of the thirty thousand ejidos throughout the country. Constraints on private investment in rural activities taking place on ejido land-grants were abolished. All three factors in rural agricultural production—land, labor, and capital—were legally brought into a new modernizing framework. Land was now opened to purchasing, leasing, concessioning, and the formation of non-ejido associations. Likewise, restrictions on labor requiring ejido members to demonstrate a usucrutory possession of his plot, were lifted. These alternations were aimed at the deregulation of the rural land market, a principal which fits squarely within neoliberal policy, along with the privatization of state enterprises and trade liberalization (most clearly exemplified through NAFTA).

The ejido is more than a legal land tenure system or strictly pragmatic means for organizing agricultural production. Indeed, the ejido is the backbone of rural communities throughout Mexico, in terms of social, economic, and political organization.
Reforms of Article 27 which went into effect in 1992 “introduced unprecedented changes in the common land system (ejido), one of the most important institutions of post-revolutionary Mexico. Reform passed Jan. 1992, granted property rights to occupants of ejidos, ending social ownership of land in an effort to generate the conditions for further commercialization of agriculture.” (Schamis 2002: 123). These reforms, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, changed the nature of land tenure. Previous to reform, peasant beneficiaries of land only enjoyed rights of use of the land, and state retained title. “For the authorities, a trend toward a stricter specification of property rights in the countryside was deemed necessary for increasing investment and dismantling a pervasive system of patronage” (124).

_Ejidatarios_, the beneficiaries of land reform, only received rights to use the land in legal theory, and could not alienate it as if it were private property: if an ejidatario could no longer farm his or her land, and had no successors in the family able to do so, the plot should revert to the community for redistribution to some other potential beneficiary. In practice, however, land titles have been bought and sold in ejidos, and ejidal land might be rented to capitalist entrepreneurs from outside the agrarian community for long periods. But these were informal and illegal practices up to December 1991, when the neoliberal administration of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari amended constitutional Article 27 in ways which will in practice make legal sales of ejido land possible for the first time and allow _ejidatarios_ to use their land as collateral for a loan.

One of the most dramatic implications for Maya people with the widespread establishment of haciendas throughout the Peninsula is the concept and legal import of
usufruct rights. As Seed (2001) points out, labor doesn’t give rights to own land if that labor is carried out for a landowner. As property, ejido tenure provided members with usufruct rights. Ejido membership and land rights could be passed through inheritance. “Ejido land tenure is seen as a form of private property, but also as family patrimony within patriarchally organized families” (Nuijten 2001: 76). This author describes how local understandings of ejido parcels as family patrimony plays into social and moral codes:

There is a strong feeling that the “owner” of the land has certain moral obligations to take good care of the land and make sure that it will be there for his or her children. Land and the inheritance of land are used to maintain continuity in the family. Mutual obligations of care between parents and children influence the choice of the heir, and ensure that there is no fixed person in the family with a “natural right” to inherit the land” (Nuijten 2001: 76).

In the case studies presented in the following chapters, we will see two variations on this theme. In the case of (former) residents of Chichén Itzá, similar family patrimony claims are made to certain land parcels, however these are not ejido lands, but a combination of privately owned property and national territories (Chapters 3 and 4). In the case of Kochol (Chapters 5 and 6), a sense of ejido land as community patrimony is expressed over family patrimony. In both cases, I explore how these patrimonial claims to work within different land tenure regimes as well as how they articulate to the presence of cultural heritage properties property which in both cases is coincident with the lands in question.

It is important to point out that there exists a marked difference between feeling as though an ejido parcel was private property and legally handling the parcel as private property. After all, ejido parcels can neither be rented nor sold. Though groups of
ejidatarios have, since the establishment of the ejido system, most likely been practicing land deals that may involve buying or selling, swapping, or renting of parcels and certainly the hiring of others to work one’s own ejido parcel, this hasn’t been an issue to the extent that it has broken down the ejido system. The 1992 reforms to Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution have eased this restriction through the restructuring of property rights under the ejido tenure system. The reform is comprised of three important changes. First, the reform allowed for the individual certification, titling, and, in effect, privatization of the ejido land. Second, the reform opened up the possibility for ejido communities to participate in joint ventures with both domestic and foreign corporations. Third, the 1992 reform marked the official end of the ejido land distribution practice (Goldring 1996: 271-272).

The actual carrying out of the Article 27 reforms required the establishment of a new bureaucratic arm, the Procuraduría Agraria, or Office of the Agrarian Attorney General. The Procuraduría Agraria is the federal institution in charge of the defense of the ejido members' rights and the enforcement of the agrarian law. It provides legal support to ejidos in their dealings with third parties. It is the watchdog of ejido related institutions and must investigate and denounce cases of land concentration, administrative faults and non-compliance on the part of civil servants or the agrarian justice. PROCEDE, Programa de Certificación de Derechos Ejidales y Titulación de Solares Urbanos (Program for the Certification of Ejido Land Rights and the Titling of Urban House Plots), which operates through the Procuradura Agraria, is the land rights certification program designed to pave the way for privatization. Began in 1993, this voluntary land certification and titling program has had limited success nationwide.
After certification, each ejidatario would hold an individual certificate to a specific plot of land. However, the sale or transfer of this plot to someone outside of the ejido would have to be approved by a majority vote in the ejidal assembly.

In Yucatán, various sources estimate that 85% of ejidos have undergone the PROCEDE program, which is somewhat higher than the national average. However, this has not translated into obvious benefits for the ejidatarios who now hold titles to their land parcels. "With very few exceptions, the ejidos of Yucatan...are in crisis-undercapitalized, fragmented, and almost entirely dependent on government support" (Baños Ramírez 1998: 31). According to some interpretations, ejidos, even at the time of their establishment in the 1930s, were never meant to be permanent. Rather, these land grants to campesinos were seen as a transitional measure on the road to modernization, part of the process of dismantling the haciendas all over Mexico. The long-term vision (once liberal, now neoliberal) is one in which private property replaces (or displaces) property of the State. "Current land policies are dominated by the idea that land privatization and enhancing free land markets are key elements in breaking down subsistence production and stimulating rural development" (Zoomers 2000: 61). This land reform utilizes another form of privatization- a state sponsored divestiture of federal land-grants parcels, which accounted for about half of the nation's territory. Various governmental agencies have been created which have generated programs to regulate ejido commons land. The PROCAMPO support program for the Mexican farm sector, was established in 1993 as a fifteen year subsidy plan to aid small farmers in the cultivation of corn, beans, wheat, rice, soy beans, sorghum, and cotton. PROCAMPO continues to provide approximately 3.5 million producers of basic commodities—about
64% of all farmers—with a fixed payment per hectare of cultivated land. The subsidy was 708 pesos per hectare in 1999-2000 and 829 pesos per hectare in 2000-01. Many farmers do not find this amount of financial support to be adequate.

Land privatization follows principles of liberal ownership "refers to any property structure where full (or nearly full) rights to possess, use, manage, alienate, transfer, and gain income from property are granted to individuals" (Christman 1994: 15). Throughout Latin America, the liberal ideal of private, individual land ownership has become the driving force of land reform, and "the institution of private property rights and land transactions through market mechanisms have taken center stage" (Zoomers 2000: 59).

Much has been expected by government officials of land titling programs such as PROCEDE in Mexico. However, expected results, to date, have not been achieved. Land titling programs follow the "tragedy of the commons" sentiment, which argues that common property rights provide incentive for overuse of land by a community. If each person has their own plot carved out of the communal holding, then the exploitation of the land is more regulated. Chris Hann makes a clever play on Hardin’s "tragedy of the commons" in order to demonstrate the ill effects that might likewise result under private ownership through the phrase, the tragedy of the privates" (Hann 2000).

Tension between individual ownership, and the meaning of collective ownership to a community: both serve as meaning making devices. "A person’s assets, such as land, are not merely means with which he or she makes a living; they also give meaning to the person’s world. Assets are not simply resources that people use in building livelihoods: they are assets that give them the capability to be and to act" (Zoomers 2001, check page number). "The problem of the commons" speculate two authors, "is one of how society
creates superordinate allegiance to something—the commons or the communal—that transcends people’s immediate and everyday sense of reality” (McCay and Acheson 1987: 24). In Yucatán, it is difficult to say if being members of a local communal land holding somehow encourages these ejidatarios to identify with other farmers around Mexico. This it would be hard to identify a superordinate allegiance in this case. In the cases of my own ethnographic research, ejidatarios tend to identify most closely with the members of their own ejido. In these circumstances, the ejido is not only land, but a community of people. One way in which people of Chunchucmil or Kochol, for example, do express some reference to a superordinate allegiance is through their identification as campesinos, a term which refers to both their status as agricultural laborers, as well as a variety of other markers of class and even ethnicity. “Somos campesinos, gente humilde” [we are campesinos, humble people] is a phrase I heard often repeated, especially in the former hacienda communities.

Traditional Territory and Indigenous Land/Resource Rights

Property rights are tied to nuanced concepts and practices of access, tenure, and ownership exist within a deep context rather than a static relationship with things or objects. This framework is helpful for understanding that under neoliberalism, “land” for example, is just an occasion for privatization. In terms of the relationship between land, people, and resources, questions of property relations are thus not about the land itself, but about access to the “benefit stream” as the territorialization of the land changes under different sorts of political, legal, or economic regimes. In Mexico, the last of the leftist insurgencies in Mexico was articulated precisely to this issue. This complex articulation of ideologies and practices concerning the relationships of people, land, and resources in
the face of policies influenced by neoliberalism is made explicit in the 1994 Zapatista
uprising in the Southern state of Chiapas. The Zapatista agenda presents a clear
articulation of indigenous rights as resource rights. In the following section, I trace the
legislation, both national and international that provides a framework for this articulation.

The United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, based
on seven years of negotiations between Indigenous representatives and national
governments. While premised on the basic political, cultural and economic rights
outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the draft Declaration elaborates
these rights in greater specificity in relation to the experiences and needs of Indigenous
Peoples. The draft Declaration is now stalled at the UN Human Rights Commission
where a working group of states has been set up to review the document. National
governments have disputed the previously agreed upon wording in all but two of the 45
articles. The declaration affirms “that all peoples contribute to the diversity and richness
of civilizations and cultures, which constitute the common heritage of humankind.” The
declaration continues, “Concerned that indigenous peoples have been deprived of their
human rights and fundamental freedoms, resulting, inter alia, in their colonization and
dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from
exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs
and interests.” The Draft also refers to a recognition of “the urgent need to respect and
promote the inherent rights and characteristics of indigenous peoples, especially their
rights to their lands, territories and resources, which derive from their political, economic
and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and
philosophies.”
Article 13 of the Declaration specifically refers to indigenous relationships to heritage resources:

Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practice, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of human remains. States shall take effective measures, in conjunction with the indigenous peoples concerned, to ensure that indigenous sacred places, including burial sites, be preserved, respected and protected.

In the Mexican national context, issues such as repatriation have not reached the level of public discussion or debate that has been the case in the United States, Canada, or Australia. Amongst my informants in Yucatán, for example, no legal or ethical precedents or procedures allow for the articulation of repatriation claims.

Other articles of the draft resolution refer more generally to the rights of access and control of indigenous groups over resources within the purview of “traditional ownership” regimes. For example, Article 26 states:

Indigenous peoples have the right to own, develop, control and use the lands and territories, including the total environment of the lands, air, waters, coastal seas, sea-ice, flora and fauna and other resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used. This includes the right to the full recognition of their laws, traditions and customs, land-tenure systems and institutions for the development and management of resources, and the right to effective measures by States to prevent any interference with, alienation of or encroachment upon these rights.

This is bolstered by Article 27, which refers to restitution and compensation:

Indigenous peoples have the right to the restitution of the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, occupied, used or damaged without their free and informed consent. Where this is not possible, they have the right to just and fair compensation. Unless otherwise freely agreed upon by the peoples concerned, compensation shall take the form of lands, territories and resources equal in quality, size and legal status.
As in the case of repatriation in the Mexican national context, restitution is another issue lacking a strong public discourse. In the case of lands lost to the creation of federal archaeological zones, the Mexican state has been, for the most part, reticent to compensate indigenous landholders for loss of access to lands, most of which are ejido land-grant properties.

México is a party to the International Labor Organization (ILO) *Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples* (1989) provides for the “recognition and protection of territorial rights of these peoples and establishes their rights to be consulted on any measure or project affecting their lands and natural resources.” The Convention is marked from it predecessor, Convention 107 (1957) for its introduction of the notion of “territory.” Commenting on the introduction of the term territory—rather than land—in this legislation, Assies (2000) indicates, “it marks a departure from earlier forms of tenure regularization affecting indigenous peoples and contrasts with processes of individualization, titling, and registration that characterizes the ‘reform of the reform’ currently taking place in several countries,” including Mexico (93).  

While Mexico has signed the ILO Convention 167, and this introduction of the concept of territory has the possibilities of a radical new interpretation of indigenous rights and access to land and resources, there remains a disarticulation between indigenous political and patrimonial claims in Yucatán. In Mexico, the politics of indigenous claims to heritage properties is not a part of the dominant indigenous politics discourse. Nor do they capture national or international attention, whether through the popular media or academic scholarship. One notable exception to this depoliticization of

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4 Chapter 5 discusses a land-titling program connected to the 1992 privatization of the ejido.
indigenous claims to cultural heritage is found in the Zapatista critique of the Mexican state. The 1996 San Andres Accords call for “The rights of the indigenous towns to the protection of their sacred sites and ceremonial centers.” But this assertion loses its punch, so to speak, in a later article which asserts the power of the state over indigenous claims, which limits indigenous territorial rights “to the use and benefit of the natural resources of their lands and territories, understood as the totality of the habitat that indigenous communities use and occupy, except that which corresponds as the direct dominion of the Nation.” Thus, while the Accords pledge indigenous administration of and free access to cultural heritage sites, they concede that such sites are property of the nation.

While international conventions and resolutions might set the terms for debate over the relationships between indigenous people and resource rights, as sui generis legal regimes they may do little to effect the local level politics surrounding heritage sites. In the case of internationally negotiated national agreements, such as the San Andres Accords, the rhetoric of indigenous rights to sacred and ceremonial centers often fails to match the histories and political contexts in which these sites are situated. In sum, I present these legislative frameworks in order to illustrate the international concern with the indigenous resource rights as one layer of the background against which we will see the case studies of the archaeological heritage sites in Yucatán presented.

Part 4: Conclusion: Cultural Patrimony and the “Striptease” of the State

When we discuss the dilemma of civilization in Mexico, we are really considering the necessity for formulating a new vision or plan for the country in which all the patrimony that we Mexicans have inherited can be incorporated as active capital. This includes not only natural resources, but also various ways of understanding
and making use of them through knowledge and technology that are inherited from the diverse peoples composing the nation (Bonfil Batalla 1996: xvii).

Mexico has moved in just a few decades from a wave of nationalizations to a new wave of privatizations. Megaprojects and massive neoliberal development plans are not a new phenomenon in Mexico and Central America. In fact, they have been the central components of fiscal packages of many presidents in recent years. From the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), the past decade has witnessed transnational corporations increasingly being given the opportunity to take advantage of the natural resources and workforce of developing countries in Latin America. Programs and policies associated with neoliberal globalization, while they may promote economic “growth,” also run the risk of eroding a sense of national belonging. Examples abound from other parts of Latin America. In Argentina, for instance, “the privatization of the national petroleum company led to massive layoffs (from 5,000 to 500 workers) as well as to significant increase in profitability (from losses of $6 billion between 1982 and 1990 to profits of 9 million in 1996)” (Coronil 2000: 362).

But there is a counter-story to the economics or privatization, what one might call the symbolic realm of privatization. “Privatization is primarily an economic issue, but it is much more. The development of a large-scale privatization program is also a highly political act. Almost by definition, privatization represents an ideological and symbolic break with a history of state control over a country’s productive assets” (Megginson 2000: 1). If one thinks of privatization as the selling off of a nation’s assets, the nation would be, in effect, selling their national patrimony. In the second wave of privatization
pushed by the Zedillo administration, the government introduced legislation to allow the extension of privatization to the main areas of national economic infrastructure.

PEMEX serves as a symbol of unity and national identity, and its revenues have made possible the construction of hospitals, schools, highways, and rural roads. Anti-privatization arguments include a support for a nationalized PEMEX to provide resources for human development and to fight poverty. Using this argument of the nation benefiting from a nationalized industry, in the first years of his sexenio, President Fox reiterated that PEMEX would not be privatized. However, this did not mean that efforts would not be made to open the national oil company to private investment. In a radio address two years after his election, Fox affirmed the importance of PEMEX as a symbol of national patrimony, stating, “This business is the business of the Mexican people...PEMEX will not be privatized, as it is the patrimony of all Mexicans. But we propose to convert it into an instrument of modernization and development. For this reason we want to bring the industry up to date and to the vanguard” (Diario de Yucatán 2002a).\footnote{Fox made a similar defense for the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS) in January 2003 on the occasion of the institution’s sixtieth anniversary, “Today I reaffirm that the institute will be neither privatized nor concessioned, nor much less, disappear...as it is a fundamental patrimony of the nation” (Torre 2003: 1)} That said, he continued to call for the participation of the private sector, as “there is not (within the government) enough money the manage the investments of this spectacular whole. Furthermore, the private initiative helps a lot, as it brings high technology and makes the investments” (ibid.). But at the same time, perhaps industry growth is impossible without private sector funds. For example, in order to exploit the deepwater wells in the Gulf of Mexico, platforms must be built- and this can only be carried out with the aid of foreign investors.
The neoliberal worldview carries, as an essential component, the dream of the displacement of the state. But what about the cession of patrimonial resources which operate as both important economic resources as well as symbols of national identity? According to one critic, “The crucial issues regarding privatization of strategic industries are whether they embody special features that necessitate absolute state control of assets and administration and whether government companies such as PEMEX should operate under the criteria of open competition and consumer sovereignty that privatization would generate” (Salinas-León 1996: 193). Would such industries fare better under private management? “It is only the forces of history and culture that rule out what is demonstrably a better course” (Salinas-León 1996: 194). As the public begins to question just who is profiting from the state’s divestiture of valuable industries, privatization programs may enact a feeling of erosion of national belonging through overt social unrest or protest. For Mexico, the clearest example is with the rise of the Zapatista movement in Chiapas, which became internationally renowned for its rebellion against the government on the eve of the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement. While not strictly a privatization program in and of itself, NAFTA as a document par excellence of neoliberal policies, threatens the sovereignty of the Mexican state. Add to this economic border-blurring the continual rise in the participation of non-governmental organizations, and the increasing presence of the private sector in the provision of public services—and assertions of nationalism and citizenship, as well as the very division between public and private itself, take on new challenges.

Any current evaluation of neoliberal policy, as manifest through privatization programs, must closely examine the transformations in the status of the nation-state
particularly vis-à-vis the exercise of control and authority over territory. The extent of the sovereign powers of the nation-state in the context of the global economy or the process of globalization is a major concern of recent social theory. Though states cannot be detached from territory, the Westphalian logic which dictates that states retain ultimate sovereignty over the territory within national borders is, there is a growing recognition that this kind of sovereignty is, if not eroding, in decline, and if not completely refiguring on the ground, than at under conceptual transformation. While critics such as Saskia Sassen find “globalization...has entailed a partial denationalizing of national territory and a partial shift of some components of state sovereignty to other institutions, from supranational entities to the global capital market” (1996: xii), Hardt and Negri (2000) stretch this critique to a more totalizing conclusion. According to them, a new global “Empire” is emerging out of the processes of globalization, namely, as an effect of the ongoing, continuous deterritorializations of culture, politics, and economics. “Empire” thus represents a global sovereignty in which transnational networks works over, against, and through territorial national boundaries. Observe Hardt and Negri, “sovereignty has taken a new form, composed of a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic or rule” (2000: xii). They call this “single logic or rule” Empire. Neither imperialist nor imperialism, Empire is both deterritorialized and decentered, yet reaches to incorporate the whole global realm.

Yet, “economic globalization ... is by no means a foregone conclusion. It is important to remember that what has been characterized as an essentially economic phenomenon takes place in a social, political, legal, and cultural setting—national and international—that has the capacity to slow down and even reverse global economic
trends” (Reinicke 1998: 3). Trends running counter to a hegemonic economic
globalization may find expression in new forms of nationalism, as well as within the
politics of cultural identity. In 1997, three years after the implementation of the North
American Free Trade Agreement, Subcommandante Marcos issued from the Lacandon
Jungle of Mexico’s southern state of Chiapas a communiqué entitled, “The Fourth World
War has begun.” Coronil (2000) summarizes the document. Marcos renames the Cold
War the “Third World War,” as it was a conflict played out and fought over the Third
World. “World War IV,” according to Marcos, has been brought about through the
intensification of neoliberal globalization is characterized by multiple conditions:

- the polarization of global wealth, which increases the power of capital over
  labor worldwide;
- expansion of migratory flows;
- rise in crime brought about through illegal traffic in drugs and arms;
- through the elimination of the welfare functions of the state, it is transformed
  into an illegitimate power which legitimizes violence. “the ‘striptease’ of the
  state and the elimination of its welfare functions have reduced the state in
  many countries to an agent of social repression;”
- Global politics is a conflict between giants and dwarves, “Between the
  megapolitics of financial empires and the national policies of weak states”
  (Coronil 2000: 360).

A nation-state must battle at least two fronts in the defense of national patrimony. In the
case of Mexico that I have discussed here, these fronts are multiplied. The state faces an
internal crisis of conflicts between the central government and the “Mexicanness” the
republic officially embodies and subnational indigenous groups, though they vary in
composition, background, language, and region of origin, are all known as Maya. Can the
state sustain these fronts as it is indeed performing a “striptease” as Marcos charges?
And while it is maintaining its vigilance of its inalienable possessions at home, what are the prospects for its sovereign assertions and reassertions on a global scale? May the case of cultural patrimony actually be instructive in the identification of a new kind of state sovereignty under conditions of neoliberalism?

Against this backdrop, I assert that “heritage” as both concept and material manifestation is a productive point through which to enter and analyze the question of the status of the modern nation-state at the nexus of sovereignty and territory. Through a demonstration of the relationship between the Mexican state and its patrimonial resources, I have attempted here to set the stage for arguing in the following chapters that “heritage,” specifically understood as a location, represents a residual assertion of territorial sovereignty on the part of the nation-state. Ethnographically and historically, I thus consider how local practices of claiming patrimony within and against one the one hand, Mexican national assertions of sovereignty and territorial control, and, on the other hand, neoliberal programs which may or may not allow for sovereign regimes to maintain their boundaries.
Chapter Two
Cultural Patrimony as State Territory in Modern México

There exists a comparable discontinuity between the Spanish conquistador who sought only to extract the material riches from the Indian monuments and then destroy them, and the contemporary protector of cultural heritage who defends to the bitter end the continuity and authenticity of the archaeological monument against any agent which could damage or alter it” (Robles García 2000)

Heritage is a specifically modern phenomenon that arose with the concentration of both power and identity centered on and through the configuration of the nation-state. In Mexico, cultural patrimony is inherently and intimately tied to the state, as established through law and as it circulates as a national symbol of identity and belonging. National patrimony has always been both a result and the condition of possibility of national sovereignty. This chapter demonstrates that conservation and protection of cultural patrimony, or heritage, in Mexico has a long legislative history, which corresponds to the different ideological and political positions taken by the Mexican state over time. We will also see the strong relationship between legislation of cultural property, and that of land propriety, and questions of access and ownership.

The goal of this chapter is to read the history of the development of legal frameworks and institutions regarding cultural patrimony as a hybrid form of governance enacted through the strategic spatial, territorial elaboration of a patrimonial geography of the nation. Archaeology is a specific set of practices carried out in close relationship to the set that are, in effect, territorializing. Thus, it is both a spatial and spatializing practice. We will see this more clearly in the following chapters through discussions of the archaeological sites of Chichén Itzá and Chunchucmil. This chapter, then, takes an historical perspective running from post-Independence nineteenth century state formation
projects, through the Porfiriato (1876-1910), the Mexican Revolution, through the post-revolutionary Cárdenas period, notable for both agrarian reform and establishment of the National Institute of Anthropology and History.

Part 1. Controlling Territory/Managing Heritage

The Mexican state has, since its inception, envisioned heritage as a question of governance. Until recently, the problematic of heritage, as dealt with primarily through top-down legislation, has been one based in territory: identifying and locating of archaeological and historical monuments, tracing the flow of artifacts, museumification, marking boundaries of archaeological and historic monument zones as distinct spaces, and so on. This is characteristic of the state’s practice of gaining “knowledge of things in space” in which space is an “aggregate of objects” (Lefebvre 1991: 104). Maps, zone delimitations, and atlases and even guidebooks have sought to determine, establish the importance of, and thus manage the material embodiments of heritage. However, as the state began to transform itself, (particularly vis-à-vis its “possessions”) through neoliberal reforms only in the last two decades, the management and legislation of heritage as territory is undergoing transformation as well. This is especially evident through the different national, state, and local instantiations of the practices and discourse of privatization of cultural patrimony. Throughout this transformation, thus far, heritage remains a question of governance, yet the array of social actors and agendas vying for control of heritage, envisioned not only as archaeological or historical material artifacts, but as resources, as explained in Chapter 1, brings to the fore that which has previously been located only in the interstices of the heritage assemblage. This is the problematic of
the relationship between the concept of heritage, its material embodiments, as
exemplified by archaeological monuments, and on-the-ground dynamics between
heritage sites, legislative and institutional orchestration of the management of these sites,
and local communities.

Cultural patrimony legislation through the Porfiriato (and it can be argued, up
through the present, in a certain way) is an issue of sovereignty, most generally, the
exercise of power over a territory. Before the emerging independent nation could fully
develop, it had to assess itself, to come to know itself, through its possessions. Thus,
concern with territory was prominent— not just questions of extent, but quality and
contents. It is with this framework that the Mexican state has built national anthropology,
fitting together ideology, institution, and policy. Luis Vázquez León (1994) traces the
history of archaeology in Mexico along as one of the dominance of governmental
archaeology over university or academic archaeology. Where as in the United states the
discipline has three registers (governmental, university, and museographic) of which the
university model is most prevalent today, the distribution under these branches has
diminished since 1910 in Mexico, leading to a current situation of an almost complete
dominance of governmental archaeology. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw
the emergence of investigators interested in the indigenous past, who took up tasks such
as the conservation of documents and relics, but sustained, and what we might call
“professional” investigation did not begin until the late nineteenth century with the
various works of several individuals. Jesus Galindo y Villa developed course programs
and catalogued collections, including that of the National Museum in 1895 (Schávelzon
1990: 48).
Governmental archaeology dates back to 1776, according to Vázquez León, when under Spanish colonial rule, King Carlos III established the Royal Cabinet of Natural History whose task was set forth to collect and excavate antiquities in the territories of the Spanish empire. The first excavations carried out were in the Maya area, and characterized as “royal enterprises carried out by military men and bureaucrats, genuine examples of a patrimonialism.” This is what the Mexican state inherited in its first post-Independence bureaucratic arm related to cultural heritage— the state’s Antiquities Council (Junta de Antigüedades) in 1822.

The transformations from Spanish colonialism to Independence had profound effects as well as received enormous support from the material cultural heritage within the territory. With the coming of Mexican independence from Spain, the prehispanic cultural heritage which had been considered to be royal patrimony passed into the hands of the newly independent nation, under whose dominion it was to reside (Sánchez Caero 1995: 188). Thus the prehispanic cultural patrimony became of the patria, the nation or homeland. During the eighteenth century, cultural heritage was seen as part of a larger “conciencia de mexicanidad en el criollo.” Since the Independence period, a discursive identification of the historical relationship between the national state, particular governments in power, and the cultural patrimony of the country, particularly archaeology. In the first half of the nineteenth century, conservation and protection of national monuments was primarily a concern of the conservative wing of government, and developed under the influence of Romanticism in its vision toward culture and the past (Litvak and López Varela 1997: 186).
Post-Independence, Mexico's interest in the understanding, protection and conservation of its archaeological and historical heritage has a long history, dating back to 1827. In that year, under the presidency of General Guadalupe Victoria, the first law related to "antiquities", term used at that time to designate archaeological heritage, was issued. Since 1827, in the Arancel de Aduanas, the Mexican government has prohibited the exportation of archaeological findings. The Ley de Terrenos Baldíos prohibited the transfer of properties upon which were found archaeological monuments. The Constitution of 1857 marked a break with the Spanish legal framework, and took inspiration from French law with its vision of bourgeois liberal society (Olivé 1980: 35).

The most important concept here regards the attitude toward property. The spirit of this legislative framework placed the rights of the individual over that of the collective, thus property ownership is seen as a natural right. This marks a change from Spanish colonial law, under which rights to property had emanated not from natural right, but from the Crown.1

Based on a compendium of historical documents, here is a summary of an analysis of legislation of nineteenth century:

1. In the first half of the century, the politics of the conservation of monuments was in the hands of the conservatives, who put forth principally educational plane, following in the encyclopedic and scientific tradition, with the goal of creating national institutions of high culture, absorbing the functions previously held by the Crown
2. The liberals utilized the national institutions; but to the contrary, they viewed this as part of a popular politics
3. Maximiliano, as a European liberal, followed in the European democratic tradition based in municipal administration, and thus placed the protection of monuments under local authorities

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1 This comes from a Palpal Bull dated May 4, 1593, by Pope Alexander VI which granted/acknowledged the American possessions.
4. In the Juarez period, with the laws of expropriation and nationalization, that the state will assume not only the responsibilities it already held, but would add to these archaeological investigation, oriented scientifically for the recovery of monuments of the prehispanic Mexican past.

5. During the period of Porfirio Diaz, the Juarist proposals were consolidated into the 1897 law for the conservation of archaeological monuments; this effects state control over conservation activities and declares prehispanic antiquities as properties of the nation.

6. Laws concerning the conservation of colonial monuments in the Porfiriat were not amended; this was to be reserved for post-revolutionary legislation (Lombardo de Ruiz 1988: 24).

Amidst the internal struggles, the foreign interventions, and the political and economic chaos that the nation faced, a rising nationalism created both an atmosphere and necessity for the establishment of legislation regarding the nation’s cultural patrimony. It is during a period of foreign intervention that the Emperor Maximiliano, in 1864, dictated a law designed to stop the looting of archaeological sites characterized as symbols of the history of the nation. The house of Miguel Hidalgo in México City, the first national monument was recognized by the government in this year (Sánchez López 2000: 4). Another law, of 1882, legislated the expropriation, for public use, lands upon which existed one or more archaeological monuments.

According to Lombardo de Ruiz (1988), there are three features that characterize the available historical materials regarding the process of the formation of a national consciousness for the conservation of cultural heritage in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These may be summarized as follows:

1. Monuments are cultural elements which embody nationalism
2. Monuments are primary source materials for the study of history; they are of educational value, therefore it is necessary to classify and study monuments scientifically, for the enhancement, enrichment, and reproduction of Mexican culture
3. There exists a contradiction between the national cultural project in the first case promotion of conservation and the demands of the market, both for the external antiquities market, as well as for capitalist investment market within the state;
through exportation and in the second, the destruction of monuments to pave the way for other types of land use. (1984: 24).

In 1868, then-president of the republic Benito Juárez codified the cultural heritage of the nation in the *Ley General de Bienes Nacionales*. The patrimony under the auspices of this legislation included castles and forts, historic cities, weapons storehouses, and other buildings which, through sale, donation, or any other manner, were national property (Olivé Negrete 1995: 21).

By the last third of the nineteenth century, new interest in archaeology had arisen, mainly through the exploration and "adventures" of mostly foreign travelers. Legislation followed this interest through further regulation of cultural patrimony properties. The law of May 11, 1897 formally declared archaeological monuments in Mexican territory to be property of the nation. Additionally, this legislation made destruction or damage to the properties a crime. Through the *Carta Arqueológica de la República*, written by Leopoldo Batres in 1910, it was established that the federal government, over and above the states, was responsible for the care and vigilance of these properties. In 1902, Porfirio Díaz initiated a new organization and classification of federal cultural properties (*bienes inmuebles*), replacing the Juárez law. Most significantly, this Porfiriato legislation included archaeological ruins and historic monuments. This law divided federal cultural properties into two classes: 1) properties of public domain, and 2) properties of the federal government. Public domain property, which includes archaeological and historic structures, was non-mortgageable, non-transferable, and it could not be used for the exclusive benefit of private persons. This category of cultural properties was placed under the administrative auspices of the Department of Justice and Public Education (Olivé Negrete 1995: 23).
On June 3, 1896, legislation regulating authorizations and permissions to carry out archaeological explorations, with the caveat that objects found, even in private property are the domain of the national government (Olivé Negrete 1980: 35; Sánchez Caero 1995: 189). Though “modern” cultural heritage legislation has several distinct features, perhaps the most interesting being the distinction between a cultural property and land upon which it sits or the land in which it is embedded. In the next chapter, we will have a closer look at the case of private ownership within the archaeological zone of Chichén Itzá, in which the land is owned by a private party (propiedad particular), but the monuments are national, administered by the state. As Olivé Negrete (1995) discusses, there were theoretical and juridical questions raised by this division of cultural property. Public property is an effect of sovereignty as a power of domain, dominion and that also makes clear, in terms of the social, that which corresponds to the state. In response to these concerns, the January 8, 1982 Ley General de Bienes thus altered this scheme into the following two categories: 1) Public domain properties of the federation, and 2) Private domain properties of the federation.

The Constitution of 1917 is the first post-revolution Constitution. It remains in effect (with amendments) until today. The Constitution lays the basis for the current Ley de Monumentos. The most salient Article relating to cultural patrimony is Article 27, which also is the most important agrarian law. Article 27 considered property ownership as social, subject to public interest, and provides for the nationalization of subsoil resources. How effective is this legislation regarding cultural properties? According to Olivé Negrete, the legislation is weak, only marginally protecting monuments. This, he argues, drives from the liberal ideology of the state, in which the state is prohibiting from
intervening in the life of the individual, except for those circumstances in which the state should provide that which is necessary and indispensable (22).

*Institutionalization of Archaeology as a Nationalist Contribution*

The articulation of archaeology to nationalist projects and sentiment (Atkinson et al 1996; Anderson 1983; Gathercole and Lowenthal 1990; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Kohl and Fawcett 1996; Oyuela-Caycedo 1994; Silberman 1989) is becoming increasingly well-documented. The proliferation of studies of particular nations and their institutional "archaeological heritage" so to speak are connected to the emergence of historians of archaeology and those interested in documenting its social, political, and economic contexts (Hodder 1991; Leone 1981; 1987; Trigger 1980; 1984; 1985; 1995; Trigger and Glover 1981). While the majority of the work covers Europe and the Middle East, authors such as Kohl and Fawcett claim that "the issues associated with the relationship between archaeology and nationalist politics, whether considered historically or in terms of contemporary developments, are ubiquitous" (1996: 3). These relationships may be overt, subtle, "in service to the state" or less politicized, and change according to sociopolitical and historical conditions.

Nationalist archaeologies emerged throughout the world across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Of course, just as nation-formation itself was a different process for European imperialist states than for emergent postcolonial nations, so too was the role of archaeology—more broadly, the "past"—in the ideologies, sentiments, and imaginations of these new nations. Rife with political rhetoric and propaganda, archaeology was tied up in questions of civilization and development, international prestige of a nation's pre-
historic civilizations, as well as the construction of ancient civilizations as the ancestral forebears of a modern national or ethnic groups. This is a particularly salient feature of the Mexican case. Diverse peoples within a coalesced national territory are united through a national myth based in the ancient past—typically through archaeology. In the Mexican nationalist myth, as embodiment in the diagrams, dioramas, and displays of the National Anthropology Museum in Mexico City, the modern Mexican state has its origins specifically in the region's "Aztec" (not Maya) past.

The relationship between archaeology and the nation is embedded in questions of territory and sovereignty, as well as legitimacy of the state. Recent political movements under the awakening of new nationalism have presented a recapitulation of the nineteenth-century politics of using the ancient past to justify contemporary territorial claims, in which the case of Israel is particularly illustrative (Abu El-Haj 2001). The coupling of archaeological interpretation and nationalist political projects might also have a very pragmatic effect in terms of public interest in and support for investigation. Diaz Andreu (1995) uses the case of archaeology in Spain to demonstrate that the depoliticization of archaeology and its interpretations, marked by its uncoupling from the state, may lead to lack of public interest, thus support, for research.

In the case of Mexico, archaeology has figured as both a "national" and "nationalist" enterprise. Kohl (1998) is careful to distinguish between national and nationalist archaeology:

The former refers to the archaeological record compiled within given states. The latter refers more inclusively not only to that record but also to policies adopted by the state that make use of archaeologists and their data for nation-building purposes, and such policies may extend beyond the borders of the state. Nationalist archaeology is frequently involved in the creation and elaboration of
national identities, processes that occur not only within states but also as states expand and interact with other states (226).

Between 1885 and 1942, archaeology in Mexico developed out of a loosely defined “proto-state” endeavor characterized by the explorations of mostly foreign amateurs into a state institutional model, characterized by museums, professional training institutions, and a centralized government agency to manage all heritage properties in the nation’s heritage properties. This evolution is not unusual from other Latin American nations (Oyuela-Caycedo 1994). A few important factors led to the initiation of this period of transformation in Mexico. The first is concerned with museums, which were initially closely tied to educational institutes. In 1825, the first Mexican National Museum was established, followed in 1835 by the creation of the National Academy of History. Sánchez López identifies the objective of these institutions as “to illustrate the history of the nation, correcting the errors that had been made” (2000: 4).

Leopoldo Batres, during the dictatorial governance of Mexican president Porfirio Díaz, served as the Inspector of Archaeological Monuments. Batres was an amateur archaeological enthusiast personal friend to Díaz, “The growth of the monumental, museographic, and even academic archaeology of the era owed to Díaz’ favors” (Vázquez León 1994: 71). The era of the Porfiriato promoted a strong nationalism that supported archaeological exploration in the ruins, now conceived of for the first time as archaeological zones, “monumental urban sites unveiled as open-air museums for government ideological reasons, specifically public history instruction in the supposedly pre-Hispanic origins of the Mexican people” (ibid.). The archaeological work carried out under Batres consisted of large-scale reconstructions in central Mexico, including Mitla, Xochicalco, Monte Albán, and Teotihuacan. Though Batres did not work at the Maya
sites in Yucatán, it was under his Inspectorship that a regional office was established in the peninsula. Vázquez León cites the example of the “pharonic labors” employed in the reconstruction at Teotihuacan, arguing that “the imprint of this style of archaeology is visible in INAH’s current archaeological projects up to the present.” Citing Anderson (1983: 178-185), he continues, “It is evident that this style resembles the national archaeological traditions of southern European countries and above all nation-states with colonial origins” (1994: 72).

The founding of the International School of American Archaeology and Ethnology (ISAAE) in 1910 marked the first institution with an organized academic program in archaeological research, but it only lasted for a single decade. Despite its lack of longevity as an institution, the ISAAE was seminal in establishing core anthropological concepts in the Mexican arena, which were brought their through the presence of Franz Boas. Manuel Gamio, often referred to as the father of Mexican anthropology, entered the field of archaeology as a student of Boas at the International school. He came to develop the idea that scientific archaeology had a “practical end” beyond the increase of knowledge. As he became more geared toward official monumental archaeology, he believed that nationalist and political ends were equally infused in the goals of archaeological endeavors (Vázquez León 1994: 80). Thus, anthropology could be applied toward good governing. Although by 1925, Gamio had practically abandoned archaeology, many of his ideas persisted, and are reflected in the functions of goals assigned to the INAH.

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2 The International school was a project of Columbia University, backed by the Mexican government.
Even from this brief summary, it is clear that individual personalities—most of whom, with Gamio at the vanguard—are intellectuals, played a key role in the institutionalization of archaeology in Mexico. In a discussion of the role of Mexican intellectuals in the project of nationalism, Claudio Lomnitz argues "...the economic and political circumstances surrounding Mexican independence produced a long delay in the effective implementation of a governmental state. During this protracted period, a style of intellectual representation that gained its authority from political revolt complemented the sort of scientific representations of the Mexican people that are associated with governmentality" (Lomnitz 2001: 198). But it was not intellectuals alone who offered content to the framework of Mexican nationalism. Both practices and products, including the famous trio, "census, map, and museum" (Anderson 1983) "profoundly shaped the way in which the...state imagined its dominion—the nature of the human beings it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry" (164). While Anderson is specifically referring to the operations of the colonial state, I find a strong parallel with the ways in which "census, map, and museum" (both literally and figuratively) were employed and deployed by the Mexican state struggling to define itself in the chaotic years from Independence to Revolution.³ Archaeological atlas projects, identification and delimitation of "zones" of monuments, massive reconstruction projects—all accompanied by impenetrable ideologies which valorized Mexico's pre-Hispanic past while reducing contemporary populations to excavation and restoration laborers—now have nearly a century of practice.

³ After the end of the seven-decade rule of the PRI, Mexico has arguably entered a new phase in its crisis of identification.
While institutionally, things did work as Lomnitz argues, in local sites of archaeological practice around the country, and particularly in those far flung from Mexico City, such as the sites of Yucatán, the concept of governmentality does not really describe the power/knowledge regimes which articulated the triangulation of indigenous people, to ruins, to the nation. While archaeology and nationalism have an obvious, though variable, articulation, the mere positing of the fact that they are related is not sufficient to understand the historical complexity of the ways that the changing State has, over time, both intervened in as well as invented cultural heritage. Olivé Negrete (1980) argues that the legislation of archaeological materials has historically been “weak, timid, and only marginally protective of monuments” as influenced by the liberal ideology of the state: the state as prohibited from intervening in the life of the individual except in matters of the public good, when the state is expected to provide that which is necessary and indispensable (22). However, I argue that there are certain characteristics of the historical development and current status of cultural patrimony legislation are certainly neither weak nor timid, nor particularly liberal. It depends on perspective: from an institution in México City, or from an inside a archaeological zone or Maya community in Yucatán. As we will see in this chapter, the legal roots as well as “spirit” of cultural patrimony legislation predates the liberal state which institutionalized a particular understanding of cultural heritage and how it should be administered, protected, and promoted.

Part 2. *The National Institute of Anthropology and History*
The National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) was created during the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas as a subsection of the Secretaría de Educación Publica (SEP). The institution fused the museographic and governmental archaeological traditions, putting them under the auspices one agency which effectively left no space for the development of an academic archaeological tradition outside. "The purpose of creating a single institution which concentrates control over exploration, conservation, and dissemination related to the archaeological heritage of Mexico reflects the context of nationalization of significant natural and cultural resources which was the central political doctrine at the end of the 1930s" (Robles Garcia 2000). The INAH has under their purview archaeological zones, historic monuments and area, museums. As a centralized federal agency, the INAH has a complex and wide-reaching infrastructure. The INAH, through a network of state bureaus, administers all archaeological, historical, and artistic national heritage in the thousands of monument zones, and in various museums, including the national museum in México City, the INAH’s premier showcase of Mexican heritage.

Institutional Organization

In the Mexican federal system, the state concept of culture includes two major areas. The first area is science and technology, administered under the Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONACyT). The second area corresponds to artistic activities, per se, those belles artes, or fine arts, administered by the Consejo Nacional de Cultura (CNCA). CNCA was created by presidential decree by Carlos Salinas de Gortari on December 7, 1988, as an administrative body whose presence in the organizational structure de-centers the SEP’s umbrella over cultural patrimony in Mexico, at least in
theory. In fiscal year 2000, CONACULTA managed a budget of 978 million pesos 
(*Letras Libres*, September) for ‘coordinating and supervising programs of autonomous 
institutions, such as the INAH, founded by President Lázaro Cárdenas (Galaz 2000a).

The INAH operates through a technical secretariat responsible for the supervision 
and distribution of tasks among the seven national branches as well as thirty-one *centros 
regionales* (regional centers) across the country. The Institute is responsible for more 
than 110 thousand historical monuments (defined as built between the 16th and 19th 
centuries) and for twenty-nine thousand archaeological zones (sites of pre-Hispanic 
civilization). It estimated that there are approximately two hundred thousand sites with 
arkeological remains in Mexico. Of these 29,000 archaeological zones, one hundred 
fifty are open to the public. In addition to historic and archaeological monuments, the 
INAH supervises more than one hundred museums within the national territory, divided 
into different categories according to the extension and quality of its collections, 
geographical situation, and number of visitors. The INAH coordinates and participates in 
activities of the excavation and public opening of archaeological sites or the rescue and 
recovery of historical monuments. The agency also registers historical monuments and 
arkeological pieces in the care of individuals.

The CNCA brought the INAH together with the INBA, the *Instituto de Belles 
Artes*, by President Salinas de Gortari as a gesture to demonstrate his administration’s 
 purported interest in “culture.” CNCA is a decentralized (or deconcentrated) office of the 
Secretariat of Education (SEP) charged with promoting and disseminating culture and the 
arts (*Diario Oficial de la federación*, December 7, 1988). The INAH is situated below 
the “trusteeship” of CNCA as its cultural branch, which has several implications for the
autonomy of the INAH. Budgetwise, the INAH remains dependent upon the SEP. Additionally, the INAH’s general director is named by the head of the Secretariat of Education although organizationally, this skips the level of the CNCA.

**Governing Legislation**

Today, all sites of archaeological patrimony are under the governance of two pieces of legislation: the *Ley Federal sobre Monumentos y Zonas Arqueológicas, Artísticos e Históricos* of 1972, last modified in 1993, and *Ley Orgánica del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia*.\(^4\) The founding legislation is the *Ley Orgánica* which was approved December 31, 1938 went into effect February 3, 1939 (*Diario Oficial de la Federación*). It was revised in 1985, abrogating articles 10 through 20. The 1938 law reflected a long national experience in legislating the protection of archaeological and historical monuments, and marked the “federal government’s absolute control of the management and fate of cultural resources” (Garcia Robles 2002). Distinctive from a nationalization brought about through a threat of foreign intervention in Mexico’s national territory, the cultural patrimony legislation was created with a more internal focus, toward the hierarchy of the federal system. “In practice, this avoided the possibility that state, municipal, or local governments could issue permits to explore or loot archaeological sites, or that they could otherwise have decision power over the use of historical or archaeological monuments” (Garcia Robles 2002).

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\(^4\) A 1986 revision acknowledges "...protected fossil vestiges or remains of living creatures which lived within the national territory in the past, and whose study, conservation, restoration, recovery or use obeys a paleontologic interest...." (*Diario Oficial, 13 January 1986*). This decree covers an omission from the 1972 law—the original law did not mention such finds— and includes the definition of new fields of archaeological research.
The *Ley Federal* of 1972 establishes in Articles 27 and 28 that all archaeological, historic, and artistic monuments are property of the nation. As such, they are inalienable and imprescriptable. Counting as archaeological monuments are “moveable and immovable properties produced by cultures preceding the Hispanic within national territory, including human, plant, and animal remains related to these cultures” (INAH 1995).

Its relation to the *Ley Federal* of 1972 is that this law establishes the modalities through which artistic, historic, and archaeological zones and monuments are protected. The *Ley Federal* has both greater scope as well as greater specificity than the *Ley Orgánica*. The *Ley Orgánica* speaks to institutional organization and duties of the INAH, governance and the institution’s mandate and derivation of power. This law dictates how the institution should work. The *Ley Federal* is concerned, on the other hand, with *bienes*, or cultural properties. It dictates what kinds of properties are under its protection or stewardship.

The *Ley Orgánica* establishes the Institute and defines the agency’s “patrimony,” or that which pertains to the INAH. The Institute’s patrimony includes the artistic, archaeological, and historic monuments already supervised by the Department of Monuments, under the administration of the Ministry of Education (SEP), as well as any monuments discovered through exploration which would conform to cultural patrimony legislation. Article 5 confirms that objects found within monuments or museum collections may not be sold, loaned, or alienated from the custodianship of the INAH. Article 4 reassures that the custodianship granted to the Institute does not detract from the national character held by the cultural heritage. Article 3, Item VII provides that that
INAH will maintain in its control the income obtained through admission fees paid by visitors to monuments and museums, as well as income generated through the sale of publications, reproductions, posters, etc.

The *Ley Orgánica*, which founded the INAH as a federal institution was modified in 1985 in order to reflect both a complex organizational structure of the Institute, as well as a more nuanced understanding of cultural patrimony. The legislation maintains the character of governmentality that distinguishes Mexican anthropology and archaeology, particularly in terms of scientific research carried out under it auspices. A fundamental task charged to the INAH is scientific research, and the 1985 revision of the *Ley Orgánica* pays special heed to the breadth and scope of scholarly research through the Institute. Currently, more than four hundred academicians contribute to it in the areas of history, social anthropology, physical anthropology, archaeology, linguistics, ethnohistory, architecture, heritage preservation, preservation, and restoration.

Item VII of Article 2 states that scientific investigations be oriented toward “la solución de los problemas de la población del país y a la conservación y uso social de patrimonio cultural.” Case in point is a 1989 study of ambulant vendors at Chichén Itzá carried out by two social anthropologists in the INAH Centro Regional Yucatán. A site management issue, namely, the “invasion” of the federal property of the official zone by community resident vending artisanry, was turned into an object of social research (see Peraza Lopez and Rejón Patrón 1989). Like most INAH social anthropology studies, the research was oriented toward defining a social or cultural “problem” and offering solutions, which, from the US perspective, would be considered within an applied anthropology model. Additionally, the study follows another model typical of INAH
social anthropology studies, within a framework that sustains a tension between tradition and modernity.

Nowhere does the Ley Orgánica deal with the question of property, per se. Cultural patrimony in the 1939 version of the law is material, understood in its embodied or objectified form. In addition to monumental heritage, the INAH has followed UNESCO in the extension of its mandate the jurisdiction of what might be called non-monumental and “intangible heritage”: languages, traditions, music, dance, artisanry, etc., as we will see shortly.

*Public Good: Civil Society Support and Private Sector Benefits*

In the 1970s, the INAH re-envisioned itself as a national institution in service to the public, who worked for the interests and benefit of the people. This populist strain was most evident in the ways in which museums were fashioned at the time, geared toward the dissemination of information to the general public through exhibitions (Vázquez Olvera 1998: 188). “The monuments grouped as archaeological zones should carry out a primarily didactic function, for both Mexicans and foreigners. And their proper use as a touristic resource should always be subordinated to preliminary and adequate investigation” (Colegio Mexicano de Antropólogos 2000: 5). In a document solicited by the Fox transition team in the fall of 2000, just before the president-elect was to take office, the Colegio Mexicano de Antropólogos contributed their opinions on the institutional restructuring of the cultural sector in Mexico. Concentrating most directly on the INAH, the document raises several points contributing toward a general consensus that the institution requires renovation in order to reconstitute its scientific character and
reinforce its legal framework. The first concerns the 1972 Ley Federal (see above). The Colegio argues that the Law is neither obsolete, nor ineffective. Instead, it has not been followed, or, in some cases, has been misapplied by authorities.

The current "official" vision of the INAH includes, and indeed, relies upon the participation of "civil society." Carlos Vázquez Olvera (1995) points out that in recent years, there is a growing awareness of the relationship between social phenomena and cultural patrimony. Social scientists have realized the importance of the participation of civil society in the cultural field. This marks a change in thinking and practice, as previously in Mexico, it was the exclusive realm of the state to determine what is cultural patrimony and how it will be used (185). However, we might also read this use of "civil society" as a term operating as a euphemistic cover for encouraging the participation of the private sector in the heritage field.

In addition to the support of civil society, broadly construed, is the necessity of strengthening the cultural sector within the purview of the federal government through the involvement and participation of different levels of the government itself. Many expect the revision of the legal/juridical framework to lead, eventually, to the creation of a new one. In terms of a new juridical framework, INAH Director Arroyo envisions one which guarantees the federal weight of the institution, that fortifies and strengthens, rather than diminishes the functions and qualities of the institution, that establishes a direct line of attention toward the individual states, and que resuelva aspectos como el derecho de audiencia, which are not specifically addressed in the current legislation; that considers cultural diffusion, for example, as an issue of the public good; and that incorporates concepts such as intangible patrimony and cultural landscapes.
Additionally, a revision of cultural patrimony legislation would take into account issues addressed by international declarations and conventions that Mexican national legislation does not sufficiently address. One example would be restrictions of the construction of modern buildings very close to ancient or historic monuments.  

Part 3. *Mexico’s Cultural Heritage as World Heritage*

The protection of a heritage site is not solely incumbent on the State in whose territory is a work to preserve, but, instead, is a duty commonly shared by humanity as a whole, that indivisible depository of all of the great creations that constitute landmarks in the universal adventure (1988: 4, in Mele 1998: 14).

-Federico Mayor, UNESCO Director General

Since the creation of the UNSECO in 1945, the importance of Mexico’s archaeological patrimony extends far beyond its national territorial borders. The nation has joined many others in both the drafting of national legislation as well as participation in the international scene.  

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5 Perhaps the most contentious case in México regarding the construction of modern buildings in close proximity to ancient ruins is that of Cuicuilco, a site located in México City. Plans to develop a commercial and residential center stirred public outrage in the mid-1990s. While government agencies modified land-use designations to legalize construction permits in the name of “public good”, development plan opponents charged that the corruption of public officials allowed business interests to overshadow those in the protection of national cultural resources. The case is particularly interesting in that it demonstrated the INAH’s position to be quite weak within the Mexican political infrastructure. Merely seen as a “pebble in the shoe” of developers and other political interests, the INAH “has been reduced to the care of a handful of archaeological zones—preferred tourists areas which have inordinately high budget allocations for research and conservation...INAH demonstrates a lack of professional and legal competence to apply any specific measures for effective protection of cultural resources.” See Mar a Salazar Peralta 1998.

6 México has participated in important international meetings such as the United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism (Rome, 1963), Meeting on the Use and Preservation of Monuments and Places of Artistic and Historic Interest (Quito, 1967);
**Historic Antecedents**

In Mexico, the notion of the monumental zone emerged for the first time in 1930, in the *Ley sobre la protección y la conservación de los monumentos y de los sitios naturales*; this formed the core of the 1934 law (Melé 1998: 14). The Mexican legislation of the 1930s was contemporaneous with other international attempts to define technical norms for the restoration and conservation of historical monuments. The development of this legal framework is similar to that of other nations, particularly France (Melé 1998: 13). Two influential international documents are the *Athens Charter* and the *Venice Charter*. The Conference of Athens, 1931 was the first international conference that had as its theme restoration of monuments, which brought together specialists from around the world, who stated their findings and opinions in the *Athens Charter*. The *Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments* is concerned with 1) outlining the principles of monument restoration; 2) the status of national legislation regarding preservation and restoration of monuments of artistic, historic or scientific interest; 3) the techniques and aesthetics of ancient monument excavation and restoration; and 4) the role of international collaboration. Members of the Conference on Athens noted the tendency in national legislations toward the prioritization of the public interest over that of the private owner, noted as "the difficulty of reconciling public law with the rights of individuals." Mexico was not unique in conceiving of cultural heritage properties as the unalienable property of the nation, and the Conference of Athens, faced with this general trend in national legislation, had to consider the delicate issue of the right of the community in regard to private ownership. The charter states:

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Consequently, while approving the general tendency of these measures, the Conference is of opinion that they should be in keeping with local circumstances and with the trend of public opinion, so that the least possible opposition may be encountered, due allowance being made for the sacrifices which the owners of property may be called upon to make in the general interest.

A second important international convention is the *Venice Charter*, established in 1964. The charter reflects a definite modernization in the ideas and perspectives presented regarding cultural heritage, preservation, and restoration. The document includes salient points such as the broadened definition of monument that appears in Article 1: “The concept of an historic monument embraces not only the single architectural work but also the urban or rural setting in which is found the evidence of a particular civilization, a significant development or an historic event. […]” Also important to note is the relationship between monuments and the activities of contemporary society, as documented in Article 5: “The conservation of monuments is always facilitated by making use of them for some socially useful purpose. […]” There were only three non-European countries signatory to this document: México, Peru, and Tunisia. Both the Athens Charter and the Venice Charter contributed significantly to the development of an international concern for cultural heritage, which has achieved concrete form in both international organizations and legislation, particularly through the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the UNESCO.

The term *patrimonio cultural*, or cultural heritage, came into usage as an organized concept at the 1962 conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris (Lombardo 1993). Pérez Ruiz (1995) identifies several concurrent issues or problems in the field of cultural heritage circulating at this time: the regulation of international traffic in art and archaeological goods, the
systemization of norms and recommendations for the protection and conservation of artistic works and monuments. Rising in importance at the time of the establishment of the UNESCO was the question of how are agendas of modernization and development compatible with those of protection and conservation. Further, what would be the role of the state in these projects and legislation? (55).

In 1984 Mexico signed UNESCO World Heritage Convention (Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Natural and Cultural Heritage). The Convention, drafted in 1972, promotes the international cooperation and assistance between the UNESCO and state parties in “establishing an effective system of collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage outstanding universal value, organized on a permanent basis and in accordance with modern scientific methods” (UNESCO 1972), In the spirit of the United Nations organization, UNESCO World Heritage works to complement the legislation and institutions of state parties regarding heritage matters, while recognizing, respecting, and maintaining state sovereignty. For example, Article 6 of the Convention reads:

Whilst fully respecting the sovereignty of the States in whose territory the cultural and natural heritage is situated, and without prejudice to property right provided by national legislation, the States Parties to the Convention recognize that such heritage constitutes a world heritage for whose protection it is the duty of the international community as a whole to cooperate (UNESCO 1972).

Further, Article 11 guarantees that the inclusion of a property on the World Heritage List indeed requires the consent of the state, and additionally, provides that “the inclusion of a property situated in a territory, sovereignty, or jurisdiction over which is claimed by more than one State shall in no way prejudice the rights of the parties to the dispute.” While
the international organization is positioned as a collaborator in the conservation and preservation of heritage properties, it is the responsibility of each state to

...ensure the identification, protection, conservation, presentation, and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage...situated on its territory...It will do all it can to this end, to the utmost of its own resources and, where appropriate, with any international assistance and cooperation, in particular, financial, artistic, scientific, and technical, which it may be able to obtain (UNESCO 1972: Article 4).

In the past several decades, Mexico has played an active role in the UNESCO through participation in the World Heritage program.\footnote{This circumstance raises the following question/speculation for further research: does Mexico participate so actively on the international level in order to more carefully patrol the boundaries of their national cultural heritage?} Mexico sits in sixth place in the world and first in North America, with twenty-two World Heritage sites declared by the UNESCO.

The inscription on the World Heritage list constitutes a recognition of state policies and legislation of protection, as well as an international validation of their protection efforts. Nevertheless, it constitutes at the same time a commitment/compromise on the part of each individual state, to assure the protection, conservation and the transmission of cultural and natural heritage to future generations (Melé 1998: 17).

Article 5 of the World Heritage Convention sets out the duties of member states:

a. to adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programs;

b. to set up within its territories, where such services do not exist, one or more services for the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage with an appropriate staff and possessing the means to discharge their functions;

c. to develop scientific and technical studies and research and to work out such operating methods as will make the State capable of counteracting the dangers that threaten its cultural or natural heritage;

d. to take the appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures necessary for the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of this heritage; and
e. to foster the establishment or development of national or regional centers for
training in the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural
heritage and to encourage scientific research in this field.

Since the 1972 Convention, México has ratified other UNESCO cultural conventions,
including the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954) and
the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of
Ownership of Cultural Property (1970). Of the nations of Latin America and the
Caribbean, only Brazil, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Peru have also ratified this set of World
Heritage documents. World heritage sites are internationally recognized by 114 UN
member nations and the UNESCO, headquartered in Paris. There are currently more than
five hundred sites of natural and cultural heritage listed by UNESCO. Among the sites
are world-famous sites such as the Grand Canyon, the Taj Majal, and the Great Wall of
China. The 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention ascribes the following three
categories considered as "cultural heritage":

Monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and
painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions,
cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding
universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

Groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which,
because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the
landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of
history, art or science;

Sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas
including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value
from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of
view (UNESCO 1972).

Heritage is subdivided into a series of special categories, reflecting the problem of
defining what exactly is heritage. The Convention for the Protection of Underwater
Cultural Heritage was adopted in 2001 at the thirty-first General Conference as UNESCO’s fourth heritage convention. Gives priority to the preservation of *in-situ* heritage which has been underwater more than one hundred years. Underwater heritage has been a key component for Latin American and Asian Pacific state parties in promoting their sites. Interest arose which predates the Convention, marking a concern for “the safeguarding of the beauty and character of landscapes and sites is taken to mean the preservation and, where possible, the restoration of the aspect of natural, rural and urban landscapes and sites, whether natural or man-made, which have a cultural or aesthetic interest or form typical natural surroundings (UNESCO 1962). Currently, there are three types of landscape sites:

1) clearly defined and intentionally created sites (for example, gardens like those of Aranjuez in Spain, Versailles in France and Central Park in New York);

2) organically evolved sites (like the rice terraces of Luzon in the northern Philippines or the stone-walled Yorkshire Dales in the UK);

3) associative sites (for example, sacred and commemorative places such as Uluru in Australia and Ghana’s sacred groves).

Although UNESCO World heritage refers to the articulation of heritage with tourism, in Mexico, the category of touristic heritage (*patrimonio turístico*) is employed in speaking about the specificity of sites and their uses. Touristic heritage refers to “beaches, oceans, natural resources of great beauty, including archaeological and historic monuments and anything else which can attract the interests and thus, money, of foreign tourists” (Quintal 1995: 121).

Cultural heritage not only and always refer to a distant (whether ancient or colonial, in the case of Mexico) monumentalized past. The category actually
incorporates sets and subsets of definitions and materials. Cultural heritage, is, according to standard schema used by both Mexico and UNESCO, categorized into two broad types: tangible and intangible. Under the category of tangible heritage, there are movable and immovable properties. Recently, the UNESCO has promoted a campaign to raise awareness of intangible cultural patrimony. Intangible cultural heritage, according to UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura, includes “oral traditions, customs, languages, music, dance, rituals, festivities, traditional medicine and pharmacopoeia, the culinary arts and all kinds of special skills connected with the material aspects of culture, such as tools and the habitat, are sources of community identity and cohesion which have so far been neglected” (Osava 2002: 1). In a concrete effort to identify, promote, and preserve these and other forms of intangible heritage, the UNESCO as of 2002 was working to draft a new international standard-setting instrument aimed at these specifically non-monumental entities, conceived of as “collective creations that are transmitted orally or by gesture, and are modified over a period of time through a process of collective re-creation” (Osava 2002: 1).

Are legal frameworks that protect monuments, for example, flexible enough to protect and conserve intangible heritage? The UNESCO has addressed this issue on an international level through several statements and programs aimed toward taking into account the specificities of intangible heritage. As alluded to in the discussion of property rights in Chapter One, concerns over intangible heritage are connected to the issue of intellectual property and its associated rights. The category of “intangible cultural heritage” is often, in non-legal parlance, synonymous with intellectual property.
According the UN report *Study on the Protection of the Cultural and Intellectual Property of Indigenous Peoples:*

... heritage includes all expressions of the relationship between the people, their land and the other living beings and spirits which share the land, and is the basis for maintaining social, economic and diplomatic relationships - through sharing - with other peoples. All of the aspects of heritage are interrelated and cannot be separated from the traditional Territory of the people concerned. What tangible and intangible items constitute the heritage of a particular indigenous people must be decided by the people themselves (Daes 1997).

In a specific national context, the terms set forth in this statement may not hold; tensions may arise between the concept of territorial integrity and sovereignty held by a nation-state and that of "traditional territory" alluded to by the author. An issue that merits further investigation and consideration is the following conundrum. While the UNESCO World Heritage program propels national or sub-national ethnic (usually indigenous) heritage "properties" into the international public domain, where they might receive more acknowledgment and protection, the move into the international public domain complicates issues of intellectual property rights and occasions broader access to the sites, rendering them less likely to serve local interests.

Both Mexican national as well as international legislation, most of which derives from the UNSECO and its associated organizations such as the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), has worked to keep up with both changing attitudes toward defining heritage and its significance in the contemporary world as well as the continually changing social and political landscapes. This is most notable in the efforts made to legislate intangible heritage, as discussed above, and also the considerations for the protection of heritage properties under conditions of military conflicts, modernization and development projects, and urbanization. The efforts and, indeed, anxieties over the
protection of heritage under these kinds of circumstances is best exemplified through the 
UNESCO World Heritage in Danger list. Examples of heritage properties recently 
inscribed to this list include the following: the Iguacu National Park in Brazil because of 
the illegal opening, by local people, of a road cutting through the park; the Rwenzori 
mountains in Uganda, for the occupation of the site by rebels, which has prevented 
conservation activity; Salonga National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 
because of housing construction, poaching, and armed conflict activity (this site was the 
last of the DRC's five heritage sites to be added to the World Heritage in Danger List); 
and India’s Groups of Monuments at Hampi, for the construction of two suspension 
bridges, as well as the construction of a road that would increase heavy goods traffic 
within the site (World Heritage News 1999).

Nevertheless, critics and supporters say that it is time to revise the World Heritage 
Convention. “This convention was very advanced in its time but it is necessary the 
reform it, as for example, [identifying] cultural routes such as that of the slaves, silk\(^8\), or 
silver were not [previously] known as cultural patrimony,” commented Ramón Bonfil 
Castro, head of the Mexican state committee to the ICOMOS (Riveroll 2002). As the 
UNESCO World Heritage Committee has realized the insufficiencies and blurred 
boundaries of the categories of “natural” versus “cultural” heritage, and has sought to 
simultaneously broaden the inclusivity of just what comprises heritage while specifying 
more kinds of heritage. How is cultural heritage as a resource legislated differently from

\(^8\) Silk roads became the focus for a 2002 one million dollar endowment dedicated to their 
research. The Xi’an Declaration (2002) calls for greater inclusion of silk roads of the World 
Heritage List. The Declaration is interesting for its supranational concern, “This would be the 
first time that a designated World Heritage “site” crosses the boundaries of many nations. The 
cooperation between Member States necessary to put forward this proposal would in itself be a 
manifestation of international cooperation and a contribution to dialogue between peoples”.
other "natural" resources? The nature/culture divide has motored anthropology since its inception as an academic discipline. While these disciplinary boundaries stand in a realm of debate often moving toward the abstract, within policy discourse there exist fundamental definitions distinguishing the two very clearly.

The categorical distinction between natural and cultural heritage sites contributes toward what I, following Neil Smith (1990) term "uneven heritage development."

"Uneven development" refers to the uneven nature in the geography of capitalism.

The logic of uneven development derives specifically from the opposed tendencies, inherent in capital, toward the differentiation but simultaneous equalization of the levels and conditions of production. Capital is continually invested in the built environment in order to produce surplus value and expand the basis of capital itself. But equally, capital is withdrawn from the built environment so that it can move elsewhere... The pattern that results in the landscape is well known: development at one pole and underdevelopment at the other (Smith 1990: xv).

Uneven development is both a geographical and political question. While "uneven development" refers to the spatial unfolding of capitalism on a geographical terrain—also understood as a social landscape—my use of the term "uneven heritage development" points toward how heritage sites are identified and promoted in relationship to the spatialized concentrations and intensifications of capitalism itself.

Historic cities and centers, archaeological sites, and monumental structures dominate the UNESCO's World Heritage List, while natural heritage such as volcanos, lakes, mountains, forests or island are less represented. Of the 730 World Heritage Sites as of last year, 563 are cultural, 114 natural and 23 are of mixed heritage, located in 124 of the 167 states party to the World Heritage Convention. Geographically, the greatest concentration of heritage sites is in Europe. The national territories of Spain, France, and
Italy alone contain 99 World Heritage sites. With Germany and Britain, the number is raised to 148—one fifth of existing World Heritage sites. The rest are distributed among 119 other nations. For this reason, Dr. Francisco J. López Morales, director of the INAH World Heritage subsection stated that México would widen its vision to propose sites of outstanding universal value such as cultural routes, industrial heritage, cultural landscapes, and modern heritage. Of the 22 World Heritage Sites in México, the majority are historic cities and archaeological zones. According to López Morales, while these sites do reflect a good part of the nation’s patrimonial wealth, surely there exist other kinds of heritage, such as are outlined in the UNESCO Global Strategy plan. The broadening of definitions and categories of heritage can fully take into account the “great historical and cultural treasures” of México (CNCA Press Release, Sept. 2, 2002). The UNESCO Global Strategy was implemented in 2000 with an initial budget of $278,000 (WHC Report of 23rd Session Marrakesh 1999: 12), and subsequent years’ budgets were increased by 50%. The Global Strategy, developed jointly with the emphasis on intangible heritage, has inverted the dominance of Europe and the North in general. For example, in the 2001 List, 19 intangible “masterpieces” of oral and intangible heritage were inscribed, the total of which included one in Japan and five in Europe. Of the remaining, four are in the rest of Asia, four in Latin America, and four in Africa.

Mexico’s participation in UNESCO programs and its ratification of the World Heritage Convention raises questions of state sovereignty over both its national territory as well as the resources contained within. The case of the ESSA saltworks development plan exemplifies this issue. The World Heritage-listed Whale Sanctuary of El Vizaino (1993), one of 144 total natural World Heritage sites, is located in Mexico’s Baja
Peninsula. Salt plant operated by Mitsubishi which dumps into San Ignacio Lagoon, was planned as a joint project of Mitsubishi and the Mexican federal government. Environmentalists protested, and UN sent team to inspect, the World Heritage Convention does not obligate company or government to cease work, but it might move site to in danger list, which creates a double bind: though it might embarrass the Mexican government, it would garner attention for international conservation aid. In March 2000, President Ernesto Zedillo announced that the development of the proposed saltworks would not proceed. Acting on the information reported by a 1999 UNESCO expert mission to the World Heritage site at the UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee meeting in Marrakech, Mexican officials decided to “fulfill all obligations under the UNESCO World Heritage Convention…to ensure that the values for which the site has been inscribed in the World Heritage List be protected for future generations” (World Heritage News 2000). Zedillo was sent a letter by World Heritage Committee Chairperson Abdelaziz Touri:

Please be assured that the World Heritage Committee will continue to work with your Government to ensure the best implementation of the World Heritage Convention in México. In this regard, I would like to underline that the World Heritage Convention is based on international cooperation to ensure the protection of the sites of outstanding universal value. The UNESCO World Heritage Center, as secretariat to the World Heritage Committee is at your disposal to assist your Government if it wishes to envisage sustainable development projects for the benefit of the local people.

A cursory reading of the saltworks case reveals an interactive, mutually supportive relationship between the UNESCO World Heritage Committee and the Mexican government. Deeper reflection on the exemplary case raises a crucial question regarding the territorial sovereignty of the nation-state vis-à-vis World Heritage properties.
Part 4. The INAH Crisis of "Privatization"

The international *sui generis* cultural heritage legislation backed by the UNESCO exists both separate from and in addition to Mexican national policy. The Mexican state actively participates in the activities of the UNESCO (a participation most clearly indicated by the large number of sites of both natural and cultural heritage inscribed on the World Heritage List), and it would logically follow that the Mexican state would abide by the international conventions set forth by the UNESCO, bringing national policies in line with those of the UNESCO, and adding complementary legislative features to Mexican law reflective of the particularities of the national heritage landscape. In the following section, I discuss the cultural patrimony "privatization crisis" in Mexico for two reasons. The first is to set the stage for the case studies of the local, sit-specific "privatizing practices" in the archaeological zones of Chichén Itzá and Chunchucmil, Yucatán. The second reason is to speculate upon the possible contradictions between the politics of cultural patrimony within the Mexican national territory and the state's *de jure* adherence to UNESCO's *sui generis* cultural heritage protection regime.

The year 1999 marked the sixtieth anniversary of the National Institute of Anthropology and History in México and also marks a time of crisis on both national and state levels. Put before the Mexican Senate April 28, 1999 was a proposal to amend Section XXV of Article 73 of the Mexican Constitution. The amendment calls for the establishment of the *Ley General de Patrimonio Cultural de la Nación*. This new federal legislation is designed to replace the current Ley Federal (discussed in Part 1). One important effect of the new law is the removal of Constitutional responsibility for the
maintenance cultural patrimony. The Constitutional article currently protecting national
cultural patrimony, reads, in part:

to legislate on matters concerning archeological, artistic, and historic monuments,
the conservation of which is of national interest; and also to enact laws designed
to distribute feasibly between the Federation, the States, and Municipalities the
exercise of the educative function and the appropriations corresponding to this
public service, seeking to unify and coordinate education throughout the
Republic. (As amended on December 21, 1965, published in the Diario Oficial,
January 13, 1966.)

The initiative proposes the reform in the juridical and institutional organization of the
protection of Mexico’s patrimonio cultural, as stated in two pieces of legislation. The
first is the Ley Federal sobre Monumentos y Zonas Arqueológicos, Artísticos e Históricos
and the 1972 Ley Orgánica.

Garza, a wealthy industrialist from Monterrey, is considered among the top
twenty-five art collectors in Mexico (Royce 1997: 116). Another source describes him
as “Mexico’s most avid fossil collector (He has reportedly cornered the market in wooly
mammoth bones)” (Now Toronto 2000: 1). Already Senator for several terms, Garza
recently won a bid (with three other candidates) to vie for the PAN candidacy to run for
governor of the state of Nuevo Leon. The April 28 proposal followed Garza’s successful
initiative dictating the inclusion of paleontological materials within legal protection.

According to Garza’s presentation of the proposal,

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9 Para establecer, organizar y sostener en toda la República escuelas rurales elementales, superiores, secundarias y profesionales, de investigación científica, de bellas artes i de enseñanza técnica; escuelas prácticas de agricultura y de minería, de artes y oficios, museos, bibliotecas, observatories y demás institutos concernientes a la cultura general de los habitantes de la Nación y legislar en todo lo que se refiere a dichas instituciones, para legislar sobre monumentos arqueológicos, artísticos e históricos, cuya conservación sea de interés social; así como para dictar las leyes encaminadas a distribuir convenientemente entre la Federación, los Estados y los Municipios el ejercicio de la función educativa y las aportaciones económimas correspondientes a este servicio público, buscando unificar y coordinar la educación en toda la República.
The initiative grants power to the Congress of the Union to establish general laws in matter of the cultural patrimony of the nation. It allows for the co-participation of the three branches of government in the protection and promotion of the cultural patrimony of the Nation; additionally, it encourages access to cultural heritage for the private initiative, collectors, as well as religious, traditional, indigenous, civil, cultural, academic associations, of investigation and the individuals in general. The object of this law is the transformation of the National Institute of Anthropology and History into a decentralized public entity with greater autonomy of management, as well as establish the National Registry of Monuments, Zones, and Goods of Cultural Patrimony of the Nation (Garza 1999).

The proposal contains seventy-eight articles, plus transitorios, distributed across eight chapters, while the current legislation has only fifty-five articles within six chapters.

Article 2 defines the cultural patrimony of the nation as "all manifestations of human endeavors considered valuable and meaningful for the inhabitants of the Mexican Republic, with archaeological, historical, artistic, ethnological, anthropological, traditional, scientific, technological or intellectual relevance."

The initiative proposes a new institution to replace the INA, the Instituto parala Protección de Patrimonio Cultural (Institute for the Protection of Cultural Patrimony). The new institute would absorb several entities of the current cultural sector government agency arrangement, absorbing the INA as well as taking over certain functions of the Instituto Nacional de Belles Artes (INBA) and the Consejo Nacional de Arte y Cultura (CNCA).

Critique of Proposal

Cultural patrimony is often valorized as an “integrator” of national identity (Vázquez Olvera 1998: 187), while at the same time it serves to “convert local realities into politiccultural abstractions, symbols of a national identity in which particularities and conflicts are diluted” (Florescano 1993: 15). The case of Garza’s 1999 proposal
shows this to be true, but supports its inverse as well: that cultural patrimony provided for the crystallization (rather than dilution) of a series of issues ranging from labor union agendas, the fracturing of national and regional politics, and the continuing validity of Mexico's old bureaucratic structures and practices during the last gasps of PRI control.

To what degree did (or does) the privatization proposal of 1999 present a crisis to both the power of the National Institute of Anthropology and History, as well as Mexican sovereignty over its territory and cultural possessions? Immediately following the introduction of the proposal, then national INAH director Teresa Franco offered her approval of the initiative. Just days later, INAH workers, from the lower-level site workers up through the higher level functionaries and academics firmly stated their outright rejection of any changes to the 1972 law, declaring that any alteration to the law would put at risk the future management at a federal level by the INAH regarding matters of historical and cultural patrimony; opening the possibility that the administration of archaeological zones would move into the hands of big tourism businesses, enterprises unlikely to allocate resources toward scientific investigation; and render archaeological and historical monuments and zones inaccessible to the Mexican people. Currently, by Federal mandate, Mexican students enter archeological zones at a discounted rate, and national holidays are free. Both Mexican nationals and international tourists benefit from free admission every Sunday. According to the INAH, the initiative is unconstitutional and "plagued with omissions, ambiguities, imprecision, gaps, vagueness, and incongruities in its conception of cultural patrimony and in the role that it plays in national development" (Ruiz Salcine 1999: 1).
Officials in defense of the proposal accused the INAH of jumping the gun on the issue of privatization, claiming that the proposal calls not for full-scale privatization, but rather for concession, such as allowing private enterprises to assume the refreshment vending at archaeological zones. Defenders of the proposal strongly critiqued the INAH itself, appealing to a historical national sentiment of disgust toward the ineffective functioning of large, bureaucratic institutions. Proponents for a constitutional amendment argue that the INAH is by now, after sixty years in existence, a bloated bureaucracy, inefficient and inept at carry out its charges. Though the institution receives a regular annual budget, it is never sufficient to cover the costs of actually carrying out the constitutional mandates with which the Institute is charged. One INAH bureaucrat at Yucatán’s regional headquarters, frustrated by the hinderances of the large and often petty bureaucracy of the centralized agency, metaphorically describes the problem of the INAH: “If you tie up a man’s arms and legs, toss him over the side of a boat in the middle of the ocean and tell him to swim—he’ll never make it to the shore. Does this mean he doesn’t know how to swim? That he doesn’t want to reach the shore?”

The oscillation on the parts of different social actors between the terms privatization and concession adds another, virulently ideological, layer to the debate. In some cases, the terms are used interchangeably. Especially for critics of the proposal, an emphasis on the use of the term privatization over and above concession, given that privatization is the stronger of the two, and more immediately tied to other economic programs ushered in by the neoliberal model in Mexico. Privatization is essentially a form of “denationalization,” thus invoking the symbolic dimension of national cultural patrimony with a further and much more powerful reach than the business arrangement
implied by concessioning. Concessioning is a partial process granting rights of access and participation rather than ownership, per se. Thus, while it definitely implies the opening of the heritage sector to private sector economic interests, it does not carry the ideological weight of privatization. While social actors such as members of the INAH labor union strategically employed “privatization” in place of concessioning, it should be understood that a similar strategy—the substitution of concession when what is really at stake is privatization—has often been used on the part of politicians to soften the public impact of major legislative changes under neoliberalism.

A May 29, 1999 report in the *Diario de Yucatán* brings the distinction between privatization and concessioning into play. Campeche’s Secretary of Tourism, Ricardo Rodríguez Dives, argued that private sector participation in the provision of some services in archaeological zones and historic sites, all in the name of giving visitors better quality service stating, “The participation of the private initiative would be positive for the development of tourist attractions.” An INAH labor union delegate agrees, stating that the proposal does not call for the privatization of cultural patrimony, “because it is not going to be sold.” Rather, “We are going to revise the law [*Ley General del Patrimonio Cultural de la Nación*] and open spaces to the private initiative without damaging its historical legacy.” He continues, “We are talking about the privatization of some services such as the sale of refreshments, since the duty of the INAH is investigation, protection, and diffusion of cultural patrimony so that it is positive to share a range of services in order to better the quality of archaeological sites, but in no way that attempts to privatize heritage through legislative reform” (*Diario de Yucatán*, 3 May 1999: 3)
To this date, the initiative is still on the table, but not being actively considered. Of this proposal and its aftermath, it is necessary to ask at least two questions. First, and getting directly to the topic of this chapter, is the suggestion of privatization of archaeological zones a new issue that only is emergent in the past few years? It seems that the INAH has always kept a close eye on the growth of privatization initiatives, and one way in which this has been monitored can be seen in the response of the INAH academics through their union: delegación sindical D-II-I-A-1, Sección X del Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación. The academics were talking about the threat of the private initiative since the beginning of Salinas sexenio. The first forum The Defense of Cultural Patrimony was held in July 1983. The group was formed out of the first National Congress of INAH Researchers, the previous summer. In September 1988, the first forum on the Defense of Archaeological, Historical, and Underwater Patrimony was held in Veracruz, and attended by INAH academics and others.

In July 2000, just days after the election of Vicente Fox, a group of INAH academics addressed a letter to the president-elect calling attention to the actions of the directorates of both the INAH and CNCA, claiming they have wanted to implant the dogma of market-oriented [mercado técnica] use of the archaeological, artistic, and historical patrimonies for the purposes of conservation. Consequently, they have illegally and illegitimately concessioned to private interests parts of those national patrimonies, distorting and deforming what is dictated by current law (Carta a Fox 2000: 1).

One critic, echoing the sentiments of many others, especially from within the INAH, noted "a marked tendency toward privatization (referred to as 'concessions' in the text) of national cultural patrimony while completely disregarding the potential participation of the general community in its preservation" (Mar a Salazar Peralta 1999).
The April 1999 PAN proposal was a national issue writ local. The months of May through August 1999 saw a series of local, state, and national protests against the "privatization proposal" as it became known. INAH workers throughout the state of Yucatán slung banners with slogans "No to privatization" and "Our cultural patrimony is not for sale." Some of the banners hung for more than a year, especially in the sites along the Ruta Puuc, until they deteriorated from wind and weather. Protest marches were held in the capital cities of Mérida and Campeche. Forums were organized to unite technical workers and academics, two very different groups within the same institution. The INAH formed a coalition with the National Institute of Fine Arts to strengthen their opposition to the privatization proposal. On the steps on the Palacio Cantón, the INAH museum in Mérida, members of the INAH labor union section D-III-2 sindicato INAH-AMT (administrativos, técnicos, manuales) held a demonstration and forum, "INAH and society before the legislative change in the matter of Patrimonio Cultural" (Diario de Yucatán, May 18, 1999: 4). At similar events held around the country, the protesting workers wore blindfolds and adhesive tape over their mouths. At Chichén Itzá, the zone with the highest number of INAH workers in the region, organized a Culture Week in July 1999 as a platform to convey their unity as a group in defending the cultural patrimony of the nation.

The following is from a flyer distributed by INAH archaeological zone workers in the summer of 1999:

**Llamado al Pueblo de Mexico**

Los mexicanos tenemos un patrimonio cultural, herencia de nuestros antepasados, que fundamenta las raíces de nuestra nacionalidad. Tenemos también una Ley Federal sobre Monumentos y Zonas Arqueológicos, Artísticos e Históricos, que desde 1972 protégé efectivamente a nuestro patrimonio cultural.
El INAH, por las facultades que le otorga dicha ley tradicionalmente se ha encargado de custodiar, restaurar, investigar y difundir sus investigaciones sobre nuestro pasado histórico.

Hace unos días el Senador Mauricio Fernández Garza presentó ante la Cámara de Senadores una iniciativa de ley que pretende en sus artículos concesionar a particulares, nacionales y extranjeros nuestras zonas arqueológicas y museos y legalizar la posesión de colecciones arqueológicas.

La experiencia de 60 años de proteger el patrimonio ha demostrado que la comercialización y sobre-explotación de las zonas arqueológicas realizadas en forma poca respetuosa, con el fin de atraer turismo masivo, provoca la destrucción de éstas y el coleccionismo fomenta el saqueo de los sitios arqueológicos.

Por todo lo expuesto invitamos a todos los ciudadanos a sumarse a las acciones de rehzo de esta iniciativa de ley y a defender la ley de 1972 que sí garantiza la protección de nuestro patrimonio cultural.

El patrimonio cultural no es botín de un grupo, pertenece a todos los mexicanos.

(signed)

¡Los trabajadores del INAH en defensa del patrimonio cultural de la nación!

Another half-page flyer uses slightly different language for stronger effect:

AL PUEBLO DE MEXICO

Los mexicanos tenemos un rico Patrimonio Cultural legado de nuestros antepasados. Ese Patrimonio es protegido y preservado por el Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, mediante la Ley Federal sobre Monumentos y Zonas Arqueológicos, Artísticos e Históricos de 1972.

El Senador Mauricio Fernández Garza, en un intento de privatizar el Patrimonio que nos pertenece a todos los mexicanos, presentó ante la Cámara de Senadores, una nueva iniciativa de ley para sustituir a la arriba citada ley federal.

Este nuevo PROYECTO DE LEY, responde a INTRESES DE PEQUEÑOS GRUPOS ECONÓMICOS Y POLÍTICOS, y pone en peligro la propiedad nacional del patrimonio histórico y arqueológico y propicia el saqueo al favorecer el coleccionismo.

¡EL PATRIMONIO CULTURAL DE LOS MEXICANOS NO SE VENDE! CIUDADANO ¡UNETE A LA LUCHA!
In this second, shorter statement, we may note two important differences from the longer, more precise statement. First, and most importantly, “concession” (which is the term that actually is used in Fernandez Garza’s initiative) is substituted for “privatization” to a more dramatic effect. Certainly, privatization is a more eye-catching, and for many Mexicans, more alarming concept. Second, the shorter statement closes by calling all Mexican citizens to unite in the struggle, shifts the discourse from unnamed threats by introducing a set of “bad guys,” specifically small economic and political groups. Thus the INAH allies themselves with the interests of the masses, and against the interests of the few.

But what’s more important are the other, more specific interests served beyond the almost abstract concept of cultural heritage that has only become one more rhetorical device. What about the jobs of these same INAH employees? Why did they form and shape their protests to the privatization initiative through their labor union? In Mexico, there are 4,500 unionized INAH workers, with 200 of those in the state of Yucatán. Among the protest banners displayed in the City of Campeche in May 1999 read, “No to the privatization of the INAH,” and another more explicitly referred to the danger presented to workers, “No to the nullification of our work contracts” (*Diario de Yucatán*, May 21 1999: 2).

**INAH’s answer to criticisms and reform proposals**

If until now the law has not been modified, it is because the authorities do not want to disturb the wasp’s nest; that is to say, whenever somebody proposes its revision, immediately the INAH workers organize demonstrations, and argue that cultural patrimony is in danger of being privatized. Eréndira Salgado, former INAH legal director (Haw 2003: 3).
Following the flurry of activity regarding the INAH in 1999, the Institute has faced various continuing criticisms and legal disputes. Perhaps the most notorious is a case not involving archaeological monuments, but artistic works which are similarly governed by the 1972 Ley General. The case involving the collected works of Mexican painter María Izquierdo (1902-1955) was disputed between a group of art collectors prevented under the Ley General from permanently removing the works from the country as the artworks were declared under the 1972 Ley General an “Artistic Monument”. The collectors filed suit, declaring the Ley General unconstitutional for its violation of Article 14 and its guarantee of “el derecho de audiencia [right to public hearing]” (Hernández 2003). This was the third time a charge of unconstitutionality had been brought against the Ley General since its official decree in 1972.

By early 2003 (and concurrently with the Izquierdo estate dispute), INAH Director Sergio Raúl Arroyo announced that a proposal to reform the Ley General would come from within the institution and would most likely be before the legislature before the end of 2003. The main features of the reform to the 1972 law would be the highly criticized omission of reference to intangible heritage. In a newspaper report, the director assured that revision of the 1972 law is both a “political and intellectual task” and that revisions would be based on consensus reached between the INAH, other cultural institutions, and larger society. He answered critics of the current legislation:

There is a tendency to discount the law for absurd reasons, considering it invalid—something I am in complete disagreement with. I think that the existing law has sufficiently protected Mexican cultural heritage, it has given full protection to archaeological patrimony and has generated an enormous decrease in looting which was at its pinnacle before the implementation of the first law in 1938 (Arroyo in Cruz 2003).
However, the director cautioned, the legislative revisions should never privilege benefits to the individual over the benefits to society at large, indirectly referencing some of the issues of the 1999 reform initiative protests, in which many critics (mostly from within the INAH itself) read the document as indeed privileging collectors over and above the public interests. In a preview of what the INAH reform proposal to the Ley General would include, Arroyo stated:

> For a long time we have been saying that it is important to incorporate diffusion _como causa de utilidad pública_, to create more specific regulations regarding the declarations of artistic, historical, and archaeological patrimony, as well as to specify the ends to which zones and monuments may be used (Cruz 2003).

Just a week before Arroyo’s announcement, other voices from the cultural heritage sector- in this case, the Mexican representative to the ICOMOS, called the 1972 legislation “anachronistic.” In a criticism of the 1972 that sounds remarkably similar to the 1999 revision proponents’, Ernesto Becerril charged the 1972 law with “omissions, imprecisions, and contradictions” which compromise the legislation, “The concept of heritage has changed radically and everyday there are more cultural properties that require protection” (Haw 2003: 1). One of the biggest deficiencies in the Ley General, he argues, is that neither the administrative agreements nor the archaeological zone declarations enumerate the criteria for their own protection. In other words, the law is limited to ordering conservation, without specifying how it should be carried out. This leaves the specifics of conservation and protection programs to the decision of whatever functionary is in office at a given time (Haw 2003: 3).

Former legal director of the INAH, Eréndira Salgado, added that the 1972 law does not account for the protection of underwater or industrial heritage. Salgado finds necessary reforms which correct the imprecision of the registry of cultural properties, the
deficiencies in the tasks of preservation and custodianship of heritage, and that the
current legislation does not promote the participation of state and municipal governments,
nor any type of private interests (Haw 2003: 2-3). The following are further clarifications
of the critiques of the existing federal Ley General:

- The concept of “monument” upon which the 1972 legislation is based has become
  obsolete; the substitution of bienes culturales, or cultural properties, would
  account for both tangible and intangible heritage. In the same vein, the concepts
  of centro histórico and zona histórica are not considered.

- The 1972 legislation does not account for the authorization to export protected
  heritage materials for exhibition

- While the 1972 law considers historical monuments “the properties produced at
  the establishment of Hispanic culture” (i.e., post-conquest) it does not make
  further historical delimitations; further, while historic monuments dating through
  the nineteenth century are protected, twentieth century constructions are left
  unprotected by the legislation.

- The 1972 law does not dictate parameters for cultural valuation, which impedes
  determination of which properties should be preserved or restored, and to what
  degree.

- The economic sanctions, or fines, for infraction of the cultural heritage laws are
  out of date (the highest fine being equivalent today to about five dollars). Also,
  the fines for property owners are minimal. It follows that their investment in the
  protection and conservation of the properties is minimal as well.
• The law does not regulate the use of immovable heritage properties, only their conservation.

While one of the four primary mandates of the INAH, as established through the Ley Orgánica, is the orientation of archaeological, historic, and artistic heritage toward education, in recent years, severe institutional constraints, mostly of these budgetary, increasingly limit the INAH’s activity exclusively to the maintenance of tourism destinations. As one author argues, without state projects directed toward reconstruction and restoration, cultural heritage resources become non-renewable resources (Schávelzon 1990: 231). Which brings us once again around to the question of privatization and cultural patrimony, but in a different register. Does it even matter if cultural heritage properties were to be privatized in Mexico? While many critics of privatization maintain that one of the fundamental dangers privatization poses to cultural patrimony is the end of academically-oriented research, the INAH’s current move toward “maintenance” of touristic sites is already accomplishing what privatization is merely threatening.

The majority of critiques, as summarized above, at the legislation of cultural patrimony in Mexico reflect that it has not been able to keep sufficient pace with a complex set of other factors, namely, the increasingly complex nature of heritage itself. As we will see in the following chapters, another articulated set of factors concerns land—the cultural heritage legislation has been less able to keep up with the changing land tenure arrangements on local/site levels, nor with federal legislative revisions through agrarian reform programs.

Conclusion
Is Mexico "losing control" (Sassen 1996) of its national patrimony? The juridical boundaries which have been placed around cultural patrimony in Mexico have historically relied upon, and continue to employ the most basic principal of the exercise of power of a sovereign nation: the control of population of a territory. However, as we can clearly see from what has been presented in this chapter, the rise of international definition, legislation, and designation practices regarding cultural heritage One argument affirming that the state is surely losing control over its patrimonial resources finds supporting evidence in the increasing impossibilities for any modern nation-state to maintain a operative model of territorial sovereignty. The spatiality of political, social, and economic exercise of authority has fundamentally transformed under conditions of global capitalism. The maintenance of the traditional territorial boundaries of a state—in geographic terms—might still seem possible. Yet, the flows of people, capital, ideas, and heritage itself between the local, regional, national, and even global scenes increasingly disallows for a stable, sovereign national territory. The boundaries of a state and the mechanisms designed to retain its possessions are constantly in flux, spilling over, and escaping. As Kuels (1996) demonstrates in his study of ecopolitics in the Amazon forests of Brazil, sovereign territorial descriptions of political spaces fail to contain politics in two ways: "the inability of the space of sovereignty to contain the flows of political, economic and ecological activity, and the extent to which both the territory and the population of sovereign states are constructed through practices that exceed the apparatus of state sovereignty" (ix). Through a demonstration of the legal frameworks and institutions which attempt to fix cultural heritage to the state apparatus, this analysis, like that of Kuels, presents a case of the failure of sovereign territory to
contain the overflow of processes, practices, and significations which constitute the heritage assemblage. Since the Conquest, the orchestration of heritage resources has had two aims: to know both the extent and the "quality" of its territory, and the relationship between the nation and its inhabitants (between state and society). While ruins as important components of territory were important even to the Spanish crown, they become part of "wealth of the nation" only under conditions of Mexican Modernity. More than just ruins, the legislation and policy regarding ruins in Mexico since the Conquest has all contributed to the creation of what I term the heritage assemblage.¹⁰ The heritage assemblage organizes the material vestiges of ancient civilization on a model of sovereignty while simultaneously endorsing contemporary management and utilization practices of heritage sites on a neoliberal model. This dual-faceted strategy has, just as in the classic formulation of sovereignty, two parallel foci: territory and inhabitants. While the sovereign regime operates through protectionist policies characteristic of mercantilism in its exertion of control over territory, a newer inflection to the contours of the heritage assemblage operates via the neoliberal ideals of market orientation. In this formulation, Mexico's indigenous population is tied to the assemblage's strata of "ancient culture" which I contend has, particularly in Yucatán, has maintained a depoliticization of heritage sites as possible locations of claims for not only land, but rights to benefit from Maya cultural patrimony.

¹⁰ Not to be mistaken with "heritage industry," (Corner and Harvey 1991; Hewison 1987) which is concerned with the deployment of the past and its accoutrements as the ideological response to a crisis in culture induced by capitalist modernization and globalization, with the particular characteristic of reinterpreting the past as a glorification of the eighteenth century ideals of free-market capitalism (Corner and Harvey 1991: 14).
Chapter Three

Chichén Itzá: a Genealogy of Private Sector Intervention

The "Privatization Protests" of the summer of 1999 on the part of the federal employees of Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History stemmed from fears that the nation's cultural patrimony would cede from the controlling yet protective hands of the state into those of private-sector profiteers. At the same time, both the form and content of the protests themselves belied the *de facto* and *de jure* presence of the private sector already involved in the development, maintenance, protection, and promotion of archaeological heritage sites throughout the nation. This chapter attempts to reconcile the protest of cultural patrimony privatization that has recently emerged as public discourse in Mexico with the historical case of multiple forms of privatization at Chichén Itzá over at least the past one hundred years. This case study of privatization at the archaeological site of Chichén Itzá takes a historical perspective on the twentieth-century development of Chichén Itzá from jungle-covered ruins to renowned international tourist destination, passing through multiple arrangements of ownership, custodianship, and stewardship along the way.

Much debate in both scholarly work and the popular media regarding cultural heritage is based in a questioning of "who owns the past." For example, Lowenthal asks, "Who can or should own, control, and be allowed to dispose of, the places and things of the past?" (1996). Similarly are discussions and debates surrounding privatization couched in terms of ownership, specifically the transition of state-owned enterprises into private hands. This chapter demonstrates that the concept of "ownership" is so
overloaded as to become insufficient in describing or analyzing the variety of techniques employed by diverse social actors in the identification, development, and management of cultural heritage resources. Rather, this chapter and those that follow argue that historically and locally embedded principles of usufruct, rather than "ownership" per se, more accurately describe claims to cultural patrimony, situated as both present and past.

In this chapter, I will focus on the Maya archaeological site of Chichén Itzá. Chichén Itzá is the most-visited archaeological zone in the Yucatán Peninsula. Chichén Itzá is a site of overflowing signification, allows for claims by: local people, the state, anthropology, archaeology, world heritage, business sector, NGOs, IGOs, etc. The popular protest surrounding the issue of "privatization" beginning in 1999 belied the long history of privatizing and concessioning various aspects of the management and development of archaeological zones throughout Mexico. This chapter spans nearly a century, highlighting certain transformations in the zone of Chichén Itzá, demonstrating that privatization is not a recent phenomenon, although it continually takes new forms, especially when considering the spatio-juridical forms these privatizations take on.

Not only is Chichén Itzá is the most heavily visited archaeological site in Yucatán, it is the third most visited in Mexico. Located in eastern Yucatán, 125 kilometers from the capital city of Mérida and 197 kilometers from Cancun, Chichén is situated at the third node that triangulates these three destinations into a major tourism network. The archaeological zone as a "Museum of Maya Culture" (Castañeda 1996) complements the sun and beach lure of Cancun with the cultural-historical appeal of the colonial city of Mérida. Thus, these three destinations are combined into a "package" for visitors, a combination of contemporary recreation, punctuated by both ancient and
historical cultural contextualization. Cancun was literally invented in the late 1960s as a beach resort area to draw tourism to Yucatan. While this seems like a particularly modern invention of culture, so to speak, it was nearly half a century earlier that Chichén Itzá was “invented” as well, transformed at great effort and huge expense by both US and Mexican interests from a cattle hacienda into a site of international fame and importance, now listed as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World.

Not an isolated territory, the archaeological site is surrounded by the contemporary Maya communities of Pisté, Xcalacoco, San Felipe, and San Francisco, among other smaller settlements. Many residents of the communities surrounding the archaeological zone depend on the economic network based on the growth of the tourism industry, in which the archaeological site serves as the regional center. According to a 1989 INAH social anthropological study, “Pisté is the greatest generator of activities related to the tourism to Chichén Itzá. Nevertheless, for other localities located in the ‘hinterland’ of Chichén Itzá, Pisté attracts migrants looking for chambitas [little jobs] that the residents of Pisté have left behind in order to work more directly in tourism activity” (Peraza Lopez and Rejón Patrón 1989: 14). Since the initiation of archaeological development in the mid-1920s, the archaeological site has served as a source of income for the population in its surrounding areas. However, as this chapter will demonstrate, the “benefit stream” which issues forth from the zone is not unmitigated in its flow to the local communities. Private individuals, as well as both state and federal agencies have participated heavily in the production of Chichén Itzá as an economic resource. The efforts on the part of these social actors and institutions represent, in the argument
presented here, forms of alternative privatizations of the national and international cultural heritage which is Chichén Itzá.

**Part 1: Whose Land? Whose Ruins?**

In the course of my research in Pisté and Chichén Itzá, I was hard pressed to find anyone who denied the importance of the archaeological zone in their midst as both Maya cultural heritage and economic resource. There are, however, countless residents of Pisté and the smaller communities surrounding Chichén Itzá who express anxiety, and even anger over the manner in which the site has become further “lost” to both big-business tourism developers as well as the state. The notion that the site is slipping away from the hands of the local Maya residents into the grips of the powerful forces of *mercado tècnica*, or marketing technique, is only relatively recent, coming with the major infrastructural development projects beginning in the mid-1980s. As I will demonstrate in this and the following chapter, prior to this time, the site did not serve to economically benefit more than a handful of local Maya, the majority of those being the site guards and custodians employed by the National Institute of Anthropology and History. Although the 1980s serves as a historical marker for one major transformation in both the significance and management of the site, we can trace other transformations back several decades earlier, to the excavation and restoration projects carried out simultaneously by the Carnegie Institution of Washington (CIW) and the Mexican agency, *Subdirección de Población Colonial*, under the *Secretaría de Educación Pública* (SEP). Attention must also be paid to the “provenance” of the site in terms of the chain of private ownership the site has experienced.
Before the Conquest

"The Indians have no superstitious feelings about these ruins" (Stephens 1962 [1843], Vol 2: 192).

In Maya, Chichén Itzá means "The Mouth of the Well of the Itzas," and makes direct reference to the natural fresh water source at the site. The Itzas were a group of Maya who made their way to eastern Yucatán from the lowlands of present-day Tabasco and Campeche. Their arrival in Yucatán has been characterized as an "invasion," which occurred at the end of the eighth century. As the center of their dominion, which extended across the whole eastern half of the Yucatán Peninsula, was the capital city, Chichén Itzá (Peniche 1987: 4). A history of the site of Chichén Itzá is a story of multiple occupations by different groups, made more complicated by a necessary reliance on dubious historical sources, as well as differing "academic" interpretations. The Chilam Balam of Chumayel, a record of the Itza, gives the settlement of Chichén Itzá as 6 Ahau, a Maya calendrical figure correlating to about 712 C.E. Other books of the Chilam Balam present histories and traditions of other groups or elite families. For example, the books of Mani and Tizimin speak of the family Xiu, the principal rivals of the Itza (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 19). In the years 600-1000 C.E., the Late Classic period, the city was occupied by Mayas. Ca. 949-1145 marks a second phase of the occupation of Chichén Itzá. The Toltec occupation brought the god Quetzalcoatl, the Plumed or Feathered Serpent, to the Maya world. The third phase in the history of Chichén Itzá is marked by a Toltec reoccupation with a Maya resurgence (1145-1225), and the arrival of the Itzas with Quetzalcoatl-Kulkulkán II (1224-1244). In the years 1280-1450, Chichén
Itzá was in a period of dissolution, with violence blamed upon the “vicious” Itzas. From the mid-thirteenth to the mid-fifteenth centuries, Chichén flourished (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 19). In the last phase before the Conquest, most of the Itzas emigrated to the south, moving to the Peten region of Guatemala. The years 1460-1542 are widely understood as a difficult time, fraught with hurricanes, plagues, and pestilence. They also mark a time of civil war (Ruz Lhuillier 1970: 43).

Was Chichén Itzá abandoned in the years before the Conquest? According to Redfield, when the Spanish entered the Yucatán Peninsula in 1527, Chichén was “much reduced in importance” and it is unknown what group was controlling the ceremonial center. Ruz Lhuillier clarifies, “Chichén Itzá, however, had not been totally abandoned, nor forgotten. Campesino groups continued to live in the ruins of the monuments. The pilgrimages continued carrying offerings to the Sacred Cenote” (1979: 67). The Xiu were known to make pilgrimages and offerings, and had to ask permission of other groups, such as the Cocom, to do so. It is thought that the region of Chichén Itzá (including Valladolid) was controlled by the Cupul family for most of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 19). Francisco de Montejo, the Spanish conquistador credited as the founder of Yucatán, landed in Cozumel in 1527, having sailed from Seville, Spain. He and his soldiers fought heavy battle with the Peninsula’s indigenous inhabitants as they attempted in penetrate the interior. In early 1528, a group of Spanish soldiers reached Chichén Itzá where, “by kindness and conciliation, they got together some Indians and built houses of wood and poles and covered with palm leaves” (Stephens 1962 [1843] Vol. 1: 37-38). Given the dearth of colonial-period accounts of the events that ensued, a nineteenth century summary account of the first settlement in
the Peninsula’s interior tells of the disappointment of the Spanish *conquistadores* at the absence of gold or similar riches. At Chichén, the conquistador Montejo was “murderously attacked by a cacique named Cupul” (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 20). Unable to maintain a stronghold at Chichén Itzá, the Spanish were severely diminished in ranks and fled across the Peninsula to Campeche, escaping Chichén under the cover of darkness (Stephens 1962 [1843] Vol. 1: 38).

Peter Schmidt, longtime director of the INAH’s archaeological project at Chichén, narrates the sites Conquest history in the following manner:

The decadence of Chichén Itzá is related to the emergence of Mayapán as a new center of power in Yucatán. Since the thirteenth century, the inhabited part of the city was very reduced. In the sixteenth century, the Castillo and the Sacred Cenote were still functioning as sites of great processions for the consultation of their oracles. However, the grand buildings were not being maintained. Nevertheless, a nearby settlement of the Cupul lineage blocked the first Hispanic attempt to establish the colonial capital in the ruins, taking advantage of the immense symbolic value that this held for the Conquest; it is likely that this settlement was Pisté, located on the western side of Chichén Itzá, which is still populated by Maya people (http://www.cnca.gob.mx/pa.htm).

The noble lineages of the postclassic Maya period did not sustain their power through the ownership of territory. After all, the Maya conception of the universe, centered on the Earth as giver of life and creator of the forests giving sustenance to humans and animals alike, did not allow the earth to be conceived of as private property. Even less so could it be bought or sold. Nor did these powerful nobles control access to the forest land. This was thought to be the realm of the deity *Yumbalam* (Quezada 2001: 27).

*From Cattle Hacienda to Treasure Trove*

The numerous ruins of large and beautifully built ancient cities manifest an organization which must have been of high quality, and a leadership by men of great ability and
authority, yet today only the stone structures, overgrown with shrubs and trees remain to
tell a story of desolation and abandonment (Steggerda 1941: iii).

Abandonment and collapse are powerful tropes in contemporary understandings
of Maya civilization. These concepts are politically useful in creating implicit
commentaries on the relationships between ancient Maya civilization and living Maya
communities throughout Mesoamerica. Both abandonment and discovery discursively
make possible the “discovery” of the Maya, by state officials, travelers, archaeologists,
and others. As such, “abandonment” conceals the post-conquest “social histories” of
archaeological zones in Yucatan. A full historical inquiry into more than 400 years of the
various uses, occupations, and local significances of zones such as Chichén Itzá is far
beyond the scope of my ethnography, even supplemented with archival research. And
perhaps this is a worthwhile task that would benefit from collaboration between
ethnographers, historians, and archaeologists. What is within the scope of this discussion
is the twentieth-century history of Chichén Itzá.

Until the early decades of the twentieth century, the Yucatec landscape did not
recognize divisions of “archaeological zone” and “community.” Therefore, it is
important to view historical materials with an understanding of a more seamless
connection between the two entities contemporarily distinct. Most likely, Pisté and
Chichén were one community in from pre-Hispanic times until the late sixteenth century,
as Pisté is not separately mentioned by the encomenderos1 in their descriptions of
Yucatecan towns in 1579-1581. As early as 1588, there are records of the existence of a
cattle hacienda at Chichén Itzá, from the accounts of a visit to Yucatán by one Father

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1 Spaniards in control of certain indigenous populations who had the right from the Crown to
collect tribute.
Alonso Ponce. A property title from 1729 indicates that one Gerónimo de Avila put up for sale the Estancia de Chichén (Olivé Negrete 1991: 121). The *Titulos de Propiedad de la Hacienda Chichén* document the owner of the Hacienda between 1834-1845 as Juan Sosa Arce, likely one of several white Yucatec property owners through whose hands the hacienda passed until the late nineteenth century. Sosa inherited the property upon the death of his father. The hacienda contained cattle, horses, and mules, with a total value of five to six thousand dollars (Olivé Negrete 1991: 121; Stephens 1962 [1843]: 182). The hacienda most likely functioned as a mixed cattle and maize production center, with a small population of laborers who lived within the property.

In 1888, explorer Alfred Maudsley notes a phenomenon that occurred throughout the Peninsula: “The Indian ruins had been freely used as quarries when the buildings of Pisté and the hacienda were being raised, and many well-squared blocks of stone bearing fragments of hieroglyphics and other sculpture can be found embedded in the Church walls” (Steggerda 1941: 8). The date 1734 can still be read on the lintel of Pisté’s colonial Catholic Church, which still stands, like a small fortress, at the center of town. Our best historical source specifically addressing both Pisté and Chichén Itzá is Morris Steggerda’s *Maya Indians of Yucatán* (1941). At the end of the seventeenth century, it was recorded that there were 152 tribute-paying inhabitants² of Chichén Itzá (Steggerda 1941: 4). “Under the Spanish-speaking Yucatecans it became a thriving colonial town of 1500 inhabitants, which went down to ruin in 1847 during the War of the Castes. By 1918 its population had again increased, but a new revolution reduced its numbers by half and left the remainder quarreling and hating one another” (Steggerda 1941: 1).

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² Married and unmarried adults, including widowed persons.
It was during the ownership of Sosa that the proto-archaeologist and
writer/explorer John Lloyd Stephens, accompanied by illustrator Frederick Catherwood,
visited Chichén Itzá. Having already distinguished his career through the “discovery” of
Maya sites in Central America, most notably Copán in Honduras, Stephens continued his
explorations into Yucatán, with the object of “finding who were the people who built
these ruins” (Von Hagen 1947: 221). The volumes of his writings, including Incidents of
Travel in Yucatán, which initially appeared in 1843, give accounts of not only the ruins
(accompanied by Catherwood’s quasi-magical realist drawings), but also the conditions
of the Peninsula at the time. Though the ruins of Chichén Itzá were much collapsed and
overgrown, the site could hardly have been mistaken as lost or desolate. Stephens makes
mention of the inhabitants of Pisté who used to draw water at Chichén’s cenote. The
travelers were particularly bothered by the presence of the locals from Pisté during
bathing hours: “Upon one occasion we were so annoyed by the presence of two ladies of
that village who seemed determined not to go away, that we were obliged to come to an
amicable understanding by means of a preemptory notice that all persons must give us the
benefit of their absence at that hour” (Stephens 1962 [143], Vol. 2: 185).

In addition to his descriptions of the site with detailed descriptions of several
structures, Stephens adds a few historical notes that reveal the socioeconomic
circumstances for the populations of the hacienda and surrounding communities. He
describes the failure of the corn crop throughout the peninsula in 1936, which sent maize
prices soaring. On the interior of the Peninsula, such as are located Chichén and Pisté,
prices were prohibitive for the indigenous population, and a famine was suffered. Upon
the arrival of Stephens and his party at Chichén, they quickly learned that many of the
Maya servants were poised to leave the hacienda, with the permission of the owner, to regions where they might find corn. "Our arrival," Stephens recounts, "arrested this movement; instead of our being obliged to hunt them up, the poor Indians crowded around the door of our hut, begging employment...but all the relief we could afford them was of short duration" (Stephens 1962 [1843] Vol. 2: 186). This rather desperate situation Stephens described from his visit in 1842 was exacerbated by the Caste War, which severely depopulated the southern and eastern portions of Yucatán, beginning in July 1847.

Later nineteenth-century visits were made to the ruins only by those explorers outfitted with armed escorts. In 1859, French explorer-historian Desiré Charney visited the site, returning again decades later. In 1875, Augustus Le Plongeon, a French enthusiast of the Maya, made his way to Chichén Itzá as part of a quest to prove that the New World was the seat of origin of civilization. While Charney did little to intervene in the site except take photos, Le Plongeon carried out excavations, which are understood from a contemporary perspective as haphazard, irresponsible, and destructive to the site.

At the time of Le Plongeon's visit, the area around Chichén Itzá was controlled by the Chan Santa Cruz (otherwise known as the Cruzob) Maya, one of the battling factions in Yucatán's Caste War. Before arriving with military escort at the ruins, Le Plongeon and his party, including his wife Alice, passed throughout the town of Pisté. Desmond and Messenger (1988) narrate the arrival scene:

There, nestled around a cenote, they saw the remains of what had been a pretty village ten years earlier. On election Sunday 1865 the peaceful beauty of the village with its thatch-roofed houses, citrus trees, and kitchen gardens had been shaken by an attack of the Chan Santa Cruz Maya. The came to avenge anyone they thought had cooperated with their enemy, the government. The village was
destroyed that day, and only a few of its residents, taking refuge in the bush, escaped the terrible machete blows (27).

Pisté’s colonial church had been converted into a military fortress to house government soldiers fighting the Cruzob Maya. Augustus and Alice used the church and Pisté as their headquarters, traveling daily back and forth to the ruins on foot. It appears that the Hacienda was not inhabited at this time, most likely abandoned due to the continuing strife of the Caste War. Although accounts such as *A Dream of Maya* (Desmond and Messenger 1988) make mention of local Maya hired to clear to the ruins for Le Plongeon, this source does not indicate from where they came, although it is likely that they lived nearby.

In the course of his explorations at the site, Le Plongeon discovered the reclining statue—the chacmool—a now-famous image of Chichén Itzá. This discovery initiated a series of events forming the first publicly documented dispute in the custodianship or stewardship of archaeological heritage at Chichén. Several months after finding the figure, Le Plongeon had it moved to the church in Pisté for safeguarding as he and Alice were forced to leave Pisté and Chichén following a local Maya revolt.3 Fearing uprisings from any armed Maya, the soldiers who had belonged to the attachment protecting and assisting Le Plongeon at Chichén were disarmed under orders of the government. Using a wheeled platform, the chacmool was transported a little more than two kilometers from the site to the center of town. Upon returning to Mérida, Le Plongeon solicited President Tejada for permission to bring the statue to the American Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. Additionally he requested permission and aid in continuing his exploration

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3 The couple returned to Chichén Itzá in 1883 to carry on further excavations, focusing their work on the Platform of Venus and the High Priest’s Tomb.
at Chichén Itzá. Months later, Tejada replied. "Citing an 1827 law banning the export of artifacts, the president decreed that the Chamool was not to be moved and could not be shown at the American Exposition" (Desmond and Messenger 1988: 42). The law cited by Tejada prohibiting the export of artifacts did not apply, however, to collecting practices: the legislation provided no ban on the private ownership of archaeological materials. Desmond and Messenger explain the legal complexities of the chacmool case:

Le Plongeon felt that he should at least receive some redress for the amount of money and labor it took to uncover the Chacmool. And, as he pointed out, they had found the piece in disputed territory. At the time, Chichén Itzá was not under control of the Mexican or Yucatecan governments, but in rebel territory. Furthermore, a law of Yucatan specifically stated that objects of value for the sciences and arts could be purchased at a just price from the finder, essentially acknowledging individual ownership of the object.

Le Plongeon did, however, export smaller artifacts to display at the exposition, which were subsequently purchased in the United States by Stephen Salisbury III of the American Antiquarian Society. Desmond and Messenger suggest that it was perhaps this accidental encounter had by Salisbury with Le Plongeon's artifacts that set a plan in motion to send an American amateur archaeological emissary to Chichén, Edward H. Thompson. However, Salisbury had already had a great deal of contact with ancient Maya civilization, and visited Yucatán in 1862, the year before he became a member of the American Antiquarian Society. From his eventual post as director of the Society, Salisbury sent several expeditions to Yucatán and published three books and several articles on the Maya area.

Edward H. Thompson (1857-1935) came to Yucatán in 1885 as the American consul to Mexico, working out of Mérida, though he lived in the nearby port city of Progreso. Little more than an amateur enthusiast, Thompson considered himself an
archaeologist, and took an active interest in the archaeological resources of the region. A local newspaper reports

Mr. Stephen Salisbury, president of the American Antiquarian Society, to appoint Edward H. Thompson, a former student at the Worcester Polytechnic Institute, United States consul to Yucatan, Mex. Mr. Salisbury was ably and successfully seconded in this effect by Senator George F. Hoar. Yucatan was considered to be a scientific rather than a commercial post, and it was intended and so understood that Mr. Thompson was to devote his trained abilities to scientific research among the ruined cities of Yucatan and the Maya Indians, the probable descendants of their builders (Worcester Daily Telegraph, October 31, 1911).

According to Olivé Negrete (1991), Thompson was clear about his intentions to carry out excavations and collect artifacts during his stay in Yucatán. He purchased the Hacienda Chichén Itzá July 29, 1895 from Delio Moreno Cantón, Emilio García Fajardo, and Leopoldo Cantón. Reportedly, he paid 300 pesos, an outrageously low price due to the instability in the region brought about by the Caste War. The registered size of the property was 800 hectares. In an article entitled “Forty Years of Research in Yucatán,” Thompson narrates his early encounters with the Hacienda Chichén Itzá:

...[Upon arriving in Yucatán] I found that the old plantation of Chichén, founded in 1681, destroyed by the Sublevado Mayas in 1841 and since then abandoned, could be purchased. By the aid of Mr. Salisbury and Mr. [Allison V.] Armour I purchased the plantation, rebuilt the plantation, rebuilt the plantation house and outbuildings, adding modern improvements, peopled the plantation with servants, stocked it with fine digne cattle and then, not only made it my scientific home and that of my friends but from the sales of cattle and fine timber, commenced to materially aid in the financing of my archaeological undertakings” (Thompson 1929: 42-43).4

In 1891, Thompson was officially granted an indefinite leave of absence from his Consular post so that he might take charge of a scientific work of great importance”

4 It is particularly interesting to note in this passage that Salisbury, then-President of the American Antiquarian Society, “aided” Thompson in the purchase of the Hacienda. Although I do not know for certain what form this aid entailed. I think it can be safely assumed that it was indeed financial. If indeed it was, the implications of an institutional involvement in the purchase
(Worcester Daily Telegraph, October 31, 1911). He was thus able to devote himself full-time to his archaeological work. However, a correspondence from Thompson to Stephen Salisbury Jr., dated April 6, 1895, indicates that he had not yet begun any excavation work at the site, “At present I am doing nothing directly in the way of research but am rather furthering the hacienda and getting everything ready for continuous accurate work when everything is ripe.” Not only was Thompson involved with the American Antiquarian Society, he was also acting as field emissary of Harvard University professor F.W. Putnam, head of the university’s Peabody Museum, and he also had an established relationship with the Field Museum in Chicago.

In 1896, Thompson excavated two structures—the Osario (Tomb of the High Priest) and the Chichanchob (Casa Colorada, or Red House)— without permission from the Mexican government. At the time, specific institutions were not effectively in place to regulate such activities, especially in Yucatán. However, the 1917 Constitution was in effect, of which Article 27 stipulated the eminent domain of the nation over national territories and waters, with a clause for direct domain over subsoil deposits. Thus, even as owner of record of the property, Thompson did not hold legal rights of ownership of the objects of bone, jade, copal, and ceramic that were excavated or dredged from the Sacred Cenote.

Nevertheless, in 1904, Thompson began the first in a series of attempts to dredge the Sacred Cenote. Another attempt was begun in 1905 and continued until 1909, all again without government permissions. In 1909, the dredge was dismantled, and stored in the immediate vicinity of the main house of the Hacienda Chichén. Some of the

of the property are important to consider. I thank Thomas G. Knoles, Curator of Manuscripts at
artifacts recovered during this exploration are displayed at the on-site museum at Chichén Itzá, as is the dredge itself. In 1906, Thompson was publicly denounced in a Mérida newspaper for this illegal activity by Teobert Mahler.

A Mérida newspaper, *La Prensa*, featured an “anonymous” article with the headline, “Is Mr. Edward Thompson the legitimate owner of Chichén?” (May 27, 1921). The charges made and issues raised by the piece closely resemble those in the Cañada de la Virgen dispute in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato: how can someone own archaeological ruins if they are the property of the nation? If anyone should have access to the land surrounding the monuments, the legal usufruct rights should belong to the ejidatarios of Pisté, points out the author. Also, he argues, it is not possible that the monuments legitimately fall within the perimeter of the *pequeña propiedad*. The author of this 1921 article, most likely the very same Teobert Mahler of the newspaper campaign against Thompson a decade before, cites an article which appeared in *La Revista de Mérida*, dated July 16, 1910: “With great puzzlement has been received a news item related to Mr. Thompson having asked for a twenty-year concession...for the installation of a hotel or boardinghouse and a cantina, in the famous ruins of Chichén, as well as a rail line from Dzitas to the hotel” (*La Prensa*, 27 May 1921). For centuries, the author argues, residents of Pisté have used the lands at Chichén for making their milpas, without incident.

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5 In the years 1951-1954, INAH archaeologist Jorge Acosta proposed a plan to drain the Cenote, but it wasn’t until 1960-1961, that another exploration effort was carried out by archaeologist William Polan under the sponsorship of the National Geographic Society, and authorized by the INAH. Yet another project was initiated in 1967-1968, under the supervision of INAH archaeologist Roman Piña Chan.
In Thompson’s defense, one might argue that his excavation work and the dredging of the Sacred Cenote gave fame to Chichén Itzá, attracting many visitors to the site in the early twentieth century including Mexican president Porfirio Díaz (in 1906)\(^6\) and Inspector General de Monumentos, Leopoldo Batres (see Chapter 2) (Olivé Negrete 1991: 120). Thompson’s arrangement with the Peabody Museum undoubtedly gave rise to Sylvanus G. Morley’s early interest in the Maya during his years of study at Harvard University, possibly serving as the link between Chichén and the Carnegie Institution of Washington’s subsequent major research project at the site (see below). Thompson claimed that he was forced to abandon Chichén in 1921 due to a political situation in which local Maya, led by Salvador Alvarado and the Socialist Party, attempted to reclaim lands, setting the Hacienda Chichén on fire in the process (Batres 1930). He and his family lost many valuable possessions due to the fire, which left the house nearly unlivable. But, as Olivé Negrete argues, it is quite probable that the situation at Chichén was not nearly so dire; nearly at this same time, Thompson was defending his rights to the exclusive proprietorship of Chichén’s monuments against the Dirección de Antropología, who wished to carry out activities in the site (1991: 120). It is reported by this same author that Thompson offered the sell the land and the monuments to the Dirección de Antropología, at the time under the supervision of Manuel Gamio (ibid.). The offer was, of course, refused by the government agency. A legal document (Oficio núm. 541) details Mexico’s the legal position contra Thompson. Thompson attempted to justify the work that he had done at Chichén Itzá as he was the owner of the property.

His property claim, dating back to 1894, prefigured the Ley Especial of May 11, 1897,

\(^6\) It was during Díaz’s same visit to Yucatán that he visited the Hacienda Chunchucmil (see
which declared the rights of the nation over archaeological monuments in Mexican
territory. Lucio Mendieta y Nuñez, lawyer and student of Gamio, argued that the
legislative precedents of the nation’s claim to jurisdiction over archaeological ruins pre-
dated the nation itself. Mendieta y Nuñez, began with the Spanish colonial *Leyes de
Indias*, which formalizes the Crown’s dominion over the entirety of the territory of New
Spain (Olivé Negrete 1991: 121). Through various forms of land distribution, the Crown
ceded certain parcels of land

One might say that the archaeological ruins in the lands transformed from the
patrimony of the Crown into private ownership were ceded by the royalty to the
private property owners. However, this is not the case. Though the Crown
distributed land … the royalty reserved their rights over ownership of the

While Thompson furnished a document of property title dated 1729 (above), Mendieta y
Nuñez argued that the law prohibiting the transfer of monuments to private hands dated
back to 1575. Even from the time of the first owner of the Hacienda, the archaeological
monuments did not belong to this person, “no eran susceptibles de formar parte de
dominio privado: *estaban fuera de comercio*” [they were not subject to incorporation into
the private domain: they were outside of commerce] (in Olivé Negrete 1991: 122;
emphasis in original).

Thompson publicly disclosed his activities in smuggling the artifacts from the
Sacred Cenote to the United States in an admission in a New York Times article in 1923.
Yet an investigation by Mexican authorities into the matter was not carried out until
beginning in July 1926. Workers from Thompson’s crew, hacienda workers, as well as
residents from Pisté and Xcalacoop were asked to testify. A key witness was Juan

Chapter Five).
Olalde, who had moved the Yucatán from San Miguel de Allende as a young man and found employment at Chichén as a foreman of Thomson’s hacienda. Olalde was questioned by officials as to his possible role as an accomplice to Thompson’s activities. He admitted his observations of the dredging and the packing of objects for transport, but denied having any role in the selling of any artifact. He claimed, reports the *Diario de Yucatán*, that Thompson explained to him that the pieces from the Sacred Cenote were destined for two museums in Mexico. It was only later that Olalde, along with everyone else, came to discover that they left the country (September 18, 1926: 2). The *Diario de Yucatan* reported the findings of a judicial inquiry into the matter (September 18, 1926). Witnesses were asked by a judicial panel to describe what they had seen during the Sacred Cenote exploration- how the dredging or diving suit methods worked (or didn’t) and what kinds of finds to which they were witness. More than one witness claims to have witnessed nothing, but others, including a man who made his milpa nearby, got an eyeful. Pablo Tun wasn’t permitted to get too close to the operation. Nevertheless, he was able to confirm that many objects were brought out of the Cenote, but he was unable to distinguish the details of these objects due to the distance of his perspective. Faustino Tun observed Thompson and a group of assistants operating the dredge. He reported to investigating officials that in the initial stages of the extraction of artifacts from the Cenote, they were placed around the opening’s perimeter. After Thompson realized his were under the observation of many locals, Tun reports, he began to conceal all finds inside bags. Faustino Tun reports having seen human skeletons and what looked like, though he wasn’t sure, a large piece of gold (*Diario de Yucatán*, September 18, 1926: 2).
The Hacienda was confiscated by the Mexican government at this time, with the intent of holding the property pending the settlement of charges of the looting and illegal exportation of the artifacts removed from the Sacred Cenote. “If, as I am told, Mexico has seized my plantation, ‘Chichén,’ in reprisal for what I have done for science, so let it be. I am ready to make this sacrifice if need be” (The Boston Globe: October 25, 1926). Thompson spoke out in the US media, “I should have been false in my duty as an archaeologist had I, believing that the scientific treasures were at the bottom of the sacred well, failed to improve the opportunity and attempt to bring them to light and thus make them available to scientific study instead of lying embedded in the mud and useless to the world” (Boston Globe October 25, 1926). Harvard’s Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, then under the direction of Alfred M. Tozzer, and the Field Museum in Chicago were named in the Mexican federal suit against Thompson, which valued the objects at $500,000.

In the spirit of contemporary World Heritage, Thompson stated, “I hold it to be self-evident that these finds, taken from the Sacred Well, do not belong to any one Nation of this New World. They are part of prehistory and it may be that from them will come facts linking this New World with the old. It is unthinkable that these scientific objects be subjected to eventualities” (The Boston Globe, October 25, 1926). Thompson’s death in 1935 brought on a new phase to the penal action sought by Mexico, which had remained unresolved until then: an extended legal argument which brought not only previous cultural patrimony legislation, but the very Constitution itself into question.

In 1943, the Mexican Supreme Court ruled in favor of Thompson, because of a curious omission in Article 27 of the 1917 Constitution. Recall in Chapter 1 the specific
reference to the protection of subsoil deposits as national patrimony. However, in the case of the artifacts dredged from the Sacred Cenote, these materials were subaquatic, and thus not covered by the article. Further complicating the Mexican case against Thompson was the fact that the "monumentality" of the Sacred Cenote was itself in question. At this time, legislation was geared toward monumental, built archaeological heritage. The Sacred Cenote is a natural topographical feature rather than a humanly built pre-Hispanic monument. In a memorandum issued by the INAH in 1943 to the Supreme Court, the argument was made that indeed the Sacred Cenote was monumental, built heritage. Although the formation of a cenote is a natural topographic feature, the cenote at Chichén Itzá was altered by the site's ancient inhabitants, specifically through the construction of a platform from which to make sacrifices. The presence of cultural materials below the waters of the cenote may also be considered human alteration of the site, marking it as cultural rather than strictly natural. The memorandum was presented to the Supreme Court before the ruling favorable to Thompson was made, but to no avail.

The Edward Thompson scandal is still remembered, though his name is not widely reviled, and is, ironically enough, often confused with that of Sir J. Eric S. Thompson, famed and revered Maya archaeologist of the mid-twentieth century. The Sacred Cenote is scarred by these projects, marked mainly by an imposing cement platform sitting directly in the line of the tourist approach to the Cenote. And its "treasures" are scattered widely: in the Peabody Museum at Harvard University, in private collections, and in various museum displays as well as basements. Many of the objects brought originally as "stolen" property of the Mexican nation has since converted
in status to donated materials. Incidentally, the cenote dredging projects are immortalized in photographs that today hang, incidentally, just outside the restrooms in the parador turístico of Chichén Itzá.

Expropriation of the Hacienda Chichén Itzá

Beginning in the 1920s, great post-Revolution land reform movements swept Mexico, taking effect in the latter part of the decade in the southern and eastern Yucatán, where Chichén Itzá is located. Bit by bit, over the course of several decades, pieces of the Hacienda Chichén Itzá were expropriated to create ejidos, or communal land grants, for the surrounding settlements of Ticimul, Xkatun, San Rigberto/Xkalacaoop, San Felipe, and Pisté. Until the mid-1930s, the owner of record of the Hacienda remained Edward H. Thompson, though it is evident from archival records that Thompson was physically absent. He appears to have been the owner of the Hacienda until his death in 1935 and even beyond. A document dated 1947 still lists Thompson as the proprietor of the Hacienda Chichén Itzá (CAM, exp. 726 San Felipe extension). From the mid-1920s until this time, Licenciado José Casares Martínez de Arredondo, attorney for Thompson, repeatedly protested the expropriation of the Hacienda property. In a letter of November 21, 1928, Casares Martínez, on behalf of his client, the “exiled” owner of record, argues against the expropriation of a parcel of land belonging to the Hacienda:

7 “Parte de last tierras de la hacienda pasaron posteriormente a particulares, y en cuanto a los objetos extraídos del Cenote, se encuentran en poder del Peabody Museum, salvo ciento número de joyas de ro y cobre y adornos ed jade que fueron restituidas a su propietario legal, la Nación Mexicana” (Ruz Lhullier: 46-47).

8 While the reforms which led to the establishment of ejidos in the milpa zone of Yucatan began to take effect in the 1920s, it was more than a decade later that a Chapters Five and Six present an extended discussion of land reform as well as a case study of the expropriation of two haciendas in northwestern Yucatan, which began in 1937.
The ejido grant which purports to affect the lands which belong to the hacienda Chichén Itzá and annexes under the ownership of my client Edward H. Thompson, in extension of 1,521 hectares, 48 ares. As this land grant is completely illegal, I plan to challenge it by means of this memorandum before the local Agrarian Commission, in order to resolve that this affectation shall not proceed (CAM Exp. 205).9

The lawyer goes on to argue that the amount of land requested by the residents of, in this case, Ticimul, is excessive, and that his client’s property rights are in danger of being violated. Why, he asked, is the hacienda property a target for expropriation when there are abundant terrenos nacionales in the area? (CAM, exp. 205). Agrarian authorities from Ticimul had previously requested enough land in order to create 52-hectare land parcels for 55 ejidatarios, or eligible farmers, from their community.

The records of both the ejido grants for a number of communities as well as those on file with the Public Property registry demonstrate considerable confusion regarding the amount of property that Thompson actually held under the title “Hacienda Chichén Itzá and Annexes.” A report concerning the grant for the creation of the ejido of Xkatun of November 21, 1934 states

…but in itself the hacienda has a far greater size, as its American owner Edward H. Thompson was acquiring lands, purchasing them at unjustly low prices or denouncing them as abandoned or uncultivated. These lands were then annexed to the main hacienda, without reporting to the Public Property Records office (CAM exp. Xkatun).10

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9 La dotación de ejido se trata de afectar terrenos pertenecientes a la finca Chichén Itzá y anexas de la propiedad de mi mandante Edward H. Thompson, en una extensión de 1,521 hectáreas, 48 áreas. Como esa dotación es del todo ilegal me apresumo a impugnarla por medio de este memorial ante esa Comisión Local Agraria, a fin de que resuelva que la misma afectación no es procedente. (CAM exp. 205).

10 …pero propiamente la hacienda tiene mucha mayor superficie pues su propietario el estaunidense Edward H. Thompson fue adquiriendo tierras, ya sea comparándolas a precios irrisorios o denunciándolas como baldíos, tierras que fue anexado a la hacienda principal, pero sin hacer manifestaciones al Catastro y Registro Público de la Propiedad (CAM exp. Xkatun)
This letter was written by Sebastian Montejo and signed by the agrarian committee officials of the ejido of Xkatub, Gregorio Dzul and Andres Poot. It was clear to these officials that a quantity of land far greater than the limits of the pequeña propiedad (300 hectares) still remained attached to the Hacienda, even after extensive expropriations by several ejidos established in the immediate area.

The confusion over the ownership status of the lands of the Hacienda Chichén Itzá was of great advantage to Fernando Barbachano Peón, a wealthy Yucatec who as early as the 1920s had an eye for the touristic possibilities of the Peninsula. In 1932, Barbachano Peón purchased from “Edward H. Thompson, married, ingeniero, 70 years old, with the consent of his wife Enriqueta T. Thompson, also 70, of Evanston, Illinois” two hectares of land (lot number 2529) for 200 pesos (RP Folio 385, Tomo 2B). We may deduce from the archival record that upon these two hectares was constructed the original portion of the Mayaland Hotel beginning in 1930, two years before the legal transfer of ownership. This was the first in a series of purchases of various lots comprising a large portion of Chichén Itzá.11

By the mid-1930s, a particular part of the lands which had belonged to the Hacienda Chichén Itzá began to be identified in the ejido records and maps as an archaeological zone. From this time on, the areas of monument concentration took on a special status, and efforts were made to identify these areas as in need of protective measures. Perhaps the most explicit statement of the early importance of the ownership of the land containing the archaeological ruins (an area defined as a forty-eight hectare nucleus) is found in the request for a second extension to be granted to the ejido of
Xcalacoop in 1954. Xcalacoop had already received 643 hectares in the original ejido grant (March 26, 1935), to which was added 432 hectares as a first extension (August 26, 1942). Finding themselves with an increasing population and lack of land resources, the ejido community filed a request for more land, a typical procedure for growing ejido communities, especially in this area of the Peninsula.

Barbachano strongly protested the granting of the extension, arguing that it would invade the monument zone of the property. Exactly what part of Chichén would be affected by the Xcalacoop ejido extension? Portions to the east and south of the former Casa Principal of the hacienda, on which are found “key monuments of national and international importance, among them those which form Chichén Viejo and the Three Lintels,” areas which have to remain “absolutely clean...inasmuch as it interests their conservation for tourism and so that these archaeologically valuable things not be destroyed.” (CAM exp. 797, October 21, 1954). The same document states the wishes expressed by Barbachano and “his desire to cooperate in the conservation and maintenance in the best conditions of the zones of Yucatan in which archaeological monuments are found, for the interests of the nation and the state in the archaeological monuments that attract both the scientific world as well as national and foreign tourism.”

A memorandum of April 14, 1954 to the Comisión Agraria Mixta in Mérida from their own surveyor leans toward supporting Barbachano in the name of protection of the archaeological monuments. The memo supports the designation of the 48-hectare site nucleus, stating that even the surrounding land is covered with monuments, all of which were being damaged by agricultural practices. Arguing in favor of the hotel owner, the

11 Soon after Barbachano Peón began acquiring land at Chichén Itzá, he also began to purchase
memo states that well before Xcalacoop’s request for the second ejido extension, Barbachano had filed for a “solicitud de inafectabilidad ganadera” with the principal objective of saving the archaeological monuments.

This *solicitud* refers to a request to the agrarian commission for a twenty-five year concession on a piece of property for the purposes of raising cattle. Concessions were granted if the property owner met the following requirements: that he held at least 200 head of cattle, that the cattle-raising was for business purposes, and that the piece of land in question was located in an area where the agrarian needs of all population centers were already satisfied, or if there were other available non-granted lands within a seven-kilometer radius. The benefits of this kind of concession are obvious: if the concession is granted, the land cannot be expropriated. Further, the size limits of the concessions were much more extensive than those set on the *pequeña propiedad*. The 1942 Agrarian Code (Titulo Segundo, Capítulo VIII, Sección 2, “Redistribución de Propiedad Agraria,” Artículos 115-126) sets the following boundary limits for such concessions between 300 hectares (for highest quality land) and 5,000 hectares (for lowest quality land). This rule allowed for some flexibility. The judgments as to the quality of the land (which, in ratio with number of heads of cattle, determined the legal size of the land concession) were most likely made on an ad-hoc basis, the results of which were easily manipulated.

Adding to this fluidity in determination of concession size is the clause in the 1942 Agrarian Code stating that a concessioner might request twice as much land as that determined to be necessary for the amount of cattle held at the time of the original request. Clearly, the amounts of land that could be controlled through this concession

large tracts from the Hacienda Uxmal.
system were much greater than the more rigid national restrictions on the small property holdings retained by hacienda owners after expropriations. A former hacienda, such as Hacienda Chichén Itzá, transformed into a small private property holding could not legally exceed more than 150 hectares of irrigated land (riego), or alternatively, 300 hectares of rainfed land (temporal). Barbachano’s application for a concession of inafectabilidad ganadera effectively allowed him to increase the size of his landholding, though by exactly what amount it is difficult to say.

The same Memorandum concerning Barbachano Peón’s concern over controlling the land containing the greatest concentration of monumental ruins relates the solution offered by the wealthy businessman purporting his role as steward of cultural patrimony: “Señor Barbachano Peon with the objective of avoiding as much as possible the disappearance and destruction of the meritorious monuments, has acquired, at high cost, the property of the finca Halakal in exchange.” Barbachano, circumventing state or national agrarian officials, had proposed a deal to the local farmers. Barbachano offered a land swap deal to Xcalacoop which was eventually accepted by the ejido. 158 hectares of land, known as Halakal, located five kilometers to the northeast of Xcalacoop was purchased by Barbachano and then given to Xcalacoop in exchange for their concession of any lands within the 48-hectare monument zone. Ejidatarios of Xcalacoop were savvy to looking out for their own interests, initially protested. Not only was Halakal

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12 The 1917 Constitution makes the following provisions: 150 hectares for land dedicated to the growing of cotton, or anything else with irrigation; 300 hectares for land dedicated to the cultivation of bananas, sugar cane, coffee, henequen, olives, vanilla, cacao, or fruit trees. In the case of cattle, the clause states (rather than a specific extension) no more property than necessary to maintain a maximum of 500 head of cattle.

13 Folio 69, Libro 1, Tomo 12B indicates that the quantity of land was 148 hectares, purchased for 1,500 pesos
located at an inconvenient distance from town, the land was *monte bajo*, low scrubland of poor quality. Much to his own benefit, Barbachano finally did reach an agreement with the *ejidatarios* of Xcalancoop “that of the Hacienda Chichén Itzá only 410 hectares were to be affected, only in the area indicated through mutual agreement” (CAM exp. 719).

The arrangement and the ejido extension was officially approved on May 14, 1955 (CAM exp. 797),

Despite the incredible amount of development, both archaeological and touristic/economic, at Chichén, this is one key factor which underlies just what can be done with the zone and how is that it has remained in private hands of the Barbachano family for more than fifty years. It is difficult to say how much land came into and remained in the hands of the Barbachano family during and after the several decades of expropriation of the hacienda Chichén Itzá. Not only is the archival trail itself muddy, but the large size of the original hacienda property, the deliberate falsification of this size, and the number of interests (mostly family members and inheritors) in getting a piece of the hacienda complicates the case dramatically.

An additional complicating factor is Thompson’s ownership and the claims of his inheritors. It wasn’t until 1951 (RP, Folio 167, Libro 1, Tomo 10-B) that a document cites the names of Thompson’s descendants as inheritors of a portion of the former hacienda property. This document relates to the sale and transfer of property to Fernando Barbachano Peon for 800 hectares bought for $10,000 from Edward J. Thompson, Ernest H. Thompson, Alice T. Fischer and Margarita F. Diddel. Subsequently, this land was divided by Barbachano Peón into five pieces. Between 1957 and 1970, the parcels were sold to the following parties: Alfonso Cisneros Canto, Fernando Barbachano Gomez Rul,
Carmen Barbachano Gomez Rul, Rosario Aguilar, and Maria del Carmen Gomez Rul de Barbachano. This document identifies, in effect, the sale of “Chichén Itzá y anexas Yula, Xcatun, Xicatuna, totaling 800 hectares” to Fernando Barbachano Peón.

CIW presence at Chichen

The purchase of Chichén Itzá by Fernando Barbachano Peón, the construction of the Hotel Mayaland, and the Hotel Hacienda Chichén Itzá, and other tourism development efforts would have been relatively insignificant without the opening of Chichén Itzá to the possibilities of mass tourism through the reconstruction and restoration of large portions of the archaeological zone. The institution responsible for much of this is the Carnegie Institution of Washington (CIW).

The Carnegie Institution both literally and figuratively entered the field of Maya studies in 1915. The history of Project Chichén Itzá and its director, Sylvanus G. Morley is great importance of the nascent field of American archaeology as it is a large US philanthropic institution and the political and economic relations dispersed along three major areas serving as the topoi of national and international politics, and the social and academic contexts of archaeological research. These topoi form the triangulated nexus of Washington, DC, México City, and Yucatán. In the second decade of the twentieth century, the CIW was only beginning to launch their anthropology division, México was embroiled in the political instability of war, and the archaeology of the Maya area was more adventurer’s folklore than scientific endeavor.

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14 It was reported to me by locals at Chichén that Rosario Aguilar was the lesbian partner of Maria del Carmen.
Morley was hired onto the CIW staff to head the Chichén Itzá project almost ten years before the project was actually begun in situ, in 1924. Convincing the CIW to fund the project through a $20,000 grant proved to be only an initial hurdle. Of particular concern to the executive committee of the philanthropic organization was the question of whether an expedition should be attempted because of the strained relationship between the United States and México (Brunhouse 1971: 74). “The Carnegie’s policy of study, restoration, and publication of the scientific results coincided perfectly with the new sensitive feelings of Latin Americans” (Brunhouse 1971: 78). As a result of strategic negotiations between México City and Washington, DC, Yucatán became a fertile and open ground for scientific research. In these negotiations, perhaps each side saw themselves as the primary beneficiary; as Brunhouse states, “…Morley was able to carry on work where he wished; México, Guatemala, and Honduras benefited by restored, attractive ruins; the scientific world profited from the elaborate reports published by the Institution” (1971: 78).

One cause of concern for Carnegie then-director Woodward when Morley was appointed to the staff in 1914 was the actual value of archaeology as a science, and in the interest of promoting the investigative aims of the project, made it explicitly clear that Project Chichén Itzá was not one driven by a museum-collecting mentality.15 Though it does not seem as though this would have otherwise been the orientation of a researcher such as Morley, one need only consider that he did act as a one-time courier for Edward

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15 Before the concession was granted to the foreign archaeological project by the Mexican government, Morley approached the issue with Yucatán’s Inspector of Monuments, José Reygadas, and “Reygadas admitted that there would be criticism from the anti-American press in México City, but he believed that the Carnegie’s policy of not taking artifacts out of the country would be the trump card in favor of the concession” (Brunhouse 1971: 185).
H. Thompson, smuggling artifacts dredged from the Sacred Cenote back to the Peabody Museum at Harvard (Brunhouse 1971: 38).

The CIW, under new director John C. Merriam, negotiated a concession contract with the Mexican federal government, and initiated Project Chichén Itzá in 1924. At the same time, Morley sought favor with Yucatán’s state governor, Felipe Carrillo Puerto. According to Clause 1 of the contract between the Mexican government and the Carnegie,

Permission is hereby granted to the Carnegie Institution of Washington - hereinafter designated the concessionaire - for carrying out archaeological explorations and excavations, as well as works necessary for reparation and reconstruction in the archaeological zone of Chichén Itzá, State of the Yucatán. In addition to the archaeological works, the concessionaire may effect in the State of Yucatan complementary studies of engineering, architecture, art, stratigraphy, physical anthropology, linguistic studies, history and in general any other studies relating to Maya civilization.

The Project, with Morley at the helm, began nearly a decade of work based in Chichén. The core members and constant stream of visitors stayed in the hacienda’s Casa Principal, rented from Edward Thompson.16 In a March 23, 1933 memorandum summarizing a conversation between John C. Merriam, then president of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and Fernando González Roa, Ambassador of México to the United States, “Dr. Merriam spoke of the Institution’s desire to have the Chichén region developed with an increasing area for the archaeological zone…with a view of making the region a very beautiful place” (CIW 1933: 1).

The Carnegie Institution and Morley carried out work at Chichén Itzá for more than twenty years, simultaneously striving to achieve three goals:

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16 The casa principal was in the process of becoming converted into a guesthouse, or hotel, which it converted to under the later ownership of the Barbachano family.
1. Conduct the work in a manner calculated to create a feeling of confidence on the part of the Mexican government and people in the good faith of foreign scientific agencies;
2. To handle the site so as to make it a permanent example of the artistic genius and accomplishments of the Maya
3. To develop Chichén Itzá as a focal point for correlated research (CIW 1936: 6)

Working in the 1930s alongside the CIW were Mexican archaeologists under the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP), by way of the Subdirección de Población Colonial. Mexican archaeologist Manuel Cirerol was in charge of work at Chichén Itzá. From 1926 until 1936, the SEP carried works explorations and restorations in Chichén Itzá. The mission of the Mexican agencies was to reconstruct the buildings into ruins were comprehensible to the public without altering the original constructions (Peraza Lopez and Rejón Patrón 1989: 16). By 1936 two sides of the Castillo were reconstructed, as it remains until today. Work continued less intensively from 1938 until 1942, when the Carnegie’s concession ran out and the project disbanded. During the years of the CIW project at Chichén, the project staff lived in a series of bungalows built near the main house of the Hacienda, which was purchased by the Barbachano family in the late 1930s.17

As early as 1940, the state government of Yucatán planned the development of the zone with the cooperation of Secretariat for Public Education (SEP). Through the first decades of excavation and reconstruction (approximately 1926-1936), the Mexican agency Monumentos Prehispanicos (under the auspices of SEP) worked alongside the archaeologists of the Carnegie Institution of Washington. While the CIW archaeologists worked to explore structures including the Temple of the Warriors, the Caracol (or the
Observatory), Mexican archaeologists with the Prehispanic Monuments department carried out work on the Castillo and the Ball Court. In 1936, the INAH, as described in the previous chapter, was officially founded and took charge of all work within the site.

The site of Chichén Itzá became an officially delimited archaeological zone in 1950. In 1977-1978, the zone was newly defined under the direction of Peter Schmidt, who remains the archaeological director of the site. During this time, various archaeological investigations were carried out, the majority of which were externally financed, but under the regulation of the INAH. In 1977-1978, at the request of the Dirección General of the INAH, a territorial delimitation was carried out in the archaeological zone of Chichén Itzá under the supervision of archaeologist Peter Schmidt, of the Centro Regional Yucatán. In 1984 a northern amplification was made, in preparation for the elevation of the zone to one of the few in Mexico protected by presidential decree, which was formalized in 1985.

The delimitation of archaeological zones is the responsibility of the Subdirección de Registro Público de Monumentos y Zonas Arqueológicos (SRPMZA) of the INAH. Through delimitation, cultural properties (artifacts and monuments) are marked and brought more visibly under the protection of federal cultural property laws. The practice of delimitation not only decides the boundaries of the archaeological zone, but also has profound effects as well on what the zone shall contain, and thus, what gets marked or not marked for heritage status. "The delimitation of an archaeological zone is the act of

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17 Though the literature currently distributed at the Hotel claims the resort to be housed in a sixteenth century colonial landmark, it seems more likely that the oldest parts of the hacienda represent seventeenth century constructions.

18 These projects include the series of excavations of the Sacred Cenote, of which the largest and most costly plan was implemented by the National geographic Society in the 1960s.
measuring what will be protected as evidence of prehispanic cultures” (Sánchez Caero 1995: 187). The delimitation, and others that followed through the 1980s and 1990s signaled that the site was slated for more development.

The archaeological sites of Chichén Itzá and Uxmal, located in the Puuc region of western Yucatán, are both privately held properties containing archaeological ruins. This status is simultaneously both odd and remarkably common. Legally, this form of ownership works in the following way. An archaeological zone may be situated on a variety of different kinds of property. The property may be national lands, ejido lands, or privately owned property. The land is distinguished from the monuments, with the monuments figured as national property, under federal jurisdiction. Around each monument in a defined monument zone there exists a twenty-meter boundary marking the monument’s buffer zone, acting to delimit the monument’s primary sphere of influence. In certain heritage parlance this kind of a buffer zone is referred to as a curtilage, the immediate area around a structure acting as an “envelope around the main item” (Aplin 2002: 122). The curtilage is particularly important in archaeological heritage for two reasons. First, the notion that archaeological or historic monuments are part of an integrated cultural landscape has become more prevalent in the past decades. The second reason is relative to archaeological science. For reasons of archaeological investigation and site interpretation, it is important to protect areas surrounding monuments to help maintain their context and integrity. Beyond this twenty-meter perimeter, or curtilage, in force around monuments such as those at Chichén Itzá, a private owner has control of the land. For these reasons, under current Mexican cultural patrimony legislation, a private owner is not free to do whatever he pleases with that land
up to the monument's buffer zone. The curtilage is a key factor in heritage site management and development. According to INAH regulations, the boundaries around a monument are distinguished into two types of zones. Zone A refers to the monument's immediate perimeter (exact width may vary). Inside of Zone A, there is full restriction on land use. Only scientific investigations and other activities directly linked to maintenance and conservation activities may be carried out in Zone A. There is, however, a provision that allows for activities directly related to the provision of basic services necessary to the improvement of the monument zone (Sánchez Caero 1995: 195). In Zone B, the secondary perimeter, partial restrictions on land use are put into place. These internal zoning differentiations act as jurisdictional divisions as well, designating where private property lines end and federal zones begin.

What are private owner's responsibilities to monuments? Article 6 of the Ley Federal sobre Monumentos y Zonas Arqueológicos. Artísticos e Históricos (1972 [1995]) states that the owner of an artistic or historic monument is obligated, under law, to conserve the monument; if they should be inclined to restore the monument, this should be carried out under the authority of the INAH. Further, for owners of properties bordering monuments, any excavation, consolidation, demolition, or construction projects in the area immediately surrounding the monument, which might affect its “character” must have permission from the INAH as well. Article 10 dictates that in the even if a property owner is not carrying out any conservation of restoration measures, the tasks may be taken over by the Institute. Tax deductions and certain exemptions are offered (Article 11) to property owners who undertake these responsibilities. According to current workers at Chichén Itzá, the Barbachano family has consistently maintained a
cordial and cooperative relationship with the INAH and very few locals are willing to criticize the Barbachano family, save the occasional reference to their wealth and power.

_The Monstrous State and the Magical Ruins_

The contrast between the archaeological zone of Chichén Itzá before the times of the CIW and the Mexican restoration projects, before the construction of the Mayaland and Hotel Hacienda Chichén, and today is quite remarkable. When Fernando Barbachano began to buy up the property of the former cattle hacienda in the 1930s, what crystal ball told of the future of what Chichén today has become? Citing the large incomes derived from tourist visits to its heritage sites, a 1999 newspaper article suggests that the state of Yucatán is perhaps the most privileged in the nation for the apparent “magic” of its archaeological ruins:

Yucatán is a privileged state, with some 1,600 archaeological sites, which make tourism one of its principal sources of income: last year, 756,000 visitors spent an average of three days in Yucatán. In Chichén Itzá, the principal zone in the ensemble of stones with old magic, entrance fees totaled more than 50 million pesos in 1998. Yucatan is also the state that leads in archaeological investigation: approximately 1,500 people, among these archaeologists, day laborers, masons, and technical personnel work in the twelve zones that are taken care of at the present time, of the 16 opened to the public; the INAH state office, in the last two years, has managed a budget of 23 million pesos for investigation and patrimonial restoration. (cul-yucatan.html, 9 Sept. 1999)

How is the state of Yucatán, despite complaints of lack of funding and personnel shortages, able to sustain these high levels of both tourism and archaeological investigation? Perhaps the ruins do have a certain kind of magic, but so does the state. Along with foreign scientific institutions and the transnational tourism industry, the Mexican state has multiple ways and means for utilizing the magic of the Maya ruins, making them not only endlessly signifying, but endlessly consumable as well. In his
analysis of how history is reinvented in the politics of the state, Coronil (1997) addresses
the state’s symbolic sleight of hand in the mobilization of key signs and symbols of the
national imaginary. The state’s prestidigitation lends it a magical quality, alluding to “an
extraordinary reality as well as to the selective presentation of the elements that create the
illusion of its existence through invisible tricks that exploit distraction and diversion” (3).
The following discussion considers the creation of the Yucatán state government’s
creation of the Patronato CULTUR, a state-owned tourism agency developed in the
1980s, and how this agency has participated in another form of privatizing the
archaeological site of Chichén Itzá. The Patronato CULTUR has consistently utilized the
public discourse of the provision of better-quality touristic services in order to set in place
financial arrangements which, in effect, divert income from archaeological zones to the
state, rather than federal, government. Towards the conclusion, I suggest that the
example of CULTUR demonstrates just one way in which the state intervenes in the
exploitation of archaeological heritage resources, representing a state privatization of the
federal.

It is important to look briefly toward the development of the tourism industry in
Yucatán over the past few decades in order to better understand the historical context of
the emergence of the Patronato CULTUR. The first phase of touristic development in
Yucatán took place approximately between 1940 and 1960. This period is marked by
infrastructural developments such as the construction of highways, hotels, and
restaurants. Following this period, “Tourism developed slowly and without any strategic
regulation or supervision both regionally and locally throughout the 1960s and 1970s”
(Castañeda 1996: 85). Tourism became a more concerted state project in the 1970s,
based on the development of Cancun as an international tourism destination. All of this began to change with the state’s tourism promotion plans brought into effect in the early 1980s. However, for the state of Yucatán, the 1980s boom of tourism to Cancun (located in the neighboring state of Quintana Roo) actually affected a decline in visitors to other parts of the Peninsula. Between 1980 and 1985, overall tourism to the state of Yucatán decreased approximately forty-eight percent. But at the same time, visits to Chichén Itzá increased twenty-two percent (Quintal Avilés 1995: 119). Thus, while destinations such as the colonial city of Mérida paled in comparison to Cancun, the appeal of archaeological ruins was increased. For example, in 1983, Chichén Itzá captured 52.6% of the 698,808 visits to archaeological zones in Yucatán, followed by Uxmal, with 21% and Kabah, with 6.9% (Monografía de Yucatán 1983: 151; cited in Peraza López and Rejón Patrón 1989: 20),

The spatial reorganization of Chichén Itzá beginning in the 1980s was partially a result of a 1981 municipal plan for urban development in this region of Yucatán. This spatial reorganization opened new spaces for the state while closing off access to economic benefits deriving from the zone to others, mostly local community residents. As we will see, the state continues to benefit from this reorganization scheme, while local residents from Pisté and its smaller surrounding communities remain excluded, and in some cases, physically ejected, from the zone’s redrawn perimeter. This new perimeter, which began to emerge after a road improvement project, is a border simultaneously economic, social, and ideological. The reorganization of the zone by the hand of the Yucatán state government was intended to both (re)modernize the zone to make it more
appropriate for high-volume, high cash-flow tourism as well as to better contain the zone in order to control the economic activities taking place within it.

As part of the improvement on the highway from Mérida to Cancun, a detour of the central public area of Chichén Itzá was created in 1982-1983. The Old Road, which had crossed the archaeological zone within meters of the Castillo, was rerouted to make a wider loop around the zone’s perimeter. In the additional enclosed space, an entrance driveway, parking lot, and large entrance building dedicated to the provision of tourist services was erected. These activities were coordinated under the Plan de Desarrollo Integral de la Zona Arqueológica de Chichén Itzá. Opened in 1987, the main entrance building, known as the “Parador turistico,” is where tickets are sold and various commercial concessions (food, gifts, etc.) rent space. The Parador plays a major role in the spatial reorganization of the zone, not to mention its role in the orchestration of workers, guides, and tourists in the zone.\(^{19}\)

In the course of my ethnographic fieldwork at Chichén, it was often expressed to me that the site suffered from chronic lack of resources as well as from insufficient custodial staff to patrol the extensive grounds open to the public. As hundreds of tourists drifted by, shepherded by multilingual guides shouting an waving brightly colored handkerchiefs as flags, I would ask of Chichén’s custodians, “With this many visitors paying a large entrance fee, how is it that the site does not have enough money?” One worker had a particularly demonstrative answer. He pointed toward the structure of the

\(^{19}\) See Castañeda (1996) for detailed discussion of how ambulant vendors were displaced from the archaeological zone and relocated to the “Tianguis,” a handicraft vending area created along with the parador.
CULTUR’s Parador Turístico at the zone’s entrance, the symbol of the distinct imposing presence of the state at Chichén: “Because of that monster over there.”

In the mid-1980s, the state government of Yucatán developed the concept and agency of "Unidades de Servicio," “a modern formula that seeks to offer to the visitor all of the communities of a tourism center integrally planned in order to furnish the best comfort and ease during their recreational or cultural visit a the archaeological zones of Chichén Itzá, Uxmal, Dzibitchaltun, the Caves of Lol-Tun and Balankanché, as well as Izamal” (which includes both archaeological and historic monuments). The services offered include site museums, auditoriums with video projection capabilities, guide services, and sales of artisanry, photography equipment, restaurants, telephones, bathrooms, parking, taxi service, and a first-aid center. In the caves of Lol-Tun y Balankanché the tours are complemented by a light and sound show. At Chichén Itzá and Uxmal nightly presentations of a narrative light and sound show entertain visitors in the early evening hours. In the following years, a light and sound show system was installed to attract more tourism. The light and sound show was created through the participation of three different groups: INAH, SECTUR (Secretary of Tourism), and the state government of Yucatán under the archaeological supervision of Peter Schmidt (Peraza López and Rejón Patrón 1989: 17). A similar show was first installed at Uxmal. By 1993, the initial round of improvements was complete. With the zone now cleaned and cleared, Chichén Itzá was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Through this naming,

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20 "una fórmula moderna que busca brindar al visitante todas las comunidades de un centro turístico integralmente planeado para proporcionar un mayor confort y facilidades durante su visita de recreo y culturales.”

21 A much more sophisticated laser light and sound show has recently been installed at the site of Teotihuacan near Mexico City. This is the single site which receives the highest number of visitors per annum.
the zone shifted discourses from the patrimony of the nation to *Patrimonio de la Humanidad*.

The light and sound shows at Uxmal and Chichén Itzá mark the nascence of CULTUR, which began as the *Patronato de luz y sonido, luz y color de las zonas arqueológicas* with the following charge, "to carry out under its responsibility the light and sound show in a continuous and permanent fashion during the agreed upon time period" (Peraza López and Rejón Patrón 1989: 43). Interestingly enough, the agency was created as a non-profit *asociación civil* (NGO), through a convention signed by the Secretary of Tourism, the State government of Yucatán, the INAH, and the *Fondo Nacional de Fomento Turístico* (FONATUR), with financial backing through the Banco de Comercio. Thus, CULTUR’s roots are to be found in the integration of state, federal, and private sector interests. However, the character of the relationship between these agencies and institutions, both formal and informal, have changed in the passage of two decades since its initial formation.

CULTUR, the *Patronato de las Unidades de Servicios Culturales y Turísticos del Estado de Yucatán*, is one of three state agencies dedicated to the provision of tourist services. Yucatán is the only state with a state agency such as CULTUR. When visiting archaeological zones in other state in Mexico, nearly the entire infrastructure of the heritage sites is provided by INAH. In sites such as Chichén Itzá, Uxmal, Ek Balam, and others, one enters the archaeological zone literally under the auspices of CULTUR, moving from the state jurisdictioned area across the border into the federally jurisdictioned official archaeological zone.
On November 23, 1987, the Patronato CULTUR changed both its formal name as well as it legal constitution. At the time of its initial establishment, the organization held the legal status of asociación civil, a non-profit civic association dedicated to the provision of the light and sound show at the sites of Uxmal and Chichén Itzá. With the state government’s desire to expand 1) tourist services beyond the light and sound shows, and 2) capture resources beyond the archaeological zones of Chichén and Uxmal, and 3) lose the pretension of being a non-profit association, CULTUR was converted into a paraestatal agency under the office of the Governor of Yucatán. In the words of former director Juan José Martín Pacheco, CULTUR was transformed into a “decentralized governmental agency under the administration of the governor...whose function is to work between the INAH and the state government in the provision of infrastructural and other services.” The agency describes its current goals and objectives:

The objective of the Patronato CULTUR is to use the archaeological and touristic resources to the advantage of the state and its residents; to promote an increase in number of visitors to Yucatán by offering a higher and better quality of services through the Unidades de Servicios and the entities it administers; the diffusion, promotion and rescue of the valuable archaeological and touristic resources as well as the administration, promotion, and diffusion of the “Siglo XXI” [Twenty-first Century] Convention center of Yucatán (cultur_c.html).

The work of CULTUR is clearly integral to Yucatán’s state and regional economies. According to a state development plan recently put into effect by Yucatán’s PAN governor Patricio Patrón Laviada, “the state aspires to a balanced and sustainable, prosperous and dynamic regional development, with optimal productive activities to take advantage of the ecological, historical, and cultural resources of the region” (Yucatán State Development Plan, 2001-2007). As a particularly lucrative state industry front,

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22 Pacheco, CULTUR’s first director, is a long time hotelier and tourism agent.
CULTUR plays the key role in modernizing the tourism industry in Yucatán, which held the state, at least in theory, meet these goals. There are at least two factors in the formula for modern tourism that the state agency attempts to address: the most auto-beneficial exploitation of cultural and natural resources and, at the same time, and the maintenance of high service standards for visitor comfort and convenience. The following passage from Frommer’s travel web-guide to Yucatán nicely illustrates how these two elements work in conjunction in a commentary on the tourist services available at the coastal ecological park of Celestún: “the state agency CULTUR has come into Celestún and established order where once there was chaos...you’ll find modern facilities with a snack bar, clean bathrooms, and a ticket window” (meridamexico.html). In the case of Celestún (located on the northwestern Gulf coast about an hour’s drive from Mérida), CULTUR was able to stake a primordial claim in the ecological resources of this coastal community. Because no federal agency as pervasive as the INAH’s control over archaeological resources commands jurisdictional control over “ecological heritage,” CULTUR has been able to orchestrate this area as an ecotouristic destination, complete with guided boat tours. Castañeda (1996; and Himpele 1997) provides another, more compelling case of the order established by CULTUR, during the mid-1980s “Artisan invasion” of Chichén Itzá. Against the backdrop of state-sponsored site development throughout the 1980s occurred an intensification of local vendors, mostly from Pisé, entering the site, selling artisanry, snacks and other souvenirs to tourists inside the archaeological zone. “Order was established through the coerced relocation of the illegal and itinerant vendors into a handicraft market constructed just for the puropose of extracting the invaders” (87).
Popular opinion, particularly amongst those working in and around the tourism industry in Yucatán, regarding CULTUR find the agency to be solely a means for funneling money directly from the stat’s cultural, natural, and historic resources directly to the Governor’s pocket. However, allude some, if one attempts to track the income and expenditures of this agency of the state government, neither the figures nor their trails exist. The agency operates as a “caja chica”: a personal investment account for the Governor. From the point of view of some within the INAH, they find that state’s capacity to garner income through activities taking place directly within the federal jurisdiction inside the archaeological zone’s boundaries to be indubitably unjust, if not Constitutionally illegal. CULTUR receives 66% of the sale of each eighty-five peso (approximately eight US dollars) entrance ticket to the zone. There have been many backlashes to the raise in entrance fees, from both the visiting public and the tourism industry. The increase in CULTUR’s fees was announced without consulting the providers of [tourist] services and without forewarning them, generating problems within the travel agencies themselves (Diario de Yucatán 1999 April 4: 5). The rationale for this fee structure and its legality within the jurisdictional operating rules set forth by the INAH works in the following way: the CULTUR fee is exclusively for the light and sound show; it is not an entrance fee to the ruins. Therefore, CULTUR is not actually intervening in the “territory” of the federal archaeological zone. INAH employees at Chichén Itzá find this peculiar twist of logic unsatisfactory. The light and sound show fee charged by CULTUR is not an optional “extra” charge. Visitors to the sites, many of them argue, don’t even realize what they are paying for. “The way the light and sound show is advertised, it is promoted as a free, bonus attraction to the archaeological site,”
one site custodian related to me. He told of numerous confrontations between INAH wardens and tourists over the high cost of entering the zone, “If this is national patrimony,” argued one visitor from central Mexico, “and we are Mexican citizens, our visit should be free!”

“State privatization of national resources” seems like a contradiction in terms, but through the Patronato CULTUR, the state, in effect, “privatizes” away from the federal domain the exclusive jurisdiction of archaeological zones. How can a state agency “privatize” federal resources, and further, how might we understand this practice through the predominant definitions and specific examples of privatization? In Chapter One, I outlined the different forms of state/private sector relationships that exist under the general category of privatization. These forms range from the complete or partial selling-off of public enterprises, to the deregulation or demonopolization of the activities of the public enterprise, to the ceding to the private sector of one or several of the activities of a public enterprise without the express transfer of ownership away from the state. Though the formation of CULTUR is not representative of these particular types of “official” versions of privatization, is does follow, if you will, a similar “spirit.” This is especially evident in the manner through which CULTUR has captured much of the productive capacity of heritage resources in Yucatán through intervention into the federal realm.

CULTUR, with its origins dating back to 1978, is presently a state agency which has garnered control over the patrimonial resource of Chichén Itzá. In its formation, CULTUR anticipated the growing practice of decentralization of government agencies in Mexico. While key historical periods such as the Porfiriato (1877-1911) and the post-Revolution (1910) period are marked by serious political efforts toward centralization,
the current of the last two decades, backed by neoliberal policies, is toward the reorganization of the federal administrative system through decentralization. The goal of decentralization is to transfer power and resources to lower levels of government in order to allow for local participation and more direct participation in decision-making. As greater autonomy comes to the state level, municipalities may also begin to play a more important role. Thus decentralization is linked with democratization. Rodríguez (1997) cites a speech by former President de la Madrid: “To decentralize is to democratize and to democratize is to decentralize “ (7).

Privatization and decentralization are often linked in government programs, particularly under the influence of neoliberal policies. As Kohl (2202) points out, privatization and decentralization represent two linked strategies, the first geared toward economic reform and the latter toward administrative reform. Together, the intention would be to accomplish the dual task of increasing productivity while promoting greater democracy. However, experiences of such practices throughout Latin America demonstrate that on the economic side, declines in government revenues have led to financial crises and on the administrative side, decentralization might actually impede greater democratization through the retrenchment of local elites (Kohl 2002).

While many moves toward decentralization are efforts at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of bureaucracies, there are a variety of other factors in play in the impulse to decentralize. The creation of the CULTUR agency in Yucatán is not explicitly a decentralizing act (because it never was a federal entity) yet it has the same spirit of the state government taking more control of the territory and resources in their domain. After all, the Patronato CULTUR does not represent a state arm of a formerly
centralized federal agency or institution. Rather, it is a unique, state-created agency based on the exploitation of resources, which are, in a sense, unique to the region. Perhaps its formation is more representative of strategies of "deconcentration" rather than decentralization. According to a study of decentralization in México (Rodríguez 1997), "deconcentration is generally understood as a transfer of functions, powers, and resources to state offices of central (federal) agencies" in which "the states are responsible for the operation of services and programs and for the specific programming of resource utilization in the state agency" (1). Yet the formation and functioning of CULTUR does not seem to fit this definition either. I suggest that one of the only ways it may be understood in terms of decentralization practices is via its relationship with another centralized institution—the INAH. CULTUR, in effect, represents a de facto decentralization of both the jurisdiction as well as the operating practices (through site management and financial arrangements of the yet-to-be decentralized agency, the National Institute of Anthropology and History.  

In the course of this chapter, I have chronicled a series of different forms of ownership and forms of privatization at Chichén Itzá. In the case of the state of Yucatan’s establishment of the Patronato CULTUR, I argued that this marks of form of "state privatization." Typically, we think of privatization as a transition from state ownership to the private, non-state sector. In the creation of CULTUR, however, the state acted in such a way to "privatize" the resources of the federally jurisdictioned

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23 Every few years represents a new cycle of rumors alluding to the impending decentralization of the INAH, but as we saw in the case of the organized and vocal resistance to the "privatization" proposal, labor unions would no doubt quickly manifest an effective opposition to decentralization. As it stands right now, many of the benefits associated with employment by the INAH are specifically federal job benefits (working hour limitations, paid holidays, and uniform allowances, to name a few) that workers would be unwilling to give up.
archaeological zone to move directly into the state's hands rather than all resources
funneled through the federal agency, the INAH.

Conclusion

If the archaeological zone of Chichén Itzá were to be solely in the control of
private interests important effects at the local level might occur in terms of 1) physical
access to the site by local residents, 2) formal employment arrangements for both INAH
and CULTUR employees, and 3) income benefits for informal sector workers. At the
present time, it is fairly easy for local people to enter the archaeological zone without
paying. There are certain people who cross the zone on bicycles each day, to and from
jobs at the Mayaland Hotel. For residents of Pisté who work at Mayaland, transportation
has to be carefully considered, as the road that connects the two locations (the Mérida-
Cancun highway) has no sidewalk or even shoulder, and contains dangerous blind curves
which have claimed several lives of bicyclers over the years. While the Mayaland Hotel
provides a shuttle bus which picks up employees in front of the *comisaria* in the *centro* of
Pisté at certain hours each day, many others travel by bicycle, and a few by taxi. For
these employees, it is necessary to cut through the archaeological zone, for safety as well
as distance issues. The shortcut through the zone cuts a full kilometer off of the trip from
Pisté to the Mayaland. No formal permission system or permits accompany this right of
passage through the zone. It relies on local practice and custom, and the fact that anyone
who cuts through the zone on a bicycle had better be easily recognizable as a local to site
wardens working inside the zone and at the Mayaland entrance ticket-booth. Coming
from Pisté, local passers-through avoid the main guest entrance at the Parador Turístico, entering instead at the INAH campamento, an alternative entrance that is outside of CULTUR’s territory. Commuters proceed through the zone on the Old Road, now converted into a tourist pedestrian path within the zone. On the Mayaland side, a narrow path swings around the ticket booth, and out of the zone to the hotel parking lot and entrance, thereby facilitating bicyclers who need not dismount to pass through the entrance gates.

The suggestion that the archaeological site of Chichén Itzá has experienced more than a century of different kinds of interventions by private sector interests, as I have presented in this chapter, has, thus far, not been explicitly articulated to the anti-privatization sentiment among promoters of the protection of cultural patrimony in Mexico. Nor is the fact that the ruins presently sit on privately owned land a rallying point for INAH workers and other local residents, mostly in Pisté, in terms of public discourse. At the same time, both of these are situated within national and even international debates on the economics and ethics of private-sector involvement in national cultural patrimony and World Heritage.

The historical trajectory of cultural heritage legislation in Mexican, presented in the previous chapter, has to be read alongside that of land privatization. The nineteenth century was marked by the expropriation of terrenos baldios and community lands. This forced breakdown of indigenous communal land tenure was supported by the institutionalization of a liberal vision of the economy based in the ideal of private property. Owned privately, land could be used more rationally, and thus, more

24 A local price for this trip would by around 15 pesos, while a tourist might pay up to 60 pesos
profitably. Under communal tenure, it was seen, lands were not being used according to their resource potential. The twentieth century recapitulates these arguments through a neoliberal ideology. Once again, land privatization becomes a central issue. Only in 1992 did the privatization of ejidos gain juridical status through a constitutional amendment to Article 27. However, in the case of heritage properties, the effects are yet to be seen.

"Privatization" is not new in the history of the territories of archaeological ruins. This chapter has demonstrated, over a historical span of one hundred years, how rather than being opposed, private sector interests and the nation's cultural patrimony are deeply intertwined, and have coexisted throughout the modern history of the archaeological zone. In fact, this coexistence is virtually impossible to avoid or ignore, given that the territorializing practices of the state have failed, in a certain sense, to fully "contain" archaeological properties. The problem of "containing" archaeological sites may be demonstrated on several counts. First, not all ruins are within the juridically defined zones. Ruins and artifacts dominate the landscape of the Yucatán Peninsula. Limited by funds and personnel, not all of these can be explored, consolidated, and protected under federal law. It is often said that there are nearly 2,000 "archaeological zones" in the state (not the peninsula) of Yucatán. Though the figure seems enormous in itself, this represents just a small percentage of the estimated 250,000 archaeological sites within Mexico's national territory (Sánchez Caero 1995: 195). One might be tempted to affirm, and it would be hard to argue against, the notion that the whole region is, indeed, an archaeological zone itself. Many people throughout Yucatán have located significant
building foundations, carved stones, and other structures within the limits of their own properties. “Artifacts” litter the landscapes, whether pieces of ceramic, whole pottery vessels, or carved stone. Some pieces are tossed aside, some put to convenient uses, and others are displayed. It is commonly understood by scholars and local people that cut stone from nearby archaeological mounds were used in the construction of colonial structures (for the most part, churches) as well as eighteenth- and nineteenth-century hacienda structures.

The distinct presence of artifacts in a modern community significantly affects residents’ everyday lives. Take the following case in point. The community of San Felipe is the closest contemporary settlement to the ruins of Chichén Itzá, separated from the zone’s federal boundaries by the Mayaland Hotel. San Felipe is just across the street from Chichén Itzá. With a population of several hundred, most of San Felipe’s residents are employed in agricultural work combined with some form of income-generating activity associated with the archaeological zone. Though literally only meters from a one of the oldest and most luxurious hotels in Yucatán, San Felipe represents the underside of tourism development: it wasn’t until the 1990s that power lines were extended to the houses of San Felipe residents and their homes were electrified.

San Felipe has merited the close scrutiny of INAH archaeologists, one of whom reported to me his dismay that people are living in this area, which is a federally granted ejido community. “We do what we can to limit the growth of San Felipe. The residents have been instructed of the value of the ruins in which they are living, and what they can and cannot do.” Many are reluctant to notify authorities not for fear of the discoveries, but rather for the inconvenience that would arise should the INAH archaeologists want to
excavate the area. Along with this reluctance to “officially” report structures or artifacts is a pride in having them on one’s own property, as many were readily, and even boastfully, revealed to me. In cases where necessities such as road improvement occur, as happened several years ago in Pisté, these projects must be carried out under the watchful eye of an INAH representative.

While “ruins” are an accessory of everyday life in Yucatán, we saw in Chapter 2 that the juridical frameworks for defining and regulating cultural heritage in Mexico carve out specific zones, marking them for special attention, whether on the part of scientists, tourists, or the state. As marked areas, these archaeological zones pass from being the ordinary (public) space of everyday life to regulated spaces of special distinction and importance. After visiting San Felipe one afternoon for a tour of the numerous “ruins in the backyards” by a founding member of the community, I announced my plan to head over to the archaeological zone. Don Efrain, my “tourguide” pointed out the quickest way inside the zone. We crossed a two-lane road (which runs from Mérida to Cancun, or locally, from Pisté to Valladolid), and entered the scrubby bush, and proceeded along a clearly marked footpath. I, a bit disoriented, was surprised when we emerged after only five minutes of walking and climbing over the remains of a nominal fence, directly behind the Temple of the Warriors, immediately within the archaeological site center. I use this anecdote to illustrate that even within the highly striated space of the archaeological zone, territorialized as it is by private, state, and federal interests, there are still hidden entrances, secret passages which form networks representing the history and local use of the site which continually modify and exceed the zone’s official boundaries.
Dating back at least to the time of the purchase of the Hacienda Chichén Itzá by Edward H. Thompson in 1894, there has been a continuing living presence within the archaeological zone and its immediate surrounding area. Mayas, Mexicans, and foreigners lived within the main part of the Hacienda since before Thompson’s times, and though the property has changed quite a bit, the area, now a hotel, continues to be inhabited by these different groups of people, both residents and guests. Mayaland and Hacienda hotel workers through the 1970s lived in small houses on the hacienda property. During the Carnegie and SEP excavation and restoration project years, the site was continually occupied by different groups, though most of the contracted Maya laborers actually resided in Pisté or another close-by community. Within the ruins themselves, though not more than several hundred meters from the Hacienda main house, lived, from the late 1930s through 1983 the archaeological site’s custodians and their families. It is this latter-mentioned group that lived most fully and for the longest sustained period directly within the ruins. These “INAH families” acted as a different kind of private interest in the site as they became entrepreneurs in the provision of services for the slowly increasing number of visitors to the archaeological zone, at a time of relatively little presence of the State in the archaeological zone. Chapter Four will explore more fully the role of these workers, their families, and the ways in which they have invested their patrimonial claims in Chichén Itzá.
Chapter Four

“Mi Chichén” Custodianship and Patrimony at a World Heritage Site

From the 1940s until the early 1980s, the wardens and custodians working under the auspices of the Centro INAH Yucatán, a state branch of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) in the archaeological zone of Chichén Itzá lived within the site center, in the area now delimitated as the official archaeological zone. In the course of these forty years, the community of INAH workers at Chichén created a community, Chichén Pueblo, amongst the archeological ruins. Though not officially a pueblo, or town, Chichén Pueblo functioned as such for its residents. Fifteen houses stood along what was then the main road running to and through Chichén Itzá, just fifty meters from the Castillo, or Pyramid of Kukulkan. A school, refreshment and gift stands, and a small ticket booth all operated by the families of the INAH custodios complemented the scene that visitors encountered upon their arrival to the world-famous archaeological zone.

At any given time, approximately ten to fifteen families lived in Chichén. Husbands and fathers worked as wardens and custodians for the INAH. Their duties were to sell tickets, keep the grounds free of litter and debris, clear the reconstructed monuments of weeds, and maintain the visitor paths that provided access from one part of the zone to another. Part of their job was to simply maintain a presence at the archaeological zone. Several of these same men had worked in the excavation and reconstruction projects of the Carnegie Institution of Washington and the Mexican agency Monumentos Prehispánicos, the INAH’s predecessor. Children went to primary
school in the immediate vicinity of the housing area and, in some cases, went on to secondary school in nearby Valladolid or Mérida, Yucatán’s state capital. Families attended mass in the chapel of the Hacienda Chichén Itzá, less than a kilometer away. Both residents at the Hacienda, who were employees of the Barbachano family’s two hotels,¹ and those of Chichén Pueblo celebrated the feast day of May 15 to the patron Saint Isidro Labrador. In their communal solar, or backyard, several families kept domestic animals such as chickens and pigs. All families had dogs, which made everyone feel safer during the dark, unelectrified nights.

I begin with this narrative description of the everyday life of the custodios and their families who lived for several decades inside the archaeological zone in order to offer a vision that has since become unavailable to visitors to Chichén—whether tourists or anthropologists—or hybrids of the two as the case might often be. More than a site of ancient history, Chichén Itzá, like other archaeological sites throughout Yucatán, Mexico, and even the world are equally sites of daily life and living history. For people who live near or even within “ruins,” the monumentality of ancient structures might not always take on the discourse of archaeology, and instead, circulates as a vital source of contemporary memory and meaning-making. Archaeological zones, like Chichén Itzá, have ongoing lives in and of themselves beyond tourism as well. This chapter recreates an everyday life of Chichén Itzá through the perspective of those who spend the majority of their days inside the zone, as federal and state employees charged with the custodianship of the Mexican nation’s cultural patrimony.

¹ While the INAH has jurisdiction over the archaeological structures, the Barbachano family owns the land inside and adjacent to the zone, as explained in the previous chapter.
Though always in the shadow of monuments of Mexican national cultural patrimony, “Chichén Pueblo” existed for more than forty years of relatively little presence of the State in the archaeological zone. Oral history accounts of daily life within Chichén Itzá from the former inhabitants, most of whom now live just two kilometers in the town of Pisté, portray the zone as a quiet, family-centered community. Nearly all of the families of the *custodios* operated side businesses devoted to the provision of basic services. While the adult males were federally salaried archaeological zone workers, many other family members, typically wives or daughters, took advantage of the steady flow of foreign and national tourists to supplement the family’s income. Buses on the Mérida-Cancún highway, cutting directly across the zone between the houses and the Castillo, stopped twice a day at Chichén. Visitors without the comfort of accommodations at the Mayaland or Hacienda Chichén Itzá hotels adjacent to the zone were happy to take advantage of the beverages and meals sold by the families near the ticket booth. Occasionally, tourists would “tip” workers to see inside their houses. One can only surmise their motivation was to see and experience, amidst all that is Ancient, something of the contemporary lives of Maya people. After tourists were gone for the day, adults played baseball in the wide plaza and in front of the Castillo. Perhaps it is hard to imagine the walls of Chichén’s Great Ball Court serving as boundary markers for an informal game of *futbol* for a group of teenagers, as it occurred throughout the 1950s, 60s and 70s. During these decades, sons of the first generation of *custodios* grew up and began to have children of their own, many of whom would continue the family tradition of working for the INAH. In the early 1980s, state development plans for improving tourist services at the zone necessitated the demolition of the *custodios’* houses. After
losing their homes and their intimate presence in Chichén, these INAH workers would devise other ways to keep Chichén “in the family,” as a special kind of patrimony.

In the early stages of my ethnographic fieldwork at Chichén Itzá, I spent a great deal of time visiting with the INAH custodios at the archaeological site with expectations of creating an ethnography of the everyday life of an archaeological zone, tourism destination, and world heritage site. In the previous chapter, I created a “provenance” of Chichén Itzá. Rather than tracing the origins of an artifact, or the chain of ownership of a painting or other artwork, as the term typically signifies, I provenanced an entire archaeological zone, tracing the various hands through which it has passed through the twentieth century until the present. By doing so, I demonstrated that the history of Chichén Itzá is one of private ownership complemented with federal and state interests. While privatization as both policy and theory is presently connected to current trends in neoliberal economics, more than one hundred years of various kinds of privatization at Chichén Itzá has taken place. When considering cultural patrimony, privatization it is more than simply a symptom or indicator of the implementation of neoliberal economic theory into policy. It is also a very local phenomenon tied to space-claiming techniques practiced by a community of daily “users” of the archaeological zone who have personal and family history attached to a heritage site. According to de Certeau, “Everyday life invents itself by poaching in countless ways on the property of others” (1984: xii). This chapter considers this kind of figurative “poaching” by introducing a fourth form of “alternative privatization”- neither national, state, or big business as identified and discussed in Chapters Two and Three. The fourth form is occurs as a cohort of local elites, the INAH custodios, make a new claim on cultural patrimony.
This chapter presents an ethnographic "workplace analysis" of one of the Mexican state's showplaces of national cultural identity, the archaeological zone of Chichén Itzá. Various ethnographies published beginning in the 1990s focus on the workplace in order to illustrate local instantiations of the processes of modernity. Recent ethnographies of the workplace often focus on manufacturing (Lien 1997), high-tech industries, such as Rabinow (1996; 1999) or LaTour (1996) issues of technology in the workplace (Orr 1996) in terms of human interaction within organizational systems such as corporate settings (Kondo 1990) perhaps the workplace ethnography that comes closest to what I attempt in this chapter is Rofel's *Other Modernities* (1999), which gives an account of three generations of workers in a Chinese silk factory, in which the author foregrounds the concept of the generational cohort as a unit for analysis. The positioning in this chapter of the archaeological site as a workplace accomplishes several ends. Primarily, it recasts a traditional site of ethnography (Yucatán or Maya Culture) into new frameworks. Second, it additionally recast the archaeological zone as a place of labor, rather than a symbolic site or tourism destination. Millions of people around the world work in the heritage industry. For the workers at Chichén Itzá, theirs is a special kind of work.

The analysis focuses on a relatively small group of employees of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), thirty-six *custodios*, amongst whom there are thirty-four men and two women workers. Chichén Itzá has more than double the custodial staff of any other site open to the public in Yucatán. These *custodios* carry out the day-to-day functions of the archaeological zone, with activities ranging from ticket vending to groundskeeping, to patrolling tourist activities on the pyramids and structures. While technically not official "duties," *custodios* also answer visitor's questions on a
variety of topics, help them plan their time in the different areas of the zone, take photos, and even for pose for the same. The workplace, while not a traditional site for ethnographic analysis, is a particularly interesting and productive site for research, especially as issues of cultural patrimony take on a new life when moved into a new arena of inquiry.

I begin with a historical perspective on archaeological labor at Chichén Itzá. Who were the employers and workers in the early excavation and reconstruction projects of the 1920s-1940s? In the second section of the paper, returning to the “Pueblo Chichén” that we caught a glimpse of in the opening of this chapter, I use on-site interviews, casual conversation, and observations that I have carried out over a period of two years to characterize what I call the “everyday life” of the archaeological zone, its “ways of operating” (de Certeau 1984). Who are the custodios and what are their duties? How do they imagine themselves in relationship to their predominantly Maya heritage or that of the Mexican state? Does a continuous yet highly circumscribed contact with international tourists alter how they view their own lives, especially in terms of economic circumstances and opportunities? In terms of any explicit gender-consciousness they bring to their work, what aspects are, according to local custom or tradition, masculine jobs?

The third part of the paper explores the local manifestations of the overarching concepts of both patrimony and masculinity in the context of the entrepreneurial activities of the custodios and their families. Specifically, I trace the development of the custodio-operated refreshment vending cooperatives inside the archaeological zone. This discussion takes into consideration the historical transformation in the kind of labor
associated with custodianship, and how this backgrounds current conceptions of “rights” of inheritance within the archaeological zone. And, most importantly, what are the relationships between these political and theoretical concepts and the lived experiences of real men and women?

Part 1: *History of Archaeological Labor at Chichén*

Who built the ruins that cover the Yucatán Peninsula? The question is simple, yet deeply ambivalent. Answered from within the Maya Archive, as discussed in the first chapter, the question alludes to the ancient people who constructed these temples, monuments, and roads. A counter-archival interpretation calls into play the historical reality of the participation of generations of Maya laborers in archaeological projects. With attention to this counter-archival reading, which emphasizes the practice of Maya people rebuilding Maya ruins, we re-approach the question. How, historically, have Maya people worked to create and recreate Maya heritage sites? Further, how have Maya people participated in the “archaeologization” of the Yucatec landscape?

*Institutionalization*

Archaeologists in the field typically rely on local communities in the provision of labor required in both large and small-scale excavation projects. The laborers may be “skilled” in the masonry of architectural consolidation, or the drawing of architectural profiles. “Unskilled” workers haul stones, clear vegetation, and excavate. Male workers may perform heavy digging and lifting activities at the excavation site, while women and young people wash and label ceramics at an off-site lab or headquarters camp. Women also work in activities associated with archaeological projects, but these are secondary to
the investigation activity itself, involving tasks such as cooking meals, housekeeping, and doing laundry for the project staff. The excavation and reconstruction projects at Chichén Itzá required dozens of laborers to carry out the monumental tasks of clearing overgrown structures, disassembling them, ordering the pieces, firing new stones from an on-site lime kiln, and rebuilding. Many of the workers were from Písté. Some were already residents of the area, but other skilled workers were brought by archaeologists from other sites and regions.

Both proto-archaeological amateur explorers and institutional scientific investigators narrate a particular kind of relationship between themselves, their projects, the archaeological site, and the town of Písté and its inhabitants. In the following passages, we will see how archaeology, broadly construed, has provided the occasion for informal analyses of living Maya communities. Rather than scientific results, these analyses are “merely” commentary, asides, or acknowledgements, literally marginal to the official reporting activities of the discipline. For the most part, they are “economic” in substance, dominated by a colonialist frame of reference. In particular, Písté is presented as an exploitable labor resource that would, in turn, make possible the exploitation of the ruins.

In 1891, archaeologist Teobert Mahler described his perspective on labor relations between himself and workers from Písté:

Písté is a sad village in which some dozen native families gain a living from their small maize farms, spending on a vile aguardiente the entire product of their labor. Although these workmen received four reales [50 centavos] a day for their light work, I had great difficulty in getting them, because money has little attraction for these native people, and at Písté, no one works when he has earned four reales or a peso. They then get drunk, and only when the last centavo has been spent will they again resolve to work for a day or two (Maler [1932] in Steggerda 1941: 8).
Several decades later, when the more ambitious and well-funded Carnegie's Project Chichén Itzá was getting underway, a clause of the concession contract agreed upon by the Carnegie Institution and the Mexican government concerns laborers: "The workmen employed by the concessionaire shall be Mexicans, only the technical directors and specialists may be foreigners." Anthropologist Morris Steggerda, a member of the Carnegie research staff from 1931 to 1939, carried out intensive research in and around the Maya town of Pisté, located just two kilometers from Chichén Itzá.

The native laboring force that was used for archaeological investigation and repair varied in size and quality. Generally, there were fifty to one-hundred men employed in the work. Just after the season began in 1925 with sixty-nine workers, the number jumped to eighty-two. ...[When Morley] returned after a brief absence he discovered to his consternation that the [Maya] foreman had gone on hiring natives until 215 were on the payroll. ...The next day he called 133 of them into the yard of the Casa Principal [Hacienda Chichén Itzá], explained that they had been taken on by mistake, paid them off and added a gratuity, and sent them away in good humor. He realized that he might need them in the future (Brunhouse 1971: 208-209).

According to one biographer of Morley, the payroll for "native labor" was 1,500 silver pesos every two weeks. By 1932, the amount had increased to 3,000 pesos (Brunhouse 1971: 207).

During the eight-year period between 1927 and 1934, when excavation and repair work were at their height, the Institution employed per season as many as 50 Indian and Yucatecan laborers, mostly from Pisté. The Mexican government also engaged many Pisté men in its restorations at Chichén Itzá. The large amounts of money paid in wages, most of which was probably spent in Pisté, did not materially change the mores of the community. People continued to cultivate their cornfields and to eat the same kinds of food as they had before (Steggerda 1941: 11).

Steggerda continues:

A few effects, however, were noticeable. The number of horses probably increased in that period, or rather, they conspicuously decreased after the
Institution activity ceased. It is possible also that more Maya women wore gold chains, although no actual count was made. No automobiles or house luxuries were purchased, nor was extra food for the table observed, and I believe that by 1938 the temporary effects of the money influx were completely obliterated (ibid.).

Brunhouse, like other biographers, spends little—albeit significant—attention to the local Maya people in recounting the archaeological endeavors of Morley and his cohort. Exceptions to this are the specific mentions of certain local workers, including the Carnegie’s cook Tarsisio “Jimmy” Chang (of Maya/Korean mixed ancestry), Eugenio May, a Maya worker whose photo now hangs on the wall of a small museum at the entrance of the archaeological zone of Chichén Itzá, and Isauro Olalde, whose circa 1930 portrait hangs inside a sitting room off the lobby of the Hotel Hacienda Chichén, the former headquarters for both Edward H. Thompson and the Carnegie staff adjacent to the archaeological zone. The Hotel Hacienda Chichén is now a rather pricey hotel which features individual villas, each named after an archaeologist or other figure associated with the excavations and reconstructions at the site.

Two notable exceptions to the above representations can be found. The first is Alfredo Barrera Rubio’s “Yo Conocí a Morley’: Vivencias de Don Isidro Criollo Pech” (1991) which narrates the history of the relationship between “Chan Is” a Maya campesino, and Sylvanus G. Morley, for whom he worked for several decades. The second is in the preface of one archaeological monograph from the Carnegie Project. Earl Morris, a Carnegie archaeologist leading the excavation and reconstruction of the Temple of the Warriors writes,

...Nor should there be forgotten the native workmen whose toil transformed a shapeless hill into a thing of enduring beauty. As a whole, they were as efficient, as dependable, and as agreeable as any group one could hope to find in any land. Juan Olalde, Mayordomo, and his son and first lieutenant, Isauro, served
faithfully and intelligently. Because of their understanding of local conditions and their intimate familiarity with the material environment, they were able to give assistance which it would have been difficult in the extreme to do without. Angelino Pat, master mason, courteous, faithful, and intelligent to a rare degree, brought to bear upon his work a resourcefulness that I have not seen equaled. To him is due the credit for difficult pieces of construction, far more than to those to whom, in the natural course of events, it would be given (Morris 1931: 9)

The naming of specific workers and their contributions to the project is quite different from Maler and Steggerda’s commentaries. However, there is a flavor of the Noble Savage in Morris’s salute. “Courteous, faithful, and intelligent to a rare degree” are rather characteristics of a loyal family pet more than trusted work companion. At the same time, the acuity of Morris’s last statement in the above passage is remarkable. In the natural course of events, Maya workers are erased the projects in which they have reconstructed their cultural patrimony, only to find themselves a greater risk of losing claims on it they never even knew they could make. After all, Chichén was a site of ruins, but not a heritage site until it was rebuilt in the 1920s and 30s.

An odd find among Steggerda’s unpublished fieldnotes includes a document, “Carnegie Workers and other Laborers from Pisté,” from 1938. Most of the information Steggerda provides is purely anecdotal. For instance, the entry for Gregorio Ek reads as follows: “Gregorio was Dr. Morley’s first helper thirty years ago. Today Gregorio is drunk a great deal of the time.” The time frame of “thirty years ago,” if at all true, who have to allude to Morley’s Maya area explorations that predated the Chichén project by many years. Some of the data is almost comical in its depiction of a man’s folly, such as the entry for Francisco Pech: “He has been working for Dr. Morley at Chichén Itzá for some time. He maintains two families, one in Pisté and one in Chan Kom. Neither wife

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2 The sons of Isauro (grandsons of Juan) live in Pisté, and the archaeological zone is their
is faithful to him. Francisco is an *evangelico* Protestant.” Some of the information is
genealogical in character and refers to familial predecessors of current INAH workers,
such as the case of Mariano Burgos, who was, in addition to a *custodio*, a ranch owner
and half-owner of a cantina. In noting the occupations of the men in this document,
Steggerda usually notes if the individual is a *milpero* farmer or an employee. Such is the
case for the Pedro Lopez entry: “He does not make for himself a large milpa each year
but prefers to labor by the day for the Federal government at Chichén Itzá.” Isauro
Olalde and Angelino Pat, acknowledged above in the passage by Morris, appear as well
in Steggerda’s document, with similarly glowing commentary, except for a brief mention
of Pat’s occasional unscrupulous business dealings.

I include these references to Steggerda’s “Carnegie Workers” document as it
begins to “repopulate,” so the speak, the history of Chichén Itzá. So much of the
narration of archaeological sites in the Maya area focus on issues of "abandonment," lost
civilizations, and (European) "discovery." Considering even a small part of the history,
in this case, the twentieth century, of the archaeological zone provides an addendum to
popular misconceptions ranging from the idea that the Maya no longer exist, to the
conception that the living communities are merely "archaeological"- remnants of a former
great civilization.

Part 2: *Transformations of Space: Everyday Life in the Archaeological Zone*

*Custodianship*

*workplace*. Four are state-credentialed tourguides at Chichén Itzá, and each is fluent in at least
four languages.
Custodianship at Chichén Itzá is more than keeping the grounds clean and keeping visitors safe. Custodios stand guard at various points throughout the archaeological zone, inside the small museum, and at the two entrance gates. One custodio is responsible for safeguarding Chichén Viejo, another part of the zone two kilometers from the main tourist area of the zone. Custodios are salaried federal employees who receive health care and pension benefits, uniform allowances, and generous paid vacation. Officially, a custodio may be a man or a woman, but there is only one woman at Chichén that carries this particular title. The only other female custodios in the INAH Centro Regional Yucatán system work inside the Palacio Canton anthropology museum in Mérida.

The administrative hierarchy at the site is fairly simple, and is exclusive to Chichén Itzá. At the top is the encargado, literally, the person in charge. He is not a custodio. He does not patrol the zone regularly, nor does he wear a uniform, but he always accompanies important visitors in their tours of the archaeological site. The current encargado at Chichén Itzá has been at the job for nine years. Very importantly to the internal dynamics of the working atmosphere at Chichén Itzá, the encargado is not from Pisté, nor does he speak Maya. He was born near Mérida and currently resides there with his family. A lawyer by training, the Licenciado continues his private legal practice in addition to his job as encargado of the archaeological zone, often using this position to extend his network of private clients. The duties of the encargado There is only one other archaeological zone in Yucatán which has a non-custodio encargado,

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3 This area is presently closed to the public due to ongoing excavation and restoration activity.
4 Licenciado is an important title in Mexico, and denotes that a person is a university graduate. The encargado at Chichén Itzá is usually referred to as “el licenciado” formally, and in personal conversations between the custodios and myself, simply by his first name.
Dzibilchaltun, located on the outskirts of Mérida. All of the other zones have senior custodios in charge.

The custodios at Chichén are divided into two groups, arbitrarily designated as grupo norte (north) and grupo sur (south). Each group has a leader, or administrative coordinator. These coordinators are both second-generation custodios, and both have fathers who are still on the payroll full-time. Workers are paid every two weeks, on the first and fifteenth of each month. Most travel to the INAH regional office in Mérida to receive their paycheck, and use the extra day off work for shopping, doctor consultations, and other city business.

Custodios wear blue uniforms with little variation. All wear either dark blue slacks or occasionally (though not the majority), blue jeans. The most common uniform shirt is a sky-blue guayabera shirt, which comes in both long- and short-sleeve versions. One custodio in particular is known for always wearing a long-sleeved shirt, even on the hottest days, for protection from the intense sun. Every once in a while, a new style of shirt becomes available, such as a dark blue polo shirt, with an INAH logo. Nearly all who work patrolling the interior of the zone wear a closed shoe, some with athletic shoe styles or a hiking-type shoe. Some of the oldest custodios, who work at the ticket booths, wear a typical open sandal, as might be found on most men in Piste. Other work-related accoutrements such as the official INAH baseball-style hat complement the basic uniform. Few carry binoculars, and even fewer might have a camera with them occasionally.

The job of a custodio is to maintain order and security in the everyday life of the archaeological zone. Obviously, a major role in the custodianship is the protection of the
monuments from any of a variety of damages. From the UNESCO perspective, what presents “danger” to heritage sites? The UNESCO sites the following “serious and specific dangers” to heritage sites:

…the threat of disappearance caused by accelerated deterioration, large-scale public or private projects or rapid urban or tourist development projects; destruction caused by changes in the use or ownership of the land; major alterations due to unknown causes; abandonment for any reason whatsoever; the outbreak or the threat of an armed conflict; calamities and cataclysms; serious fires, earthquakes, landslides; volcanic eruptions; changes in water level, floods and tidal waves (UNESCO 1972).  

Security is a doubly faceted issue in terms of cultural patrimony. On the one hand is a concern for the material patrimony itself, whether this is an artifact in a museum, a monument, or archaeological materials yet to be excavated and unearthed. On the other hand, there simultaneously exists a security concern for the safety and comfort of the visitors, who might very well be the same parties who pose a security threat in the first place. Thus, the question of security almost always takes into account the simultaneous protection of the archaeological along with protection of the visitors.

Preventative measures are taken to ensure visitor safety. Installation of ropes or chains aids climbing of certain structures and prohibits public access to others. For many years, a heavy chain hung down one of the two reconstructed staircases of the Castillo at Chichen Itza. The chain eventually wore a deep groove down the center of the pyramid’s staircase, and was subsequently replaced with a thick rope. The stairs of the structure, with their narrow footholds and uneven heights, are difficult for some visitors to navigate even under dry conditions. Even the lightest rain turns them slippery and dangerous,

5 The UNESCO produces a "List of World Heritage in Danger", a list of the property appearing in the World Heritage List for the conservation of which major operations are necessary and for which assistance has been requested under the 1972 Convention.
though no warnings are issued concerning the conditions at these times by the site *custodios*.

According to several *custodios*, many visitors view the climbing of the Castillo as the major goal of their visit to Chichén Itzá, and there is little chance of diverting attention from this central aspect of one’s visit to the site. After several (not widely-publicized) deaths of both tourists and locals, lightning rods were only recently installed on top of Castillo as an aid in the prevention of future strikes during the frequent storms of the summer and fall seasons. During extreme weather conditions, such as the September 2002 Hurricane Isidore, the entire zone may be closed to visitors. 1989’s Hurricane Gilberto, the strongest hurricane to pass directly over Yucatan in recent memory, caused extensive damage to Chichén Itzá, though not in terms of directly damaging the monuments themselves. The storm wreaked havoc on the trees and other foliage at the site, and pieces of fallen trunks now serve as convenient, shady resting spots for tourists inside the zone.

“Accidents” I observed at Chichén Itzá during the Spring and Summer of 2001 are typical of those that normally, though infrequently, occur at the archaeological zone. The first category of mishaps can be attributed to the extremely hot weather. These may or may not be related to a second category of accidents, those involving falling from a structure. However, some falling accidents are thought by witnesses and others to not be so accidental. In the case of a twenty-five year old man from Guadalajara, he attempted to slide down the balustrade instead of climbing down the steps. For *custodios* who witnessed the event, they found it “so stupid” they didn’t know if it was suicidal or just foolish. A third category of mishaps at the zone involves deliberate damaging of
structures at the zone on the part of visitors. *Custodios* tell of a contestant for the Super Champion of the World contest who attempted and succeeded in displacing one of the columns at the Thousand Columns, to the side of the Temple of the Warriors. This modern-day Warrior was sanctioned by the INAH, paying a fine of several thousand pesos.

Safety often goes hand-in-hand with a concern for visitor comfort and convenience. Chichén Itzá has restroom facilities in two locations, both of which are rigorously maintained by state-contracted workers. Other sites on the tourism routes through Yucatán are less equipped and maintained due to lack of personnel, funds, as well as site infrastructure. Along the Ruta Puuc, for example, the site of Kabah, which has been open to the public for decades, lacks both running water and electricity. This is similarly the case at Ek Balam (located near Valladolid), a target of federal and state archaeological and touristic development projects. INAH officials were able to install a second-hand water pump to render the restroom facilities functional, but lack of electricity complicates actual use of the facilities. In the harsh, hot climate of Yucatán, a basic visitor need and want is refreshment. Thus, cold drinks and snacks are available for purchase at most sites.\(^6\) All sites open to the public in Yucatán have parking areas—parking is free at the smaller, less-visited sites while a minimal fee is charged at both Uxmal and Chichén Itzá. Visitors are aided on-site through maps and informative signage in front of monuments, presented in English, Yucatec Maya, and Spanish.\(^7\)

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\(^6\) As we saw in the previous chapter and will see again later in this chapter, the actual provision of vending services inside the zones is a hotly contested issue between state officials, INAH officials, and *custodios*.

\(^7\) The Maya-language signs are a source of much joking among locals. Native Maya speakers will read the signs out loud with exaggerated, funny accents, and test others around to see if they
While these multiple services are provided, visitor comment cards passed on to INAH officials at both the regional and national levels cite the lack of other basic services at the site. Most notable among these is the nearly complete inaccessibility of the site by persons in wheelchairs. Several projects to resurface or smooth-over rocky paths leading from one area of the site to another have failed to make the site wheelchair-accessible. According to site officials (in Fall 2002), this issue was a major concern, and a top priority in site development and improvement plans.

*Security: Containment, Control, and the Zone’s Official Boundaries*

The expansive size and outdoor setting of the zone together produce an environment that cannot always be controlled. While in decades past the site had abundant flora and fauna, visitors today are more likely to entangle themselves in a confrontation with a roaming dog, of which there are many, than with a jaguar. On one occasion, I accompanied the site *encargado* in a search through the bush around the monuments for a dog that had reportedly committed an unmotivated act of aggression on a tourist. The tourist was bitten on the finger, which was, moments after the incident, bleeding slightly. The dog in question had to be found in order to assess its state of well-being and what sorts of dangers it posed to the biting victim. A group of *custodios* was gathered to form search teams for the dog. I myself, having spent much time in the zone, was familiar with this particular dog. It was a yellow-colored female, medium-sized, either pregnant or having recently given birth. I, along with several others, had seen the dog several times that very day near the Osario structure. The search teams reconvened could understand what was being read. For the most part, the linguistic style of the signage is not
after fifteen minutes or so of searching to discuss the situation, reaching a quick
consensus that the dog was a nursing mother foraging around for food, acting in a very
protective mode (which may have been read as aggression) because her puppies were
nearby. A final decision was made to keep an eye out for the animal to make sure it
wasn’t ill or otherwise acting out of the ordinary for a dog with new puppies hidden
somewhere nearby.8

The search for the dog along the back-paths of the zone provided an occasion for
the encargado to comment upon such problems of daily occurrence at Chichen, his role
in handling these issues, and, in a more generalized sense, he commented upon what I
would call the “problem of containment” concerning the zone’s boundaries. Rather than a
person exclusively involved directing and managing all of the INAH activities at the
archaeological zone, the encargado’s daily routine was more directed toward acting as
the public face of the Institute at the archaeological site. As such, he was consistently
called upon by visitors, at the request of the custodios, to resolve problems of a routine
nature, whether disputes over the payment of entrance fees, the adequacy of services, or
the justification of the rules and regulations under which the site operated. The latter
concern involves questions of the visitors’ freedom in moving about the site and the kind
of access that visitors are permitted, whether this specifically concerns the opening and
closing hours of the zone, the climbing or entering of monumental structures, or the
taking of photographs.9 In sum, many of the everyday “problems” at Chichén revolve

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8 One custodio suggested that if found, the dog should be secured with a chain that it couldn’t bite
its way through, and the encargado jokingly suggested using the heavy chain that had been
recently taken down from the Castillo.
9 Photography is generally permitted in most areas of the zone. There are, however, a few
exceptions. Photography is explicitly prohibited inside the “tunnel” entrance of the Castillo.
around one central theme: the freedoms and restrictions of average person in their experience of interacting with the material embodiments of national and world heritage. While the above are spatially articulated to the area within the officially delimited boundaries of the archaeological zone, we can see how these borders are both permeable and negotiable. The instability of the line distinguishing the zone from its outside gives rise to the problem of the zone's containment. This takes multiple forms. First, it is an issue of physical access to the zone. There are two official entrances to the archaeological zone. One is through the parador turístico, and the other is near the Mayaland Hotel. Another entrance, used by locals but not but the public-at-large, is at the INAH campamento. Because there are several contemporary living communities surrounding the archaeological zone, there are, as I indicated in the previous chapter, numerous paths and trails which skirt the perimeter of the zone and even permit direct entrance to the site center. The zone is enclosed, except in the most public areas, by a haphazard fence of wood posts and wire. In some areas, there is no actual enclosure. It was only after the artisan "invasion" of the zone in the late 1980s and early 1990s\(^\text{10}\) that certain borders were demarcated or closed in at all. A second issue of "containment" stems from the historical/spatial disjuncture between the extent of the ancient settlement of Chichén Itzá and the modern boundaries of the official archaeological zone. Everyday management of the site cannot afford to dwell on this issue of the representation of space.

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\(^{10}\text{See Peraza López and Rejón Patrón (1989).}\)
projected by the official zoning of Chichén Itzá, and a custodio's work depends on the
clear, if in some sense, arbitrary, boundaries of the zone.

Part of a custodio's duty is to maintain order within the archaeological zone.
While most wear a whistle on a cord around the neck, some are known for using it too
much, while others will rarely use it. Don Pedro is one example of a custodio known for
over-using his whistle, which is connected to his complex and often contradictory
opinion regarding both his work and the tourists he observes and often interacts with at
the archaeological zone. He coined the term turismo aggressivo, or, aggressive tourism,
to describe those visitors to the site who are actively and blatantly noncompliant with the
regulations of the zone. Don Pedro and other custodios rank different national groups
based on their tendency toward turismo aggressivo, and their behavior in general.
Custodios report that they find Argentinians to be the rudest and most likely to break the
rules. Italians rank high as well, not to mention Mexican nationals. Note here that the
category of "Mexican" would not refer to local people, or anyone from Yucatán. In the
cases of the Argentinians and Italians, many custodios perceive a generalized aggressive,
non-compliant behavior, often stemming from visitors' previous experiences in
archeological sites in their home countries. A degree of non-uniformity regarding the
manner of protecting archaeological monuments around the world seems to promote
disagreement on how a site may be interacted with by the public. They are more specific
in articulating problems the have encountered with Mexican national tourists. "They
assume the rules don't apply to them. They ignore the "No Trespassing" signs and walk
around and climb wherever they want. More than once, I have stopped someone by
shouting or blowing my whistle, only to have the visitor shout back at me, arguing that it is his patrimony, too, and he can do what he pleases."

Recently, there have been half-serious requests for badges (like police shields) and T-shirts that have "INAH" printed in block letters across the chest (like FBI t-shirts in movies) not for everyday wear, but for special events that draw large crowds, such as the fall and spring equinox. To my knowledge, no daytime custodio presently working at Chichén carries a weapon inside the zone. In the more remote zones of the Ruta Puuc, a gun or machete is kept in the ticket booth area. In the past, more typically than not, a custodio would have a long-barreled rifle, the same he used for hunting. In the past, the two activities were easily and "naturally" combined, as the job of a custodio was a job of the campo, not of a site in the international tourism-industrial complex.

*Traditional Labor and its Transformation*

There are three phases in the transformation of labor at Chichén Itzá, each framed by a historical period and set of identifying characteristics. The transformations in labor accompany and are accompanied by those changes in the spatiality of the archaeological zone- how the space is delimited, organized, and practiced, by whom, and within what relations of power and authority. The first transformation we have already seen. It occurs from the 1920s until the 1940s, as foreign and national archaeological projects begin to hire local wage laborers. Through this transformation, men who had been milperos began to choose to work for employers, either the CIW or the Mexican government (see Steggerda 1938). The second transformation covers roughly the 1940s until the late 1970s, from the beginnings of the INAH until the entrance of the CULTUR state agency
into the zone (see Chapter Three). The third transformation is presented in the last section of this chapter. This transformation has been taking shape for almost two decades, and involves an expansion in the role of *custodios* at the zone, and a reconceptualization of how their work relates to issues and claims of patrimony.

*From Campesino to Cosmopolitan*

It is a particularly hot and slow afternoon. But the sun has slipped behind deep blue clouds which threaten a rain that is still hours, even days away. I enter the zone and immediately head for the *Observatorio*, or *Caracol*, where I know I can usually find Don Hugo waiting away the afternoon. Don Hugo is only a few months from his retirement, having worked for the *Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* as a *custodio* for nearly thirty years, first in the Puuc area sites, then at Chichén Itzá. His was one of fifteen families that until 1983 lived inside the archaeological zone.

A grandfather in his late sixties, Don Hugo has little formal education, but is an avid reader, with tastes ranging from the daily newspaper to popular magazines, to historical and anthropological texts about Yucatán and the Maya. He is an attentive television viewer, and the introduction of Sky TV to the pueblo of Pisté where he lives offers the *Discovery Channel* and *Arts and Entertainment*, on which he rarely misses a documentary or investigative journalism piece. He is also a fan of the program “Wild On,” broadcast on the *E* entertainment channel. “Wild On” takes its viewers to various places around the world to show partying and nightlife, replete with images of barely-clad women and excessive care-free behaviors. The Cancun episode is typical, showing drunken and sunburned spring breakers move their partying from the beach to Chichén Itzá, following a pattern common among tourists visiting Yucatán.
On this particular day that I met up with Don Hugo, he had with him in addition to his ever-present copy of that day’s *Diario de Yucatán* newspaper, a several month old copy of a popular culture entertainment magazine, geared toward teenagers. He waved it at me as I approached, “Come over here and look at Britney Spears!” I, as one of the few non-tourist regular presences at the site, often found myself as the unwilling bearer of U.S. culture, somehow deeply intertwined, if not responsible, for the profusion of sounds and images from the United States. “What do you think about this: is she really a virgin?” he asked me with just a hint of a smile. “I don’t know, but she sure likes to show it off!” I replied. “Just like a lot of the tourists here,” he answered, “They walk around looking at Chichén Itzá in their short-shorts and miniskirts and bikinis. I guess they forgot they left the beach when they got on the bus in Cancun. If someone told me thirty years ago that the zone would be like this today, I would have told him he was drinking too much.” “But do you think it is OK for women to walk around the zone in their bathing suits?” I asked. “It depends on who you ask. For some of my co-workers, it is perfectly fine. They want to see people enjoy themselves, and they also want to enjoy themselves. For others, they want them to cover-up, at least on the bottom. This is an important place- people should have some respect.”

Though Hugo has worked at Chichén for thirty years, it is not through this entire course of time that the zone has changed so dramatically. While a goal of archaeological and infrastructural plans dating back to the 1920s always had the increase of tourism as a goal, it wasn’t really until the late 1970s and the establishment of Cancun as an international tourism center that the everyday scenery of Chichén was affected. One marker of this change is the presence of large numbers of international tourists who visit
the archaeological site on chartered day-trips. Girls in bikinis present a crisis in the
custodianship of the archaeological zones, in both a logistical sense, as well as in terms of
a crisis of representation. This crisis is an important feature of the second transformation
in labor at Chichén, as custodios move from being campesinos to imagining themselves
as cosmopolitan, “at home” in the archaeological zone as an international, multiply-
signifying space in which a discussion of Britney Spears’ virginity and the difference
between showing off breasts or bottoms is part of the everyday “language” of working at
Chichén. As a logistical crisis, custodios have to negotiate the appearances and practices
of visitors that are not necessarily defined by the “rules” of the zone, but that they might
find otherwise inappropriate. Next to the monuments of national cultural patrimony, girls
in bikinis are both signs of the “success” of tourism development as well as symbols of
decadence within the ruins.

Distinguishing the relationship between traditional skills of the campo and the
contemporary work of custodianship at the archaeological site is a question of
interpretation. One “mistake” that I made in the course of conducting interviews with the
Chichén custodios quite unintentionally came to illustrate this point very well. As I
imagine is the experience of most ethnographers, my interactions with the custodios was
quite uneven. For instance there were several whom I had little contact with, while I
spent hours on end with others. Not to “remedy” the situation, but in an effort to provide
a bit more consistency in my ethnographic study, I conducted the same short survey-type
interview with all of the custodios. The following is a list a questions I asked:

1. Name, birthplace, where raised
2. How many years working for the INAH
3. Previous employment, type of work
4. Why do you work for the INAH?
5. Describe a typical day at work in the archaeological zone.
6. How do you see the relationship between the archaeological zone and the surrounding communities?
7. What does (can do) the INAH to promote Maya culture?
8. What can the wider community do to promote Maya culture?
9. Which is the most important archaeological site in Mexico? And why.

In my experience as an ethnographer in Yucatán, I have come to realize that certain kinds of questions “hit their mark” much better than others. Thus, reviewing this list of questions, if it were not my own, I would quickly differentiate between straightforward, “good” questions, and the others which are a little more abstract, which will do little to produce thoughtful answers on the part of the interviewee, at least on the first occasion.

Without hesitation, I would have thought that question five was unproblematic. In Spanish, the question reads “Describeme un día típico en Chichén Itzá.” Of course the kind of answer I was going for would go something like this:

*I arrive by bicycle from Pisté in the morning, depending on my shift that week, anywhere from eight until eleven in the morning. I sign in at the INAH office, get my radio, my assignment and location, then I enter the zone. On my way in I see my compañeros, and we discuss who will relieve whom at what hour for lunch breaks. Then I go on to my area where I will spend the next several hours watching that no one gets hurt or goes where they are not supposed to climb.*

And so on. It took me several interviews to realize that I was consistently getting a different kind of answer, each response with an almost word-for-word similarity, which went something like this:

*A typical day at Chichén Itzá is one which involves chapeo and clearing the underbrush of certain areas of the archaeological zones. You work with your compañeros in the bush, drink atole¹¹ and use tools such as the coah and machete.*

What is going on here? I asked myself, though smiling, nodding, and carefully noting these responses. Drinking *atole*? Patrolling the zone with a machete?

¹¹ Traditional corn-based beverage.
Of course, I came to realize, in a tourism center like Pisté/Chichen, and perhaps all throughout Yucatán, “típico” means that which is typical in the sense of traditional or culturally characteristic. It means what is “Maya” or “Yucateco.” For instance restaurants trying to draw tourist crowds advertise “comida típica,” which refers to regional Yucatec cuisine. “Ropa típica” includes huipiles, and other white cotton, colorfully embroidered clothing. Thus, “un día típico” is not an average (typical) day of working at the archaeological zone, but the use of which creates a question for a local person more like the following: Describe the traditional work activities at the archaeological zone. Which of course, prompts responses just like the answers I was hearing. Traditional work is campesino work, at times unconnected and unrelated to the contemporary duties of a custodio.

_Antiguos: Los mas celosos guardianes^{12}_

Tu eres Uxmal y
Yo soy Chichén
No son ruinas
Son centros arqueológicos
Pero son muy arqueológicos!

You are Uxmal and
I am Chichén
They aren’t ruins
They are archaeological sites
But they are very archaeological!

-Yucatec bomba

I heard the above bomba, or word-play rhyme, while sitting at an outdoor café in Mérida one Sunday afternoon, watching a singing and comedy performance by a Yucatec couple in their fifties. In the midst of extensive fieldwork amongst the custodios, it immediately caught my attention. The translation into English doesn’t allow the references for the pun work quite as well as in Spanish. The joke is a play on words
between "ruins" and "archaeological." The speaker, a woman, calls attention to the age of herself and her partner, admitting they are old, but not in "ruins." She instead chooses to euphemistically to substitute "ruins" with "archaeological sites." In the end, she plays on that as well, by saying "very archaeological." I include this bomba as an introduction to the group of custodios known as "antiguos." It raises the issue of a set of interrelated terms that create a relationship between "age" and "archaeology"- to what degree is something old? And how can this be measured by archaeology? It is interesting that "archaeology," a modern science, has come to mean "old" in popular discourse, not just in Yucatán, but in a generalized sense.

Of all of the custodios presently employed at Chichén, more than half are acknowledged as belonging to the group of antiguos.\(^{13}\) In Spanish, antíguo may be translated as old, archaic, ancient, or antique, depending on the context. For instance, a mueble antíguo is not an ancient piece of furniture, but an antique. The Spanish term most likely to be used to describe an old or elderly person is not antíguo, but anciano. In my fieldwork experience in Yucatán, there were only two particular cases in which the term "antiguos" was used to refer to people. In the first case, it was in the context of work. Well-established people with seniority in a workplace are antiguos. In the second case, antiguos are the Ancient Maya. In the case of the custodios, the term antíguo is a unique citation of both of these meanings.

The first custodios at archaeological sites such as Chichen, Uxmal, and other sites of the Ruta Puuc were local men chosen for their skills as campesinos. The work of a

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\(^{12}\) The most protective/jealous guardians.

\(^{13}\) The use of the label at Chichén calls to mind the popular term 'Dinosaurs' used throughout Mexico to refer to the members of the bureaucracy which formed the PRI, the country's ruling party for 71 years.
custodia was thus not very different from the sort of "traditional" labor involved in the various life-subsistence activities carried out by Maya people on the Yucatán Peninsula for generations. Here, we find a description of labor in the colonial period remarkably resonant with what was the job description of the first INAH custodios: "The work of a Maya man was the manual toil of a farmer, the cutting, digging, fixing, pulling, branding, extracting, shaving, hammering, attaching, and repairing of life on the land. The principal tools of male workers were the machete and the ax" (Restall 1997: 103).

The corporeality, location, and tools of these labor activities go towards defining them as gendered occupations. As McElhinny suggests, "Workplaces are gendered not only by the numerical predominance of one sex within them, but also by the cultural interpretations of given types of work" (1994: 159). The culturally constructed chain of associations—outdoors, requiring technical skill, dirty, dangerous, etc.—begin to give shape to defining a specific domain of masculinity—that of the particular context of work, the work situation, and the workplace. As one author suggests, "It is not the case that work and work situations create masculinities out of nothing, but they are often crucial in giving generalized notions and values specific meanings and anchorages" (Morgan 1992: 77).

The original custodios had dominion over the archaeological zone. They worked from six o’clock in the morning until six at night, but their jobs were really around-the-clock. The following narrative from a third-generation custodio and university anthropology student gives us the sense of family patrimony that develops through a connection to the site.

So there my grandfather worked in Chichén Itzá, keeping the structures he had helped reconstruct, as well as those worked on by the Carnegie, clean, and free
from weeds. And so the time passed, and the site needed more people to care for it. Soon other compañeros entered, such as the Vargas family, some uncles of mine, including my uncle Beto who still works there. ... They came to love (querer) this place, because, in the first place, they worked there, and then they made it their home, just as my grandfather had. My grandfather passed on the conception of the protection of the archaeological zone to my father. And he loved it too, and that’s how it was. Thus they became, along with their other compañeros, the most protective guardians of the site [se convierten los mas celosos guardianes del sitio].

Perhaps the most interesting and important aspect of this passage concerns the idea that descendants of the original custodios can actually take better care of the zone by virtue of inheritance. This heritage, they assert, is “in our blood.”

The first encargados of archaeological zones were, literally, those in charge of the sites. They were, in a very real sense, patrones of the sites, not unlike the patrón of a hacienda (see Chapter 5). But unlike the patrones of the henequen and cattle haciendas that covered Yucatán, these patrones were local Maya. Typically not formally educated, Maya speaking, and accustomed to life in the campo, these early encargados established a system of worker patronage at the zones. When a position needed to be filled, the encargado would present a name to the INAH central office, usually that of a relative. Because of the confianza inherent in the encargado’s position, the name would typically accepted without question. The authority of the encargado ensured the satisfactory performance of the workers. This system worked for more than four decades.

The patronage system raises issues of fairness. If INAH authorities attempted to sanction one custodio for a job-related infraction, such as excessive tardiness or absence, or drinking on the job, often the whole family takes offense, and protests the sanctioning. Thus, the attempt to resolve issues regarding the job performance of one worker can

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14 This is an important subject to be dealt with in Chapters Five and Six.
result in the protest of an entire work team of a particular zone. The issue is further exacerbated when family networks extend across multiple zones, even in different areas of the state. For example, Uxmal, the smaller zones of the Ruta Puuc (Kabah, Sayil, Labná), Chichén Itzá, and even Cobá (located in the neighboring state of Quintana Roo) have crossed genealogies of labor history.

Until new union regulations changed the patrimonial practice of automatically passing a plaza, or position, down along blood lines, if an active worker died, the plaza would pass to his wife, who always passed it to another male relative, usually her son. At Chichén there is a case of the positions being passed to daughters. Don Cristobal Chan, losing his legs to severe diabetes, could no longer work, so he passed his plaza to his daughter, Doña Dulce, who worked for five years at Chichén, and then found a position at the INAH’s museum, the Palacio Cantón in Mérida, where her family was living. Another daughter of Don Cris, Doña Blanca, works in the ticket booth at Chichén’s main entrance within the Parador Turístico.15

The presence of women in the custodio system does not necessarily introduce an alternatively gendered patrimonial discourse to rival the predominant masculinity I have already described. Rather, it is precisely the patriarchal genealogies of this particular workplace and labor system in which they are a part. This is particularly the case when these women both inherited job positions through male figures, one from her husband, and the other from her father. Note that I am not implying here that Doña Flora and Doña Blanca are somehow masculine, nor are they exclusively to be seen as “women in men’s jobs.” While I spend the greater part of this chapter devoted to custodios who
patrol the archaeological zone, there is a specificity to working in the ticket booths that should be taken into consideration. Six of the thirty-six custodios are taquilleros, who work exclusively in the ticket booths, located at the main entrance in the Parador Turístico, and at the Mayaland gate. The two women who work at Chichén’s main entrance, rather than having the autonomy that comes with a relative freedom to move about the zone (perhaps unofficially), are confined in the small workspace of the booth, behind plexiglass. Depending on personal preference, this work environment might been seen as too confined and constraining, or, on the other hand, as much more comfortable than the heat and rain of the outdoors. They report directly to the encargado of the zone, just as male taquilleros do the same. The division of indoor versus outdoor work attached to gender categories of feminine or masculine, respectively, is too simplistic when analyzing the taquilleros. It is better said that the masculinity of custodio work moves indoors to the ticket booths, but under a slightly different set of conditions.

*Nuevos*

The INAH state office in Mérida, despite pressure from the antiguo-controlled labor union,¹⁶ knew that the system would have to change. Competition for plazas was opened up. In 1994, an open competition was held in Pisté. An examination concerning Mexico’s cultural heritage was presented to all potential applicants. This test was the product of INAH/Labor union negotiations. Out of twenty questions, ten were representative of the INAH custodio exam administered throughout Mexico, and the remaining ten were put forth by the union. Eighty people presented themselves along

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¹⁶ Somehow, in this case, one male plaza was converted into two plazas for Don Cris’s two daughters. No one could sufficiently explain to me how or way this could happen.
with their official documents to compete for six positions. Current university students and those who had already completed a university education were not permitted to enter the competition. Acceptance into the available positions was based on the highest scores. Only those already living within a close proximity to the archaeological zone were chosen, with the objective of benefiting local communities with these stable and well-paying federal jobs. The custodio positions stand in great contrast to the current labor economy in Písté and nearby smaller towns. While many residents are engaged in economic activity closely associated with the presence of the ruins, the kinds of work required, number of hours, and days off do not compare with those enjoyed by the custodios. Hundreds of people work within the archaeological zone and along its perimeter as cooks, launderers, gardeners, and the like. Of those informally or self-employed, many work in artisanry vending (Castañeda 1996; Peraza López and Rejón Patrón 1989; Quintal Avilés 1995).

How does this “opening up” of the positions at Chichén Itzá represent a transformation in labor? It appears that this might be particular to the extensive development of Chichén Itzá. At other zones, where there is little tourism and no state provision of site infrastructure and promotion, the work of custodios remains within this concept of traditional outdoor activity. When one cust dio position in the archaeological zone of Ek Balam was open recently, three men competed for it. Part of the examination was to test the men’s skills in chapeo, or clearing brush and weeds from paths, monuments, and other areas in the archaeological zone. Each was given a twenty or so

16 Though I will not discuss it here, it is important to note that “antiguo” groups, though smaller in number, exist at other archaeological sites in Yucatan. Most notably in the Puuc area sites such as Uxmal
square meter area to clear, and the applicant that did this well was also a high score on
the written part of the exam. He became an INAH custodio.

The third transformation at Chichén Itzá is temporally less precisely located, and
is connected to the “modernization” of the site directed toward tourism development at
the site. Many of the current custodios have never been campesinos. From among the
thirty-six, we can find former bus drivers, pharmacy managers, restaurant cooks and
waiters, and agronomists, who studied agriculture in the classroom, which some say is
not akin to learning as a milpero. In the third transformation, the antiguos have been able
to maintain their control over the zone and its resources over and above the nuevos.

Almost all of the custodios at Chichén have forty-five hour-per-week positions,
rather than the thirty-five hour-per-week positions most custodios working at other zones
hold. The work schedule is as follows: ten days on with the following four days off.
Seven of the ten days on are dedicated to patrolling in uniform around the zone. The
remaining three are out-of-uniform, shorter workdays performing maintenance, such as
cutting the grass, hacking down overgrown areas, or spraying herbicide on weeds that
push between the stones of the restored structures. However, in the time I carried out my
research at Chichén, it was rare to find any custodios actually carrying out these
activities. Instead, it was from these three days out of every two weeks that vacation and
“compensation” days were taken. The number of “compensation” days seemed to be to
be rather high, but was explained to me in the following manner. All federal employees
get a certain number of days off, most of which are national holidays. The archaeological
zone is open to the public every single day of the year, which means that employees have
to work on holidays. They are compensated for these days by being allowed to schedule
other days off during a regular work period. As patrolling during the hours that the zone
is open to the public represents the greatest need in terms of “manpower,” custodios are
unlikely to get any of the first seven days of each two-week work period as a
compensation day. This is one logistical reason involved in the third stage of the
transformation of custodio labor. ‘Traditional’ work is being replaced by the
increasingly high degree of tourism development at the site, and the corresponding high
volume of visitors. Another way in which to describe this transformation would be
through a performance metaphor: “on-stage” labor involving public presence and
constant, direct contact with visitors is replacing the “back-stage” labor more associated
with the traditional tasks of the campo.

Forty-five hours a week of patrolling an archaeological zone is a lot of time
outdoors, especially when one’s route is confined to a relatively small area. For myself,
after the first several weeks of my ethnographic work, I experienced a period of intense
boredom during the daily walk or bike-ride to Chichén from Pisté, knowing that each day
would be remarkably similar to the last. I kept hoping something would happen in these
particularly long and tedious weeks, when the most exciting event was the summoning of
the CULTUR ambulance to the Observatory one late afternoon, where a small child had
been stung by a bee on her foot. By the time I had been visiting Chichén for several
months, I had nearly forgotten this early ennui. Some days found me traversing the zone
several times, meeting up with custodios at their assigned locations to meet, chat, or
conduct a taped interview. Other days I would spend hours in the same spot, usually
with a custodio, finding a new work rhythm for myself, which, in retrospect, seems to
have been derived from the custodios’ own pace and perspective of their work routine. I
use this personal experience Chichén Itzá as my own worksite to think through how it functions for others performing a different kind of labor.

“Fabulous place” (Castañeda 1996) though it may be, certainly the significance of the zone changes for a person who works there, day after day, year after year. But like in almost any job, INAH workers tactically manipulate their job sites and descriptions to maintain a sense of meaningful activeness and pride in their positions. “Certainly many observers see workers, men for the most part, as developing considerable skill in making ‘the best of a bad job’ in using their human imagination and ingenuity in turning work into more than just a job” (Morgan 1992: 79). While I have to qualify this statement in light of the case at hand- no one considers the work of a custodio to be “a bad job,” I find this passage to raise an issue important to characterizing work at Chichén. What are the extracurricular activities custodios participate in when patrolling the zone which make their work more than “just a job”? I will point out three. The first is social activity. The men socialize by leaving their patrol area and meeting up with a compañero at another, by stopping to talk to others while crossing through the zone to enter a work area, or through pre-arranged breaktimes. For example, one group of three to five antiguos (two of whom can always be found working at the Mayaland entrance ticket booth). These men cook on-site and each lunch together nearly everyday. They prepare meat in an underground oven (piib in Maya) in the ground behind the ticket booth. Chicken and pork cooked piib’il, or underground, is a popular dish in Yucatec regional cuisine, in both homes and restaurants geared toward tourists. Additionally, custodios socialize with other people engaged with work at the site. The majority of these are tour guides from Pisté, Cancun, or elsewhere who make daily trips to Chichén with groups of tourists.
This form of socializing has led, in one case, to informal business negotiations between tour guides and one custodio. Inside the zone, the custodio sells sets of photographs of the monuments to the tour guides, who in turn sell them to tourists. While technically not "legal," INAH officials who were aware of the situation were initially unconcerned. It was discovered, however, that one set of photos turned out to be of an area of the zone undergoing excavation, and therefore closed to the public. The archaeologists working on the project were particularly upset, as the own research results and photographs had not yet been made public. The custodio involved was reprimanded, but not formally sanctioned.

A second extracurricular activity at Chichén is best described as "playing radio games." Though they are costly and difficult to maintain, many of the custodios on-duty in the archaeological zone will have radios for communication with each other and the zone's headquarters office. Radio communication is extremely coded, using numbers in place of location names and activity descriptions, much like a typical police radio system. As much as was revealed to me by the custodios concerning every aspect of "everyday life" at Chichén and the work of the custodios, radio codes were sacred and, therefore, secret. When they did speak outside of the number-code system, the custodios often communicated with each other in Maya rather than Spanish. In this way, the Maya language functioned as an everyday code in the presence of non-Yucatec Maya national and international tourists, a category that would include almost every single visitor to the zone. The radio also served as one instrument in what I identify as the third extracurricular activity in the zone: "girl-watching." Radio communication was used to signal to the custodio at the next post of the approach of attractive women. Just as I was
not privy to the full range of “radio games,” nor was I in the position to observe the full range of these activities. It seems that the *custodios*, who were kind, open, and collegial with me, intended to hide what they thought of as the possibly more objectionable side of this activity as well.\(^\text{17}\) Just as we saw that the activities associated with “traditional” work come to define a domain of masculinity, so do these last two “non-traditional” (at least at Chichén) practices.

Part 3: “Pueblo Chichén” 1980s: from State Privatization to Patrimonial Reassertions

By the 1980s, the *custodios’* inhabiting of the nation’s patrimony—living within the ruins—became an image problem. A contemporary Maya population, with their rambunctious children, dogs and chickens running about, hanging laundry alongside the monuments was incongruent with the modern representation of tourist destination. Ambulant vendors, from Pisté and other smaller surrounding communities (San Felipe, San Francisco), were expelled and prohibited from entering the zone to sell their artisanry. Roxane Caftanzoglou’s (2001) study of the settlement of Anafiotika describes a similarly conflictual relationship between the community of forty-five illegal squatters (many of who had lived there for generations) and surrounding Greek society.

The settlement was, and for some still is, seen as a disorderly and polluting irruption of social time in the midst of the isolated and well-guarded ‘buffer zone’ designed to surround and isolate the Acropolis

\(^{17}\) It would be foolish of me to think that my own presence was completely outside of the “social atmosphere” zone. It was, in fact, just the opposite. I also consider that part of the reluctance to share information on the radio codes was (in addition to maintaining a certain level of zone security) was so that the *custodios* could communicate *about me*, not exclusively in a negative sense, but on an information-sharing basis.
A comparison with the state-sponsored demise of the “Pueblo Chichén” stands in contrast to the Anañiotika case in several respects, though the larger issues resonate. In the case of Chichén, the inhabitants of this space, rather than illegal squatters, were federal employees. But the next point is very similar- the workers were relocated and the houses demolished for the sake of “cleaning up” the archaeological zone. To change not only the appearance of the zone itself, but as part of a larger development plan for modernizing the zone, and setting the stage for the state government, through CULTUR, to make a lot of money indeed. The workers, their modest homes, their chickens, pigs, and children was a unsightly contrast to the “Light and Sound Spectacular” with its colored lights, dancing lasers, booming speakers and great expectations for a leap in tourism.

This restructuring of the everyday operations of the archaeological zone, under the guise of “modernization, occasioned the assertions of a differently articulated patrimony at Chichén Itzá. This is a patrimony not necessarily solely hinged upon the national ideologies layered upon ancient ruins. It is perhaps the most literal, dictionary-style definition of patrimony that this study examines: that which is passed down from the father. Until recently, a custodio had the option of leaving his plaza, or job position, to his son.18 This patrimony is common at Chichén, which has seven pairs of fathers and sons (in some cases the father has passed away, in others more than one son is employed) working as custodios. These families account for more than half of the thirty-six workers currently employed at the site.

18 This is still the practice with schoolteachers.
According to the kinship studies of David Schneider (1984), blood is the main cultural symbol of Western kinship rather than the universal constitutional element. In the analysis of heritage and patrimony amongst the INAH workers at Chichén Itzá, I pay close attention to the role of consanguinity. Where does blood matter in patrimony? Should it matter at all when speaking of cultural patrimony as opposed to family patrimony? The issue of biological relations within and between groups has been an issue in recent revaluations of kinship studies in anthropology. Rather than a search for rules and patterns, contemporary sociocultural analyses of kinship faces the task of constructing categories of kinship that are contextually appropriate to historical change and cultural variability. Discerning the relationships between the Chichén custodios does not require a full-blown kinship analysis. However, attention to consanguineous, affinal, and fictive relationships aid an understanding the composition of the group or community, as well as how the individual INAH families who identify within it.

For many years custodianship was a dynastic enterprise, passed along generationally, mostly from fathers to sons. Only in the past decade have open competitions for positions begun to be held. For the first time, job opportunities opened up for “outsiders” to join the ranks of custodios, the majority of whom come from Pisté, with just one from outside the state of Yucatán.\(^{19}\) Though some have been working daily at the site for eight or nine years, they remain “the new ones.” Thus became established the “INAH families” as they are known to each other and to their neighbors in nearby Pisté, and as the “INAH Mafia” in the words of a prominent archaeologist who has directed excavation work at the site for many years. In a term that emphasizes the deep
historical dimension of the presence of certain families in Chichén, the earliest generation still working on-site are known as *antiguos*.

Don Pedro is a “hybrid” *antiguo* through an affinal rather than consanguineous relation to the core INAH families. From the cattle town of Temozón, near the city of Valladolid and the newly developed archaeological site of Ek Balam, he moved to Merida as a young man. There, he met and married his wife, the daughter of the *encargado* of a Puuc area archaeological zone. No one in his own family had ever worked for the INAH. Through his father-in-law, Pedro entered the INAH. After spending a short time working at the Puuc site, he was transferred to Chichén, closer to his own birthplace and family, in 1971. With more than thirty years as a *custodio*, Pedro certainly is an *antiguo*, in the sense of his seniority in the workplace. However, he takes pains to point out his marginality to Chichén’s *antiguos*, and even isolates himself socially from the *nuevos*.

At a central-level, this job patrimony has presented both benefits and drawbacks to INAH central authorities in Mérida. I call this particular form of hiring “job patrimony” rather than simple nepotism. Nepotism is the favoritism shown to relatives (in this case, mostly sons) by granting them positions through a privileging of their family relation over and above the merits the individual would bring to the job. In the case of the *antiguos*, Clearly the family relations of current workers get positions, but it is expressed that it is precisely because the family association is meritorious in itself.

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19 There is one *custodio* from Veracruz who constitutes a special case, as he is an archaeologist in this position only for the time being.
Some current custodios explicitly reference their family genealogies, as in this case, when a third-generation custodio traces his lineage to the first encargado of Chichén:

My grandfather was Arcadio Salazar Lara, he worked in the restoration of the Castillo, working with the Mexican archaeologists. After the restoration was finished, my grandfather stayed on in Chichén, because the SEP wanted him to. They needed a person that would stay on the site. Thus, he started out at Chichén as a mason, and he ended up as the first custodio. This was in the years before the establishment of the INAH, now sixty years ago. He worked there starting in the 1930s. His compañeros including those with the last name Burgos, men who I respect a lot. They were there- Arcadio Salazar Lara, Don “Ponzo” Burgos, Don Tomás Lopez, these men initiated the era of custodianship. At this time, the site was just opening up to tourism. People were beginning to visit the site, and this required that people were there to protect it. They lived inside the zone, in casa “típicas Mayas.” At first, they made unas casa tipo campamento during the restoration work. Later, they made real houses, and there they stayed with their families. There my grandfather lived with his wife, who was from Dzitás. My grandfather was Campechano, from the barrio of San Roman, Campeche.

Family genealogies, like this one, are explicitly stated, anecdotally referenced, and assumed through the identifying category of antiguo. The next section makes explicit the connections between the INAH family genealogies and their conversion into an entrepreneurial business practice that today exists inside the zone.

Establishment of “Cooperatives”

Upon seeing the changes of both lifestyle and livelihood affected in the Plan de Desarrollo Integral de la zona arqueologica de Chichén Itzá, the INAH custodians formed a cooperative under the Dirección de Fomento Turstico. Through this cooperative, the INAH workers solicited and were granted a concession to sell refreshments inside the archaeological zone. According to one custodio, from 1940 until the late 1970s, Chichén Itzá was a "monopoly" in two senses. In the words of one custodio, “no había más ley que ellos.” Thus, in the first sense, it was a monopoly
because the custodios were the law, there was nothing in place to supercede their decisions. The zone was theirs. In the second sense, it was a business monopoly, in the everyday sense of the term, through the vending services the families of the custodios provided to tourists. The entrance of CULTUR state agency represented a “liberation” as it broke this monopoly. In the establishment of the cooperatives, Chichén’s INAH workers realigned themselves toward a new discourse of heritage—on one level addressing the importance and universality of cultural patrimony, and on another, practicing a self-preservationist strategy. The result is a contradiction with a surprisingly successful material outcome. “No one can own cultural patrimony…it belongs to everyone. Therefore, we have to claim our part of our heritage that we deserve.”

One custodio, a student of anthropology and third-generation custodio rationalizes the establishment of the cooperativas:

From the point of view of those of us that study anthropology, we can realize the reasons for maintaining themselves inside the zone that go beyond the strictly economic. Como herencia cultural, como herencia esta día, como presencia en la zona arqueológica. As a cultural inheritance, as an inheritance for today, as a presence in the archaeological zone. So, for a custodio, everyday you go to Chichén Itzá, there you spend your time, on the on the side you have a little business. For me, this is something to be respected by history, the people, and the government. After all, how many men in Yucatán have given their lives in the archaeological zones? ¿Cuántos hombres han muerto allá que han dado su vidas por la zonas arqueológicas? How many descendants have stayed on to maintain the same site? ¿Cuántas descendencias han quedado manteniendo el mismo sitio?

Around the time just before workers knew that structural and infrastructural changes were soon to instigate their eviction from the zone, the primary school, “Jose Erosa Peniche,” ceased functioning. A group of then-resident custodios drummed up a plan for a way to profitably exploit the vacated structure: they would outfit a small store. Seizing the opportunity that had presented itself, they pooled enough resources to begin
to outfit and stock the modest space. Just a year later, when they had barely gotten the shop up and running, the demolition was imminent. They were “left with nothing.”

The truth is, the families didn’t want to leave the site. They were very accustomed to living there, and some people had lived there their whole lives. It was painful for some, not because they felt like they were “owners” but because they were accustomed to the noises/sounds of the site, the sounds of the night, the sounds characteristic of the archaeological zone. So it was difficult for them to leave.

This came as a consequence of the state government making a proposal together with the INAH and the workers. One informant reports that the *custodios* were to receive an amount close to three thousand pesos, intended to allow the workers to establish themselves in some other place, and maintain a lifestyle to which they were accustomed, to build a house in the pueblo of Pisté similar to what the family had inside the archaeological zone. For some “political situation” or another, the money never actually appeared.

Along with the mid-1980s construction of Chichén’s *Parador Turístico*, two palm-roofed vending centers were built inside the INAH’s jurisdiction of the zone. But who would control these potentially big money-making enterprises? These twelve *custodios* used the investment they had created in the old school building as the basis for claiming that they were owed compensation. And the compensation they demanded was not a specific amount of money. Instead, they asked for, and after much negotiation, received permission through an accord between the INAH, CULTUR, and the Barbachano family to take over one of the *palapas* inside the zone. It was the mid-1980s, when the tourism influx centered on Cancun and trickled down to Chichén and Pisté was seemingly limitless and unstoppable.
Subsequently, the second cooperative was created, and in 1986 set up business in the *palapa* which had been previously constructed at the Sacred Cenote. This is located at a competitive distance, at the extreme opposite end of the public visiting area of the archaeological zone. This cooperative was also made up of twelve owners. However, these were the newest workers, at the time, that is. The cooperative was established by two women, both wives of *custodios*. Both *custodios* had become physically incapacitated through illness, and their wives acted in their business interests. In this case, a refreshment vending business had already opened in the *palapa*, and the cooperative members had to do long battle to win the concession for themselves.

While the Sacred Cenote group consisted of newer workers than those of the Osario, these workers were never *nuevos*, or new. They were, for the most part, second or third generation descendants of *antiguos*. They came to be grouped along with the *antiguos*. Today, the common division is as follows: *antiguos* are the original INAH workers and their descendants while *nuevos* are workers hired through open competition. This rule has a slight bend which is not quite enough to make an exception. There was one grandson of an original *antiguo* who won a spot through open competition, presumably based on his test score. Young and rather unassertive, this worker does not mix among his *compañeros* or the cohort with whom he entered, none of them coming from INAH families. It can be reasonably understood that he is an *antiguo* as well.

The real “nuevos” come from Pisté, San Francisco (a nearby *rancho*), Santa Elena (the largest town near the site of Uxmal), and Peto. Some having more than ten years on the job at Chichén resent being called “new.” But they prefer this label to *antiguo*. Outside of the zone, home in Pisté, this cohort is particularly sensitive to the town’s
opinion of INAH custodios. “They group us all together...most people don’t realize that
us nuevos don’t share in the money made by the antiguos with their palapas inside the
zone, and their other businesses in Pisté,” says Juan Ramón, a nuevo in his thirties who
has been at Chichén for six years. Though family has a longevity of several generations
in Pisté, no one among his relatives had previously worked in the INAH. Tired of
waiting tables at the Mayaland Hotel and elsewhere, he relished the opportunity to work
inside the zone. And the steady salary along with its other benefits was a safe, secure
way to ensure the maintenance of his family.

Juan Ramón is particularly vocal in speaking out against the system of economic
benefits that antiguos have developed. His complaints have an interesting discursive
simultaneity: invoking the site as both “cultural patrimony of all” and as a place where
the nuevos should have their “fair” chance to earn more than their salaries by working
there. While attacking the “injustice” from the standpoint of undermining the practice in
terms of its illegitimacy according to policies and regulations concerning patrimonio
cultural, he wants equal opportunity to profit from the site. Why should they earn so
much money in “mi (my) Chichén”? His possessiveness is more than a pride in the
cultural patrimony of the Maya, of Yucatán, or of Mexico. He is from Pisté, he works at
Chichén- he isn’t just one of the passers-by that flood the zone on a daily basis. It is his
Chichén, and he wants his financial rewards.

The antiguos assert their own logic for rationalizing and even legitimizing the
existence of the coopertivas in their present form, and do not appear to seriously consider
the “little complaints” of unfairness on the part of the nuevos. However, the custodios
involved in the coopertivas do see the state government as presenting a threat to their
business inside the archaeological zone. The following explanation demonstrates one palapa-owner’s attempt to protect his interests inside the archaeological zone by appealing to the latest discursive fashion: the invocation of the non-governmental civic association.

These cooperatives really aren’t cooperatives [in the legal sense], they are asociacion civiles, they are comercios [businesses] that have their specifications. If they want to join, yes, the door is open, but you have to give your part (money—an investment in the group enterprise). The government, when the palapas were formed as asociaciones. They weren’t formed under the name of one person, rather, they carried the names of all who were present at this historic moment [all of the antiguos]. That is why it is an asociacion civil, it is formed in accordance with the government. So they were formed as entities completely separate from Chichén- they do not receive any of the income of the archaeological zone, and since they are separate, membership/ownership is not the right of just any worker. Is something commercial which has its own history. It is a very special situation which grew out of a valid reason. These people who have no roots in Chichén are not a part of this. It is a right for the families who once lived in the zone.

Without my prompting, this custodio raised issue of “cooperativas” and repeatedly returned to discussions of their history, significance, and the necessity of maintaining these associations in their original form. Perceived a threat from the State, but not from the actual owner of the property, Fernando Barbachano. Interestingly enough, he admitted that the palapas are not technically cooperatives, which is correct, but then he proceeded to identify them as asociaciones civiles (AC). According to a lawyer I consulted, the enterprises inside the archaeological zone are actually sociidades anónimas (SA): for-profit business associations. The rationalization for calling the “cooperativas” asociaciones civiles is highly important in justifying the existence and continued functioning of the refreshment and souvenir stands inside the archaeological zone. First, the AC (more or less an NGO) has a coveted non-profit status, and carries with its status the flavor of civic duty, disinterested public work, benefiting society, and “doing good”
in general. Thus, this labeling recasts what from one perspective looks like mafia
organization motivated by personal greed into the light of public good. The justifications
on the part of the palapa owners is *de jure* quite weak, but continues to operate *de facto*
with no identifiable hinderances. According to one INAH official, there is no legal
justification for the existence of the *palapas*, yet no one is willing to confront the system
which permits their continued, and quite profitable, functioning. This, the best
justification comes from outside of the juridical field governing archaeological zones.
This “outside” is comprised of a multi-sourced fed by discourses on cultural and
biological inheritance and descendence as well as usufruct claims through both land and
labor.

Facing the threat from the state, *antiguos* have at least on the surface, attempted to
form partnerships with other *custodios* and residents of Pisté. These partnerships work
across the blurring lines between the two categories of workers. While Don Pedro is a
hybrid *antiguo*, Don Julio, a worker in his late fifties can be described as a hybrid *nuevo*.
While the benefit of age, experience, and a period of residence in the former Chichén
Pueblo guaranteed a non-consanguineous INAH family affiliation, Julio, son of an
original *custodio*, spent his early years at Chichén, but moved to Uxmal, and later to the
zone of Kabah. Here his father Patricio was named *encargado* and the family remained.
Reaching adulthood, Julio pursued a career outside of the INAH and life inside
archaeological zones. Moving to Mérida, he worked at a variety of jobs until he got a
position as a *custodio* in Chichén just a few years ago. Julio is a *nuevo* with an INAH
background which does not carry enough capital (cultural or financial) to make him an
*antiguo*. 

Despite these hybridities, the categories remain entrenched, organizing the social and economic lives of custodios in both Chichén Itzá and Pisté. There is one nuevo who last year “broke ranks” with his cohort by investing in the “Maya Cave Bar” in Pisté. Some of his cohort expressed disappointment. Antiguos, especially the union representative, have used him (much to his discredit among the other workers) as the shining example of how the business dealings of the antiguos were investment opportunities open to the whole group- nuevos included. When I asked a group of nuevos if this was true- after all, Ricardo invested- they answered with shrugs, shakes of the head, and even a loud laugh. “I’ll bet you heard that from Enrique Garcia!” And indeed I had. This grandson of the first encargado of Chichén was the union representative for all of Yucatán’s INAH custodios to the national labor union.

When the Maya Cave Bar scheme fell through, Ricardo was left without a group with which to identify at the site. He was left in a tricky and lonely position in a job where so much time is spent socializing with work-mates. Incidentally, after the INAH investors dropped the Cave Bar deal, new owners took over the business in the summer of 2002 and quickly established Pisté’s premier transvestite strip club.

It is possible to begin to see another transformation taking shape as INAH custodios are hiring non-INAH personnel to perform various jobs around the archaeological zone. These kinds of employment take two forms. The first involves the hiring of people to pick up litter. This is in accordance with an agreement reached between the INAH, CULTUR, and the property owners. Another group of workers are employees of INAH custodios. Thirty-five-year-old Efrain is an employee of the INAH cooperativas at Chichén Itzá. He is an employee of the twelve INAH custodios who own
the refreshment and souvenir stands. I had seen him a few times on my occasional
wanderings to the Sacred Cenote, picking up strewn trash and putting it in the
receptacles. Efrain has worked at Chichén for twelve years, since he was fourteen years
old. He began work as a hired local laborer in excavation work, and archaeologists soon
noticed the great skill he had for drawing structure profiles, a crucial component of any
excavation and consolidation project.

Not everyone that works at the site is an official INAH employee. The other large
group of workers at Chichén Itzá are those who work for CULTUR. Lupita is a thirty-
year-old widow and mother of two young boys, also an employee of the INAH
cooperativas. She is a native of Pisté, and has worked in the zone since the age of
sixteen. Growing up in a poor family plagued by alcoholism in the pre-tourism boom of
Pisté in the 1980s, she left home at fourteen for domestic work in Cancun. She was
relieved to move back to Pisté only two years later, finding work at Chichén Itzá
cleaning the bathrooms across from the Castillo. Demonstrating her strong work ethic
and reliability, Lupita spent the next several years moving up the employment ladder
inside the zone, finally reaching her current position as bookkeeper for one of the
refreshment stands. She is currently enrolled in computer classes at night in Pisté, hoping
to learn new skills in hopes of job advancement.

Tension arises from perceived (from within and without) inequality between
antiguos and nuevos. Says one antiguo,

There is a group of compañeros that are nuevos, who don’t have the characteristic
of herencia [inheritance] like the others [antiguos]. They have not been involved
in the history of the zone. In the whole process, meaning the living as well as the
business aspect. There exists a division in the sense that they think that because
they are custodios, they should be involved in the cooperativa. The cooperativas
are open for investment, but one has to get together the money and make the commitment. But they say, no, we don’t have to pay anything because we are custodios as well.

Don Pedro is irritated by the nuevos, calling their charges against the antiguos as no more than the whining of envy. “If you ask for a piece of cake that is already sliced and ask for half—well, it is already all divided. Each piece is already spoken for. You can’t arrive after the fact of the dividing up and expect to get a piece—especially a big piece!” explains one custodio who is a cooperative member,” Don Pedro reasons. Nuevos counter these arguments, claiming that just because a group was privileged in the past doesn’t mean that privilege should continue.

Most of the preceding account is heavily indebted to long interviews and conversations I had with Don Pedro, the “hybrid antíguo” I spoke of above. He turned out to be an unlikely ally established through my relationship with his son and daughter-in-law, a couple who were friends of mine in Pisté. Don Pedro’s son passed away (suddenly, leaving a toddler and pregnant wife) before I knew his father the custodio, and before I started my dissertation research at Chichén. His position as a not-quite antíguo (though senior member of the Chichén workforce) and familiarity with me as “an American friend” of his recently deceased son perhaps allowed us to develop a good camaraderie, a rapport that opened the door to sensitive subjects for serious discussion.

I have never seen an actual document related to the establishment or regulation of the concessions inside the archaeological zone of Chichén Itzá. I know definitely of one lawyer, who happens to also be an INAH employee in Yucatán’s state office, who provided the legal support for these business transactions. He surely holds the information as to what “really” happened in the 1980s. But refusing to give in to what is
more like an investigative journalist’s impulse to follow the story to track down the truth, I was satisfied with my “ethnographer’s disposition,” finding the deeper, more relevant significance in the versions of events as narrated to me. But there are some elements to the story that give me pause for thought, which I will mention briefly. First, the organizations don’t appear to be “cooperatives” in a legal sense. Instead, the day-to-day operations and business practices appear to be those of a for-profit corporation rather than cooperative. Nor are they, I would argue against the statement of one of my misleading informants (the son of an antiguo and cooperative member through inheritance), “cultural foundations” as he tried to assert.

How could the antiguos justify their business practices to their fellow INAH employees? Are these legitimate business practices? Are they ethical patrimony claims? Are the antiguos really the “mafia of Pisté” as in the words of one local critic I cited above? The term “mafia” carries with it a set of distinguishing characteristics: family-oriented business that is heavily involved in illegal activities. Different from the hyper-structured organization or bureaucracy, the mafia organization has a personalistic ethos. The mafia might be described as a kinship group with consanguineous, affinal, and fictive kin relations. “In the absence of a legitimate system of effective power, the mafia emerged as a system of parasitic power” (Alba 1985: 36).

While similarities exist, an analytical comparison doesn’t stand up to careful scrutiny. There is a much better way of analyzing manipulations of the state and its policies and ideologies that pays careful attention to historical and regional specificity.

Here: de Certeau on strategy and tactics, show how with entrance of the state into archaeological zone, custodios’ management of the site, which had been strategy-
because there was little else to contend with, into tactic- they were moved down a notch and had to negotiate a space for themselves, had to recover. Strategies and tactics are tied to the spatial organization of a place. De Certeau (1984) describes how these strategies and tactics operate in processes of the negotiations of a space.

I call a strategy the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a place that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base from which relations with an exteriority composed of targets or threats (customers or competitors…) (1984: 35-36; emphasis in original).

In the years before an active presence of the State in the archaeological zone, the INAH custodios, with their inherited rights of dominion, strategically controlled the zone and its resources. When the state moved in, the custodios moved into a position where tactical practices had to be utilized against the new strategic management of the zone on the part of the state. Again from de Certeau,

The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. It does not have the means to keep to itself, at a distance, in a position of withdrawal, foresight, and self-collection: it is a maneuver ‘within the enemy’s field of vision’ (37).

Through this operation of strategies and tactics, the transformations in labor imposed from without (from the practices of archaeology, the State, and international tourism) are matched by re-negotiations of positions of those within the zone. I argue that the establishment of the cooperatives inside the archaeological zone of Chichén Itzá represents a space between strategy and tactic, dependent on the presence of the State and the degree of state intervention into the zone. When threat was big, response was big, and custodios won a battle that wouldn’t be possible today because of emergent strength of private sector.
Conclusion

"Bix a be’el!” I call out a greeting in Maya, signaling a sort of cultural, if not personal familiarity. It was a fairly simple technique I often employed to set myself apart from the tourists whom I did not necessarily appear to be so different from. “You live in Pisté, right? I’ve seen you around,” one of the vendors had stopped me on the path a few moments earlier. “Yes, I’m an anthropologist. I am doing some work here, interviewing the INAH custodios.” There is a nervous moment, covered by frozen smiles by all. I quickly offer my hand and introduce myself, hoping to get past what is a naturally tense situation: I had just revealed my “connection” to the INAH, and these vendors were illegally selling in the zone, a serious infraction policed by the custodios themselves. “You guys aren’t afraid to sell here?” I asked, making exaggerated gestures of looking back over both my shoulders, trying to spot any approaching custodios. No, he answered, explaining how he and his buddies make use of the myriad of footpaths that trace the non-tourist routes around the site. The road to the Sacred Cenote is one of the less-guarded areas inside the zone, and the vendors had an advantageous position, making it possible to see oncoming custodios before being seen and found out.

A tourguide friend laughed when I related this incident. There’s no danger for the vendors selling inside the zone, at least not if the right custodios have been sufficiently bribed! On my own part, I thought I was already accustomed to the de facto rather than de jure everyday operations in the zone, and the “normal abnormality”\(^{20}\) of the heritage site’s operations. But I faced this particular revelation with disbelief, after all, the

\(^{20}\) I borrow this phrase from Angela Rivas, personal communication 2002.
“artisan invasion” is one of the most hotly contested issues at the site in the past several years.

Successive generations of steady, salaried employment with health and pension benefits, paid vacations, and uniform allowances have given the INAH families a more stable economic position than there neighbors in Pisté, the majority of whom are dependent on the dramatic fluctuations of the tourism industry for their daily sustenance. This economic stability has allowed many to build large houses (referred to as mansions by other Pisteños), drive late model cars, and carry cellular phones. Some have even moved out of Pisté to Mérida, Yucatán’s largest city.

Status as an INAH family member has allowed economic investment opportunities beyond the steady wage and benefits of federal employment. There are twelve co-owners of the two refreshment and souvenir stands inside the archaeological zone, as well as a restaurant and bar in Pisté that are INAH family-controlled. In the case of the bar, co-investors from amongst the nuevos were invited, but few jumped at the opportunity, not wishing to break rank with their compañeros. Other reasons were more personal: “They have too many meetings. I’d rather spend my free-time with my own family,” explains one of the youngest custodios, the first in his family to work in the formal employment sector at Chichén.21

There remains a contradiction at the heart of the argument I have developed through the course of this chapter. This contradiction, or discursive anomaly, lies at the core of the INAH workers’ patrimonial claims to Chichén Itzá. In the course of

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21 I distinguish here between formal and informal employment at Chichén, as many Pisteños and residents from the smaller rancherías surrounding the site have worked for decades as ambulant vendors within the zone. This activity has long been illegal, but it wasn’t until the early to mid-
discussing this history of archaeology at Chichén and the workers' relationships to the site, at once personal, ancestral, and economic, I once referred to the enclave of workers and their families as a "community." The term proved contentious, as it does in various disciplines of social science study. The term took on a distinct figure of spatiality and temporality as I was "corrected" by the current encargado of workers at the site— for himself and possibly others, Chichén was not a community—it was a campamento—a temporary housing site for the workers and their families. They were given materials by the INAH to build their houses, many of which stood in the zone for several decades. But they did not own the land—for nobody may own the land. As a site of national cultural heritage, the land belonged to no one and everyone. This articulation of the housing sites at Chichén Itzá through the designation campamento has ties to a highly politicized national issue—that of the privatization of archaeological zones described in Chapter Three.

1990s that the INAH strictly enforced this policy (see Castañeda 1996, Castañeda and Himpele 1997, and Peraza López and Rejón Patrón 1989).
Chapter 5

Henequen, Haciendas, and Hotels: (re)Patronage in Northwestern Yucatán

One weeknight, just after dark, I attended a slide show presented by the INAH’s state head of security in Kochol, Yucatán. I, along with thirty or so women residents of Kochol of various ages and some children watched the scuffed, uneven wall on the side of the darkened molino (corn mill) as images of Chichén Itzá appeared, one after another. The occasion was the invitation extended by archaeologists, mostly American, of the Pakbeh Archaeological Project to the INAH representative as an effort to increase community knowledge and interaction with Maya cultural patrimony. The Pakbeh project, a group of archaeologists mostly from US universities, was in the midst of their fifth season of excavation at the ruins of Chunchucmil, located just a few kilometers from where we were gathered—archaeologists, INAH representative, ethnographer, and Maya residents—to watch the slides of famous archaeological sites, Maya glyphs, and artifacts.

The slides showed the thousands of visitors, both national and international tourists, who would gather at Chichén Itzá each March 21, the day marking the Spring Equinox. Here we were, almost two hundred kilometers from Pisté and Chichén Itzá, in the same state of Yucatán, but, in a sense, a world away. At the site of Chunchucmil, only recently declared an officially delimited archaeological zone, there is no restored architecture, no pyramids visitors may climb and take their picture. In fact, there were very few visitors to the mounds at Chunchucmil at all, including these local community residents, even though most of the land that comprises the site center belongs to the community members as an ejido land-grant. From my own perspectives on the history
of archaeological site development in Yucatán, especially through my research at Chichén Itzá, the words of the INAH representative showing the slides rang true. “Maybe none of you will live to see the cerros (mounds) on your ejido look like the Castillo, the Great Ball Court, or the Temple of the Warriors like at Chichén Itzá, but maybe your children or their children will.” That evening, it was difficult for Maya residents of Kochol to imagine that the tree-covered hills that lay within their ejido property on the outskirts of town might be versions of the grand monuments such as those at Chichén Itzá. The few seasons of archaeological work at the site could not compare with the decades of excavation and reconstruction efforts in the ruins of Chichén. The “ruins” at Chunchucmil were hardly even that: even today there hardly exists an imagination of what these structures would have been like centuries ago. In other words, how could the mounds even be ruins if there was no operative understanding of what they would be “ruined” versions of? Thus, the mounds were, at least until a few years ago, neither “ruins” nor cultural patrimony.

The inception of an archaeological project just in the past few years introduced a new patrimonial discourse in Kochol and other neighboring communities, including the town of Chunchucmil, located seven kilometers from Kochol, on the opposite side of the archaeological zone. This is the discourse of Maya ruins as Maya cultural heritage. That which is so clearly identified and promoted by the Mexican state was not a part of the everyday understandings articulated by Kochol or Chunchucmil residents toward the mounds.

\[1\] The official name of the project is the Chunchucmil Regional Economy Project (CREP).
While Chunchucmil seems a world away from Chichén Itzá, not just archaeology but socioeconomic history makes it so. The state of Yucatán has, for more than a century, been characterized as regionalist. The southern and eastern parts of Yucatán (where Pisté and Chichén Itzá are located), are historically known as the milpa zone; Northwestern Yucatan is still known as the “henequen zone” though it has been decades since this sisal-hemp plant has been profitably cultivated in this region, and nearly a century since henequen production was at its height. The contrasts between the henequen zone and the milpa zone are most apparent not only in the forms of agricultural production for which the two zones are identified, but also in the social organization historically articulated to these forms.

Ethnography of Yucatán has consistently portrayed the regionalism of Yucatán in a manner privileging the milpa zone over the henequen zone. All four of the communities presented in Redfield’s *Folk Culture of Yucatán* (1941), for example, are situated to the south and east of Mérida. Redfield began his social anthropological study of Maya communities in Yucatan under the auspices of the Carnegie Institution of Washington’s archaeological project headquartered at Chichén Itzá. Redfield had already undertaken the first study of a “peasant” community in Tepoztlán, in central Mexico. *Tepoztlán: A Mexican Village*, published in 1930, was based on several months of research carried out in 1928. The Tepoztlán study arguably influenced Redfield’s developing conception of the influences of modernity (represented by urban centers) on traditional or folk society. Redfield suggested that the “disorganization and perhaps the reorganization” of culture in Tepoztlán under "the slowly growing influence of the city" exemplified a general process by which "primitive man becomes civilized man, the rustic
becomes the urbanite" (13-14). In 1930, he moved the focus of his research to Yucatán, where the CIW approved his plan for a study of four locations: Chan Kom (peasant village), Tusik (tribal village), Dzitas (town), and Mérida (city). Each location respectively represented a location on a continuum of the intensification of the influences of modernization.

Redfield's most intensive research was carried out in Chan Kom, a Maya village on the outskirts of Chichén Itzá. In Chan Kom: A Maya Village (1934) Redfield focuses on the concept of cultural change through the lens of the varying degrees of contact with "civilization" (modernity) differentially affects "folk culture" throughout Yucatán. Civilization and modernization are presented by Redfield through a spatio-visual image of civilization moving across the Yucatan, originating in Mérida in the northeast corner of the peninsula and spreading to the south and west, growing weaker (2). Where did the haciendas of northwestern Yucatán fit in this schematized image?

In 1965 Arnold Strickon published an article in the journal America Indigena, entitled “Hacienda and Plantation in Yucatán.” He argues that Redfield’s “classic” 1941 Folk Culture of Yucatán blatantly ignores the henequen zone. According to Strickon:

It was widely recognized, as soon as The Folk Culture of Yucatán appeared, that Redfield had all but ignored the henequen plantations of the northern part of the peninsula. In terms of the economic role of the henequen industry for the whole peninsula, and in terms of the proportion of the Yucatecan population which was directly or indirectly dependent upon it, this zone and these plantations constituted the most important sector of the Yucatecan economy, society, and polity. It is my contention that the henequen estates of Redfield’s time were critical to an understanding of Yucatecan culture as Redfield saw it (36-37).

It was thought that the slavery-like debt-bondage system which included more than one thousand population centers in northwestern Yucatán had either overly influenced or even destroyed the traditional cultural aspects of Maya life. There are few exceptions to
the ethnographic bypassing of the henequen zone. Perhaps the best presentation of a well-researched “straight” ethnography of a henequen hacienda community is Kirk’s *San Antonio: from Henequen Hacienda to Plantation Ejido* (1975). The historiography outweighs the ethnography: Joseph ([1982] 1988, 1996; and Brannon, 1991) and Wells (1984a, 1984b, 1985, 1998) have produced, both together and separately perhaps the most solid research articulating the politics of Yucatán to Mexico, and even the United States through the henequen industry in Yucatán. There are several important studies by both Yucatec and others on the political economy of henequen in Yucatán (Brannon and Baklanoff 1987; Sabido Méndez 1995). Pedro Bracamonte’s 1989, *Amos y Sirvientes, Las Haciendas de Yucatán: 1800-1860,* is an historical study of the time period that predates the henequen boom, thus demonstrating the institutionalization of the hacienda system in the early period which set up the conditions for the emergence of the large and highly profitable henequen haciendas. Villanueva Mukul (1984) follows this period, covering the henequen industry during the Porfiriato. Studies of the relationship between identity and henequen work (Varguez Pasos 1999) and the social effects of the henequen hacienda system (García Quintanilla 1987) complement contemporary examines of the twentieth century decline and liquidation of henequen in Yucatán (Baños Ramírez 1989, 1996, 1998).

The factors distinguishing the milpa zone from the henequen zone are thus ecological, agricultural, industrial, all of which are layered onto a distinction of the cultural atmosphere of the regions. Contemporary conditions have exacerbated these contrasts, at least on the level of imagination, as the region has become remapped, so to speak, into new kinds of connections and networks related to the national and
international tourism industry relied upon heavily by the state for income, jobs, and regional political stability.

I was initially drawn to this other side of Yucatán not through the lure of difference, of otherness, but for the fact that very little comparative ethnographic work had been done between the south/eastern and north/western regions of the Peninsula. While an outsider perspective might tempt one to think that just the other side of the same state might be quite the same, I quickly realized this not to be the case. Certainly, throughout all of Yucatan, there definitely exist general and generalizable features: language, dress, lifestyle, or occupation.

But what are connections between these regionalist characterizations and patrimony? My own research questions centered on local and national instantiations of the conception of cultural heritage led me initially to the bounded zones of archaeological sites in the these two regions of Yucatan. Based on oral, official documentary, and other historical sources, this chapter tells of key elements in the late-nineteenth through twentieth centuries in order to provide the social historical context of this microregion which backgrounds the current archaeological excavation projects in the site of Chunchucmil. It is divided into three parts, each of which presents a particular articulation of patrimony. In the first part, I explain the rise of the henequen monocrop culture and the reorganization of land, labor, and everyday life for the Mayas of northwestern Yucatán. In this section, I trace the social history of land patrimony: from territorial control of the sovereign Spanish Crown and the subsequent transference to white Yucatec elites. In this schema, Maya people are disarticulated from territory, thereby losing their patrimony through the loss of land claims. We will see how the
plantation owners (*hacendados*) reorganized the region of northwestern Yucatán through the establishment of a new socioeconomic framework for articulating the land and labor of the Maya people. The second part narrates the conversion of the henequen haciendas into collective ejidos through the agrarian reforms of the 1930s. Similar to the “provenance” of the archaeological zone of Chichén Itzá presented in Chapter 3, I use both ejido records and the public property state registry to trace the genealogies of the haciendas and the establishment of the ejidos from the division of their lands. In the third part, I discuss recent purchasing of former hacienda properties by tourism developers. Just as the archaeological project introduced the discourse of the ruins as cultural patrimony, the “hacienda tourism” development transforms the ruined buildings of the henequen plantations into historical cultural patrimony, the major selling point for the high-priced luxury hotels for a mostly international niche-tourism market.

This background sets the stage for the following chapter, which details the work of a US-based archaeology project and their work in the site of Chunchucmil. Figuring prominently throughout the discussion are the key terms thus far developed in various ways: patrimony and privatization. In this and the following chapter, we will find redeployments of these concepts, both through their local and historical specificities.

Part 1: *Haciendas and Henequen*

“These days, a tour of the Maya ruins means a visit to our henequen haciendas.”


The Spanish conquerors and settlers found neither rich, fertile land nor mineral wealth in Yucatán. “Yucatán is the country with least earth that I have ever seen, since all of it is one living rock,” reports Franciscan missionary Diego de Landa (Wells 1998:
98). So is the case with the land at Chunchucmil: mostly rock with thin pockets of soil with little or no surface water.² It is a natural environment seemingly inhospitable to most agricultural production. Because land as such was not so important to the Spanish, there was not an early rush among white settlers to stake claim to large tracts of land. The rich resources of Yucatán were to be found in a different kind of natural resource abundantly available: the labor power of the indigenous population.

Encomienda

In the early colonial period, lands were distributed to Spanish settlers as rewards under the encomienda system. The encomienda was a system of indigenous labor tribute. During the first decades of colonization, lands were territorialized by the Spanish crown and their original inhabitants became its subjects. While in the rest of Mexico, 55% of settlements were held in the encomienda system, in Yucatán the figure reached 90% (Strickon 1965: 42; Scholes 1937: 4). Thus the system had a greater reach, as well as greater longevity, lasting until 1785, longer than in any other part of Mexico (Cline 1953: 99; Strickon 1965: 42). The system was arranged so that the indigenous inhabitants would be obligated the to the Spanish Crown for the use of these lands.

During the encomienda period, “The degree of control of the Spanish and Creoles over the Maya villages was not uniform over the entire peninsula” (Strickon 1965: 43). Colonial power weakened to the south and east away from Mérida toward Valladolid. Beyond Valladolid were mostly “free” Maya villages outside of the labor and tribute obligations of encomienda. This region of “free Maya” was historically considered to

² Ironically, Chunchucmil is located near what one author calls “relatively speaking, the best soil, water, and climatic conditions for large-scale agriculture in the peninsula...found southeast of Mérida, just north of a set of low hills called the sierra (or, in Maya, the Puuc)” (Wells 1985: 17).
harbor the less subdued indigenous population, and became known, especially during the Caste War, as the breeding ground of Maya insurrection.

It is important to note that the *encomienda* did not imply territorial property ownership: it was only a royal dispensation to collect tribute from the communities under a particular jurisdiction for a set period of time (Millet Camara 1984: 19). Yet the effects of the system were to reorganize indigenous relations with particular pieces or areas of land.

The Maya, who for centuries had lived and worked in communal villages, were now forced to work a prescribed number of days each year for the Spanish *encomendero*. Significantly, Indians in the Yucatán countryside, although at times badly exploited by the *encomienda*, were not uprooted from their traditional lifestyle. So long as labor was considered a more valuable resource than land, little pressure was put on the Indian to alter his routine” (Wells 1985: 19).

The *encomienda* survived in Yucatán until its abolishment in 1785.

This stands a degree in contrast with the post-1785 land and indigenous labor organization in Yucatán. Before the agriculture haciendas were established the cattle ranches, or *estancias*. The lands destined to become *estancias* were categorized as *terrenos baldios*—fallow lands—seen as unfit or unusable for cultivation.³ The terrenos baldios were “lands supposedly unutilizable by the indigenous people because they could not use them to make their milpas” (Patch 1976: 33). Ironically, non-cultivatable land became the huge agricultural production centers of the peninsula. This ruse is common in the history of land deals in Yucatán, and we will see it again in the next chapter, in a

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³ This was the case with the Hacienda Uxmal, which originated as a “*real merced*” or lands donated by the King, in 1673, Lorenzo de Devia. Supposedly, this land which was to pass through many private hands and eventually become an archaeological zone. Uxmal, the second most heavily visited zone in Yucatán. See John Lloyd Stephens, *Incidents of Travel In Yucatán*, Vol. 1 (1834: 197). Stephens consulted the land titles of the Hacienda Uxmal.
discussion of twentieth century agrarian policies dealing with ejido lands—specifically in terms of terrenos baldios, and usufruct land rights.

The transformation of the political economy in Yucatán from the colonial encomienda system to the establishment of the estancias (intensified later in the form of haciendas) is most clearly marked by the encouragement of the development of private property in the Peninsula. This activity was bolstered by liberal ideals, heightened under the Porfiriato. The expropriation of communal indigenous lands in Yucatán began soon after Independence. By the start of the Caste War (1847), the expropriation of northwestern Yucatán was almost complete, with 65-75% of land converted into private property (Bracamonte 1989: 67). Villages bore the burden of proof in ownership of communal lands. If the land parcel was (at the moment) uncultivated, or baldias, the burden was even greater, as communities didn’t meet usufruct principles which might have allowed some communities to retain their properties. Villages held no proof of ownership in the form of bills of sale, donation records, or decree of merced real. The transformation of the land of Yucatan can be described as a transition in the juridical status of the land itself, from res communis—that which cannot be owned by anyone and which is subject to use by all—into res nullius—that which is owned by no one, yet subject to appropriation. Because villages could not “prove” ownership as per the requirements of state authorities, the land was considered to be owned by no one, and was therefore appropriated into private regimes which dramatically transformed both political economy and social life in Yucatan. This expropriation/privatization was less extensive in the south and east of Yucatán, where the population was less dense, the soil
poor, and the lack of water resources even more dramatic than in other parts of the region.

**Hacienda**

In almost all parts of Latin America, the hacienda emerged after the Conquest and colonization period. But the development of what came to be an agrarian institution came nearly two centuries later in Yucatán, and it wasn’t until the beginning of the nineteenth century, that the haciendas began to appear on the peninsula (Patch 1976: 21). While Patch (1976) attributes this delayed development to the geographic and ecologic conditions of the peninsula, one is also attempted to factor in the inability of the conquerors to fully “subdue” Yucatán’s indigenous population. Because land and labor were the crucial resources for Yucatán’s economy, elite landowners pushed legislation to transfer *terrenos baldíos* (the “uncultivated” public lands) into private hands (Patch 1990: 51-53). The hacienda system transformed both agricultural production and social life for the non-Spanish descendant inhabitants, as the landscape became territorialized through private ownership by the white elite of Spanish descendants. Maya people who had once lived in independent communities and worked their land for sustenance became peon-laborers on the great plantations.

It was during the eighteenth century in Yucatán that the “Classic Haciendas” developed (1750-1800). These were combination agricultural/cattle plantations, constructed with permanent houses and outbuildings (rather than the “primitive” quarters of earlier epochs). These “Classic Haciendas” had one unprecedented feature: not only did they offer a secure agro-economic system, but they began to set in place a social system that would dominate the countryside of Yucatán for almost two centuries (Patch
1976: 32-33). Unlike the cattle ranches, which required relatively few workers, in the agriculture/cattle hacienda system, workers and their families lived in the immediate vicinity of the plantation’s production center. Thus, during the first half of the nineteenth century, haciendas (as well as some cattle ranches) developed into population centers, often with larger numbers of inhabitants than villages (Bracamonte 1989: 78). “The establishment of each new hacienda was at the same time the birth of a small aldea de sirvientes” (ibid). As we will see in the cases of both Kochol and Chunchucmil, these populations and their descendents tended to remain connected to the agricultural production centers established in this period even after the twentieth century agrarian reform which dismantled the hacienda system.

Traditional Maya agricultural is based on the cultivation of corn, a dietary staple in Yucatán. Beeswax, cotton textiles, and corn were the backbone of the economy of colonial Yucatán through the end of the eighteenth century. During the war for Independence, export markets were lost, and a severe economic crisis in the Peninsula ensued. As Yucatán was cut off from Cuba, its main sugar supplier, the region attempted to internally meet this demand as well as develop other export products to regenerate the economy. At this time, henequen emerged as the “green gold” crop, the wildly profitable monoculture of the region, at least for a time.

Henequen itself did not come with Spanish colonialism, nor with the neo-colonialism of the epoch of the great haciendas in Yucatán. Rather, “it is indubitable that during the pre-colonial epoch the Mayas were already utilizing agave fiber that grew in the territory where the Maya culture developed, for many diverse uses” (Rodriguez Losa 1976: 4). Archaeological evidence demonstrates that henequen-rasping tools were in use,
and various codices refer to henequen products, such as different kinds of rope, nets, and cord. It is hypothesized that around the year 1000 CE, the Toltec Xiu introduced techniques for putting the wildly growing plant to domestic use (Irigoyen in Rodriguez Losa 1976: 10). Called “ki” in Yucatec Maya, the Spanish named the plant henequen, and used it for ropes, hammocks, and especially boatlines (Sanders 1977: 27). During the Colonial period, henequen products were exported from Yucatán, but its cultivation was far surpassed by corn and cattle.

The first half of the nineteenth century marks the beginning of major henequen cultivation and exportation, with a marked growth from 60,000 kilos in 1810 to a million in 1840. In this period, however, exports of sugarcane, grown in the more fertile areas of the southern part of Yucatán, still exceeded henequen. Two intervening factors soon catapulted henequen cultivation and export to unprecedented levels: a violent civil war and the invention of the cotton gin in the United States.

The Guerra de castas, “Caste War,” refers to an indigenous rebellion that engulfed most of the Yucatan Peninsula in harsh battle for much of the nineteenth century (1847–1903). The struggle was not only ethnic, pitting indigenous peoples against a white (Hispanic or Hispanicized) ruling class, but also economic, involving attacks by rural campesinos on hacienda owners, merchants, and others. The main demands of the rebels were the right to customary communal lands and those lands in the public domain, the reduction of the obligated tax contributions to both the church and state, as well as debt servitude. The rebels met with sporadic and limited success but still managed at times to remove whole portions of the Yucatán Peninsula from state control. Between
1847 and 1850, a third of the population of Yucatán died. In some areas, the war continued until 1905 (Reed 1964; Rugeley 1996).

During these decades, henequen stood as the biggest export crop in Yucatán. Caste War fighting was more intense in the south and east of the Peninsula, and did little to affect the everyday operations of the henequen haciendas, concentrated in the northwestern portion of the peninsula. In the northern part of the Peninsula, hacendados looked to recreate to the region’s economy, centered on the productive power of their extensive tracts of land. The boom years of henequen were from 1880 to 1918. In 1860, 2,500 hectares were planted with henequen, and by 1916, 192,000 hectares produced 210,990 tons of fiber (Villanueva Mukul 1980: 47). The Henequen Zone was thus established, and grew to eventually encompass 52 municipios, of which Maxcanú—the local governmental seat of Kochol and Chunchucmil—is one.

**Hacienda Life and Labor**

The henequen plant (*Agave fourcroydes*) takes seven years to mature, and has an average life-span of twenty-five years. In the years 1850-1880, henequen production became mechanized, and thus, highly intensified. These were the boom years for henequen, which earned it the name “green gold.” García Quintanilla characterizes this period, “cultivation was reorganized in a way that made possible an uninterrupted, collective, and militarized work process that was especially suited for production on a large scale.” (1987).

The economic process of henequen production has four phases. The primary phase is agricultural, the growing of the henequen plant, with the result of this step being
the *hoja de henequen*. The second phase, which moves the process into the industrial stage of production, is the processing of the *hojas* (leaves) in a machine known as the *disfibradora*, the machine designed to separate the plants’ fibers from the leaves. The next phase industrial as well, turning the fiber into various products.

It wasn’t difficult for the *hacendados* of the nineteenth century to find the mechanism to subject the *peones* to a life tied to the haciendas. Indeed, the state helped in the effort. The old resource of the ‘repartimientos’ of the colonial period was reenacted through a system of debt-peonage. This was the instrument the Yucatec *hacendados* relied upon to ensure a cheap and submissive workforce for the development of the henequen economy (Villanueva Mukul 1980: 45).

The cultivation, harvest, and processing was difficult, labor intensive work. The following passage captures the steps involved in working the henequen haciendas in 1908, a time of intense production. John Kenneth Turner, in his classic polemic *Barbarous Mexico*, describes what he observed on a henequen hacienda in the early twentieth century:

In the fields we found gangs of men and boys, some gangs hoeing the weeds from between the gigantic plants and some sawing off the big leaves with *machetes*. The harvest of leaves goes on unceasing all the twelve months of the year, and during the cycle every plant of the farm is gone over four times. Twelve leaves are usually clipped, the twelve largest, the thirty smallest being left to mature for another three months. The workman chops off the leaf at its root, trims the sharp briars off the two edges, trims the spear-like tip, counts the leaves left on the plant, counts the leaves he is cutting, piles his leaves into bundles, and finally carries the bundles to the end of his row, where they are carted away on a movable-track mule-car line (Turner 1969: 20).

The *Ley de sirvientes del campo* (1868) authorized landowners and administrators to punish offenses of peons with corporal punishment (see Gabbert 2000 for relation of this law to ideas on racial categories and discrimination). Garcia Quintanilla describes
how the rules of the haciendas worked to produce hunger and illness among the Maya laborers. The author points out the stark reality that there was hunger in the regions where the most henequen fortunes were generated. Due to this hunger, an epidemic of pellagra spread through the haciendas in the years 1882-1889.

Because there was so much labor required in the henequen fields, especially as *hacendados* planted more and more henequen to increase profits, Mayas who had been *milperos* were systematically converted to peons, and they lost free access to land, the key factor in distinguishing a debt-peon from a slave. This is evident in maize production statistics: maize production dropped from 15,000 hectares in 1845 to only 4,500 in 1907 (Joseph 1982: 73). The Porfiriato (1876-1910) is still referred to by many as the time of slavery in Yucatán. Jospeh (1982) points out the irony that at a time when slaveholding was being abolished or irreversibly declining elsewhere in the Americas, it was reaching a new point of intensification in Yucatán, creating a "de facto slave society" (79, 29).

The largest of the henequen haciendas reached sizes of 2-3,000 hectares, but the typical size was 1-2,000 hectares. Not all of this land was used for henequen cultivation, especially as cattle were imported with henequen profits during the boom years. Hacienda populations averaged from 100-150 persons, the majority of whom were Maya resident-peons, though some May were employed as non-resident day- or seasonal-workers. There was no such thing as retirement: one would work until his or her death. Young children began work in the henequen as early as five years old. Even with unrestricted access to the labor power of the Mayas, their force was not enough for the ever-increasing yields demanded by the market and the hacienda owners. At the turn of
the century, indentured laborers were brought from other parts of Mexico (Yaquis deported from Sonora), China, and Korea.\textsuperscript{4}

Henequen labor as controlled and regulated through the hacienda system represents a hybrid form of juridical and disciplinary power (Foucault 1977). According to Foucault, a transformation occurred in Eighteenth-century Europe from sovereign or juridical power, which was characterized by brutal, haphazard and punitive enforcement to disciplinary power: precise, continuous and routine enforcement, in which those subject to authority become self-policing. Foucault carefully distinguishes the projects of docility from slavery. While slavery systems display forms of the juridical exercise of power (as evidenced in the case of the hacienda system), the disciplines, according to Foucault, “were not based on a relation of appropriation of bodies; indeed the elegance of the discipline lay in the fact that it could dispense with this costly and violent relation by obtaining effects of utility at least as great” (1977: 137). The effect of the carrying out of disciplinary techniques was the production of docile bodies. While the hacienda system certainly carried holdover characteristics of juridical power, the several techniques of “control of activity” outlined in Discipline and Punish fit the case appropriately. These include the time-table (to establish rhythms, impose particular occupations, and regulate cycles of repetition); the correlation of the body and the gesture; and exhaustive use (non-idleness) (149-155). Men I spoke with in Kochol can hardly describe henequen work without making the great sweeping motion used to cut the tough, spiny henequen leaves. People still recall, with the greatest precision of detail, the

\textsuperscript{4} Turner gives the following statistics from the first decade of the twentieth century: “The slaves are 8,000 Yaqui Indians imported from Sonora, 3,000 Chinese (Koreans), and between 100,000 and 125,000 native Mayas, who formerly owned the land that the henequen kings now own” (Turner 1969: 8).
daily work schedule imposed, as it is explained, not by a person, but by loud bell. The ceaseless ringing of the bell didn’t even allow for a quick conversation between people in the street in front of their houses.

It is important to recognize the different forms of power and exercise of authority that enforced the hacienda system in Yucatán, and subsequently, to attempt to draw connections between these historical formations and the contemporary. Yet, due to the specificity of the rise of the hacienda system in Yucatán, one cannot automatically assume an exact parallel historicity with those states and institutions described by Foucault. The hacienda system is a “ruin” in itself, a relic which retained older forms of sovereign power as a conventional, top-down mechanism of authority based in physical coercion, yet combined with distinctively modern techniques of disciplinary power such as surveillance, the establishment and enforcement of work production quotas, and the debt which distinguished these peons from technical slavery.

This particularly modern form of disciplinary power was aimed directly toward efficient use of labor in agricultural production. The state dictated the laws legalizing the operations of the haciendas. No peon was able to leave the hacienda upon which they worked if he wasn’t given a certificate establishing that he had completed his work contract, that he owed nothing to the hacienda, and that he was at liberty to find other work. As can be imagined, this rarely happened. Instead of fulfilling their debts, the amounts consistently grew and grew, compounding as a matter of survival. The debts themselves became a terrible patrimony, an unwanted legacy passed from father to son (Villanueva Mukul 1980: 45). These circumstances are related to the hacienda system not only as an abstract socioeconomic system, but also to the spatiality of particular
hacienda properties in and of themselves. According to Foucault, "Space is fundamental in any exercise of power" (Rabinow 1984: 252). For peones acasillados, the whole of one's life might be lived on the property, all of one's needs (supposedly) cared for, and exit from the property's boundaries carried punitive measures.

These practices lessened by 1915, the year of the Mexican Revolution's belated arrival to Yucatán. Intervening national legislation, particularly Obregón's 1922 Agrarian Code, permitted only settlements with the political status of "pueblo" to receive ejido distributions. As Joseph (1982) points out, "No attempt was made to define the hacienda communities as villages and thereby distribute ejidos to the acasillados" (244). At this time, the federal government acted to protect the holdings of hacendados from expropriation for the creation of ejidos (Joseph 1982: 240). Even the home-grown popular Socialist leader Felipe Carrillo Puerto, Governor of Yucatán (1922-1924) from was seemingly unwilling to break up the hacienda holdings for distribution to the peons.

Thus, the status quo basically continued for the haciendas' resident laborers (peones acasillados) until 1937, and the ejido land distribution under Lázaro Cárdenas. In August 1937, Cárdenas visited Yucatán to preside over the largest single episode of land distribution ever to occur in Mexico, creating 272 collective ejidos in the period of two weeks (Joseph 1982: 292). He established that all hacienda lands, whether cultivated or not, would become the property of the campesinos with exceptions of 150 hectares of tierra cultivada and 150 of monte (uncultivated bush), which the proprietor might retain under the provision of the pequeña propiedad, or small private landholding.
Part 2: *History By Way of Local Memory*

"Physical space has no 'reality' without the energy that is deployed within it" (Lefebvre 1991: 13).

Arriving in Chunchucmil is a tricky process. I first came to Chunchcumil not through an exploration of Yucatán, but through a meeting with Pakbeh archaeological members at the Fiesta American Hotel in Mérida. The project co-director was looking for an ethnographer to join her team to work in the communities surrounding the project's excavation site. My acceptance of her invitation required some amount of negotiation. The co-director's proposal to me involved applied anthropology. The project was specifically looking for a "development anthropologist" to facilitate the communication between the US archaeologists and the local Maya residents. The project found this necessary for two reasons. The first involves questions of the legal rights as well as the ethics of the archaeologists excavating on the communally held agricultural lands of the site's neighboring communities. In the initial couple of years of mapping, excavation, and clearing of the site some "misunderstandings" had occurred between the archaeologists and community residents. Specifically, the archaeologists' conception of the territory of the state-defined official "archaeological zone" of Chunchucmil conflicted with another territoriality which preceded the archaeological interest in the space: the land, coterminous with the "zone," was already divided up into the agricultural lands of five different communities according to the Mexican land-grant (*ejido*) distributions of the 1930s. The project therefore was required by these communities to get access permission to work in the various ejidos, as well as contract laborers from the communities specific to the area of the zone in which they were working. The second
reason for the project’s desire to bring in an ethnographer was to facilitate their plans for
tourism development in and around the site. Ambitious plans for an artifact museum, a
“living museum” (loosely based on Colonial Williamsburg— in which local community
residents would move out of their towns into the archaeological zones to demonstrate
daily life practices of the ancient Maya), these as well as other ventures required
complex, ongoing negotiations between the project and community leaders in order to be
carried out.

Adverse to utilizing ethnography in such a capacity, I declined the offer. At the
co-director’s continuing interest, we returned to the negotiating table. I countered her
offer with another, explaining that I thought the site would be an important place for
research-oriented ethnography, explaining that I am neither an applied nor development-
oriented anthropologist, but I am a researcher whose agenda focuses specifically on the
interfaces of archaeology and communities. I proposed a trial period during which I
would do some background “straight” ethnography on the communities, not focusing
exclusively on the archaeological project or its relationships. My project, I suggested,
would be to establish the pre- and extra-archaeological context surrounding the site and
its current development. In my primary site of research, Chichén Itzá, I had found
through my ethnographic research that over one-hundred years of archaeological work at
the site—which led to it becoming a major international tourism destination—had greatly
influenced local conceptions of what Maya heritage is and how the site is inflected with
varying understandings of the articulation of the ancient Maya to the contemporary
world. In multiple ways, local residents utilize the “site” to make claims to the cultural
patrimony that is simultaneously “theirs” and that of the Mexican state. Would this
phenomenon express itself differently around a site that has only five years of
archaeological work? The co-director wholeheartedly accepted, “Yes, that sounds like
exactly what should be done!” and offered me a place to stay in the headquarters house.
Two weeks later I was living and working in the Chunchucmil project, not as an official
Project member, but as a guest researcher.

For ten weeks in the spring and summer of 2001, I carried out ethnographic
research in the excavation site of the archaeological zone of Chunchucmil. The majority
of informants I worked with were from the Maya community of Kochol located
approximately four kilometers away from the site center. Because of my lack of training
in archaeology and my hybrid disciplinary status, I spent the majority of my time in the
excavation sites working alongside the laborers from Kochol, carrying out the same tasks
which they were assigned. During these weeks, I lived with other project members in the
Casa Principal of the former hacienda of Chunchucmil. After an hour or so of language
study each morning, usually in consultation with the archaeologists’ cook and maid, I
would bike to the excavation sites (often 2 or 3 in proximity to each other). I usually
timed my arrival with the workers’ morning break, at 9 am. I typically spent the break-
time with the workers chatting, teaching English, or practicing Maya.

When each break was over, I went back to work with them, either digging,
hauling rocks, or looking for ceramic sherds, bone or obsidian fragments at the sifting
table a few meters from the excavation area. With a tape recorder in a pocket and my
notebook in the back of my pants, I used the time I spent working alongside the
excavators to conduct conversations and interviews. Though my work as an
ethnographer was tied in some very obvious ways to the archaeological project, the
openness and sensitivity of my informants enabled them to view my heterodox position with a careful discernment of both my role vis-a-vis other project members and the directors, as well as the discipline of cultural anthropology and its methods and subject matter. They knew that I wasn’t an archaeologist. At the same time, they were quite aware that I, too, was conducting an investigation in the area, the parameters of which were best mutually understood as concerning “history” and “culture.” “History” was taken to primarily refer to the henequen era and “culture” signified what was locally understood to be traditional Maya beliefs and lifeways.

Something that continually struck me as I worked in the excavation site was how history had revolved around the stretch of land between the pueblos of Chunchucmil and Kochol, encompassing the archaeological zone between the two. The same land upon which they were contracted by the archaeological project to work as seasonal wage laborers was their federally granted ejido land, where they were technically permitted to be carrying out cultivation (mostly of corn). While the next chapter is concerned with elucidating the production of value and territoriality of the land, in this chapter I am more concerned with the social history of the space of which this land is only one component, or, the ways in which people have historically interacted with land, in accordance the changing political economic and social regimes.

While neither archaeological data nor its scientific methods of investigation figure in anyway into my own research, the activities of archaeology, particularly as they relate to the local communities, serve as a springboard for much of my ethnography. But unlike other conceptions of “ethnography of archaeology” (see, for example, Hodder 1996, 2000), I did not restrict my investigation only to the local communities’ perceptions of
the mounds, archaeology, or a combination of the two. Instead, the archaeological project was only an occasion upon which other local histories were narrated, political ideologies were espoused, and community gossip was aired. The following fall season, well after the archaeologists had finished their work for 2001, I returned to Chunchucmil for another period of ethnographic fieldwork. This time, out from under the auspices of the Pakbeh archaeology project, I concentrated my fieldwork in the communities of Kochol and Chunchucmil, rather than in the archaeological site excavation.

In front of a small building which is adjacent to the Casa Principal of Kochol is a meter-high stone sculpture, now broken at the base and toppled over on its side. Many contemporary residents of Kochol tell of a time when the statue had a “twin,” a second stone carving that stood alongside the remaining one. The “twin” was stolen several years ago and no one is sure of its whereabouts. It was thought by most that the statues had a certain potency, and that touching the pieces would cause a person to become ill with fever, which could even lead to death. This potency was lost when one of the statues became weakened in a flood and toppled over- as demonstrated by the fact that the tellers of these events were actually seated upon it as they recounted its history to me. Archaeologists working in the area suspect the bas relief to come from a concentration of ruins near the modern community of Paraiso, several kilometers away, a site which demonstrates similar archaeological findings. In one family’s backyard in Chunchucmil, where I resided for a time, two ancient stone metates serve as animals’ watering containers. Columns from ancient temple or residence structures serve as stools in front of another contemporary dwelling, my own favorite spot to sit and wait for a truck or
collective taxi to come by to go to Maxcanú, the nearest town (about twenty kilometers away) with regular bus service to the capital city of Mérida.

The empty, looted shell of the casa principal of the Kochol hacienda serves as rich source of individual and community memory. In the functioning days of the hacienda, the main compound consisted of the casa principal, or main house, a chapel, the company store, and the engine room that housed the decorticating machine. All of these buildings were distributed around a large, rectangular courtyard. Workers lived in traditional-style Maya houses, not far from the casco. The casa principal of Kochol is not nearly as well-preserved as that of neighboring Chunchucmil, possibly due to the fact that it was used as a storage facility for the Banco Nacional de Crédito Rural (BANRURAL) for many years, after its owner defaulted on his mortgage.

The people of Kochol and Chunchucmil remember the hacienda days through the stories of their parents and grandparents, and refer to this time as the tiempo de esclavitud (time of slavery). “Not even my dead grandmother knew how this place used to be,” commented Rodolfo, an archaeological laborer from Kochol as I worked alongside him digging a one-meter-square test pit. “The first time I ever came out here was to work for the archaeologists. We in Kochol are gente humilde (humble people), we are campesinos, not very well and know little about things like what might be inside the cerros.” The eliciting of oral histories in Chunchucmil and Kochol proved to be a tricky ethnographic task, dependent on the particular turn of phrase when asking questions to older residents of the two ex-haciendas. There is a very strong sense that what has not been seen with one’s own eyes should not be recounted. Therefore, a question posed to an octogenarian regarding life conditions under slavery would be more often than not
answered with a flat- that was before I was born. So, upon my post-archaeological season return, I had to ask questions in the following way: “What did your father or grandfather tell you when you were young about what life was like on the hacienda in the times of slavery?” At first frustrated, I grew to appreciate the eyewitness or first-hand testimonial commitment on the part of the oldest living generation in the two towns.

I concentrate on the historical contexts of Chunchucmil and Kochol for the purpose of setting the groundwork in order to demonstrate that heritage, patrimony, and descent are complicated issues in these communities.

**Genealogies**

The hacienda system began coming into shape at the end of the Eighteenth Century in Yucatán. Millet Camara (1984) speculates that Chunchucmil was founded in the late Eighteenth to early Nineteenth Century as a cattle estancia, or ranch (18). Estancias in Yucatán were typically founded upon land obtained through a merced real, although some were bought by non-Maya elites. It was often the case that settlements of Maya communities holding lands were often forced to sell them, under the duress of owing large sums of tribute. These transactions were carried out under the authority of the governor. Millet Cámara (1984) points out “Generally, it was alleged that they were for the payment of tributes, but in the case of Chunchucmil, the transaction in 1783 for the sale of land was carried out by indigenous Maya from Maxcanú, who claimed to need funds for the creation of a granary” (19).

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5 San Bernardo del Buen Retiro in Maxcanú as well as Kopomá are other examples.
The \textit{casa principal} at the Hacienda Chunchucmil was founded in 1872 Rafael Peón Losa, a member of the \textit{casta divina} of Mérida. The \textit{casta divina}, or divine caste, was a term first used by Salvador Alvarado to mockingly address the wealthy planter class who dominated social, political, and economic life from their mansions in Mérida and across the Yucatec countryside through their henequen haciendas. These rich and powerful families controlled large portions of property, interests in transport and storage of henequen, banks and credit firms, as well as government positions. The Peón family (along with the Molinas) can be counted among the most powerful families at the height of the henequen era. As opposed to some of the period’s powerful \textit{nouveaux riches} who rose from obscurity to high prosperity as the henequen export market grew, the Peón family was more typical of the Latin American landed elite family, with important ties in Yucatán throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Wells 1985: 78). Though their roots in Yucatán did not go back to the original Spanish conquistadors, “the Peóns supported and participated in society’s most respected institutions, such as the church and the military, and indeed they can be said to have embodied the aristocratic ideals of patronage and property that had become traditional in colonial times” (ibid.). For more than one hundred years, beginning in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Peón family controlled an economic "mini-empire" in Yucatán based, in large part, on the production of henequen. The Peón family was prepared to take full advantage of the rise in henequen exports as they bought up large tracts of land, mostly cattle ranches, following the Caste War. Through focusing their power regionally, the Peón family was able to control all phases of henequen production in certain geographical areas, including the area around Maxcanú.
Wells (1985) describes the typical impression of hacendados such as Peón Losa, as influenced by portrayals such as John Kenneth Turner’s Barbarous Mexico.

Gorged with windfall profits unjustly reaped from the toil of a beaten and dependent labor force, this member of the casta divina built fabulous palaces on Mérida’s fashionable Paseo de Montejo. He traveled and educated his children abroad and generally pampered himself. Looking to the far-off capitals of the Western world for inspiration and design, the prosperous henequeneros built ornate palaces with marble pillars, intricately carved facades, and ostentatious stained-glass enclosed porticos (61).

Though Wells argues for a more nuanced portrait of the Yucatec hacendados or henequeneros (and his data supports this well), there is little articulated through local memory among current residents of the ex-haciendas of Chunchucmil and Kochol to refute this characterization, particularly as the material vestiges (i.e., the houses or their remnants) still loom large in the center of each town.

The Kochol hacienda was founded by Alfonso Lara Bolio in the late nineteenth century, who took seasonal residence there along with his wife, Emilia Lara de Patrón (1840-1911). Upon the death of both, the property was inherited by left to his two sons, Juan and Felipe Lara y Lara, and a portion to his is youngest heir, daughter Isabel. The inheritance was adjudicated in 1913. Locally, Felipe, eldest son of Kochol’s founder, Felipe A. Lara (m. Mercedes Bolio) is typically identified as the original hacienda owner (the identification complicated by three generations of owners named, more or less, “Felipe Lara”). Their three children (Felipe Lara Bolio, Alfonso Lara Bolio, and daughter Mercedes Lara Bolio de O’Horan) were the next heirs to the hacienda. The three-ninths portion owned by Felipe Lara Bolio was transferred to his son (with Cuban wife Ester Ferrer de Aldana), Jorge Lara Ferrer, in 1937. Upon the deaths of her
brothers Alfonso and Felipe, the younger Doña Mercedes “Mech” Lara, retained a three-ninths ownership of the Kochol property. Upon her marriage, she transferred the property to her husband Eracleo O’Horan Pino, a former military captain. Upon their deaths, the hacienda was inherited by Luis O’Horan, but by this time, it was no longer functioning in private enterprise henequen production, and only a small portion of the original property remained following the expropriation of the hacienda and the establishment of the Kochol ejido. The property, which, just like so many other ex-haciendas across the Peninsula, by now had a distinct air of abandonment, and the property was foreclosed on April 16, 1957.

Luis, the last of the Lara-descendant owners, occasionally visited Kochol with his wife and three daughters, but never took residence there. He is well-remembered, particularly for his height, red hair, and fútbol skills, by Don Nico. Don Nico is seventy-seven years old, and a lifelong resident of Kochol. His parents were also born in Kochol, but his grandparents came from other pueblos of Yucatán and Campeche in the boom years of the henequen hacienda. The hacienda system, he says, reorganized the people and where they lived. People were thus separated from families, and home communities because of economic necessity. His grandparents were esclavos [slaves] in the Epoca de Porfirio Díaz, and moved to Kochol because they had no other option. A significant historical event of the early twentieth century for the two ex-haciendas is the visit of Porfirio Díaz to the hacienda Chunchucmil in 1906 for a luncheon as the guest of Rafael Peón Losa.

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6 Isabel Lara de Lizarraga’s portion was not actually part of the Kochol hacienda. It was instead a piece of the Hacienda Poxila, which she sold to her brother Juan and his business partner, Alvaro Medina Ayora, in 1923 for 60,675 pesos (RP Folio 131 Tomo 1-L).
Nico remembers his father’s retelling of Porfirio Díaz’s visit to Chunchucmil. Although he did not stop for as much fanfare in Kochol as in Chunchucmil, the recountings of the day’s impressions and circumstances are similar, there just isn’t a plaque to commemorate the President’s “passing-through’ Kochol on his way to Chunchucmil. In the same breath that Don Nico describes how the hacienda workers lined up in their freshly laundered and ironed white clothes of manta cruda, a rough hewn cotton, and xanab, the typical sandals, usually made of henequen and deer hide, to greet Porfirio Díaz, he talks about how this was not a time of pride, but a terrible time of human injustice, in which “people were sold like burros or horses.”

Brannon and Baklanoff (1987) point out that the time of Díaz’s visit Yucatán was one of the wealthiest states in Mexico. Caste War chronicler Nelson reed writes, “Mérida blossomed. The streets were paved with macadam, had electricity to light them at night, were traversed by horse-drawn streetcars and numbered in the scientific way, all this in advance of Mexico City” (Reed 1964: 232; in Brannon and Baklanoff 1987: 3). This image stands in stark contrast to life on the haciendas. Life was extremely difficult in the years of the operation of the hacienda. The hacendado was like a slave-holder, or a feudal lord. Rather than using any form of money, hacendados relied on tokens or scrip. Many of the larger haciendas minted their own “coins” which held value only within that hacienda. The coins, which have since become collector’s items, are printed with such phrases as “Un mecate chapeo” signifying the labor of clearing forty square meters. In this manner, labor was directly converted into a kind of credit that could be used at the hacienda’s store.
In addition to henequen production requirements, peons were required to perform “free” communal duties to the hacienda in the form of faginas. “All of the peons were obligated to carry out certain free labor known as faginas in addition to their normal work from sunrise to sunset” (Villanueva Mukul 1980: 46). Fagina labors consisted of all of the work necessary to keep the hacienda running and in good repair besides the normal henequen cultivation and processing. Faginas thus included road clearing and repair, grounds maintenance, construction and building repair, etc. In Kochol, there were two faginas each day. Every morning a bell rang at 3am to signal the day’s first fagina. At 8am, the bell would sound again, signaling the beginning of the paid workday. Upon the workers’ return home at 3 pm, the ubiquitous bell ringing would begin again. Turner reports similar circumstances at a henequen hacienda he visited in 1908: “The slaves rise from their beds when the big bell in the patio rings at 3:45 o’clock in the morning, and their work begins as soon thereafter as they can get to it. Their work in the fields ends when it is too dark to see, and about the yards it sometimes extends until long into the night” (Turner 1969: 18).

The second fagina of the day was due to begin by late afternoon, and would last until 8pm. By nightfall, everyone would return to their own houses, if they were married couples. Young unmarried men retired to the bachelors’ quarters. There was none of the evening socializing that characterizes life in the modern-day towns throughout Yucatán. People simply didn’t spend any time on the streets, especially women and children. Worker’s lives were strictly controlled. There was no such thing as “free-time,” at least for six days of the week. Sunday was the only day off, which rather than implicating leisure, more often than not entailed a full day’s work in one’s milpa or solar. It was also
a day of heavy drinking of *aguadiente* sold directly from the hacienda store. According to some, drinking was a problem on the haciendas and the provision of alcoholic beverages through the *tienda de raya* was yet another mechanism through which the *hacendado* manipulated and controlled the lives of the *ascasillados*.

Formal education was technically available, but neither encouraged nor sought by hacienda workers. It was not unusual for children and women to help in the henequen fields in order to meet the high production quotas imposed on each worker by the overseer. Because of the stresses and rigor of everyday life, it was often the case that a family on the hacienda was without a male head of household. This, obviously, made more precarious the financial situation of the family, and the burden usually fell on the shoulders of the oldest sons. “I went to school for one year. And I even liked it. But how could I continue when there were so many mouths to feed?” Today, most men of Kochol’s oldest generation have rudimentary Spanish language and reading skills. For older women, it is different—most speak no Spanish and do not know how to read.

Control of workers’ bodies through labor extended to their personal and social lives. Nearly every older resident I interviewed told me a similar story about the hacienda marriage practices. The hacienda *patron* himself or the plantation overseer kept a large book (*nohoch cuenta*) with data on the entire population of the hacienda. It was he who decided when and to whom a young person would be married. After arranging the union, a short ceremony would take place, and immediately following this, the bridegroom would be sent off to a distant area, perhaps even another property owned by the *hacendado*. The absence of the young man following the wedding permitted the *patrón* access to the young, presumably virgin bride
Jumping ahead for a moment to the circumstances which occasioned my elicitation of oral histories of the hacienda days—the inceptions of the archaeological project—this particular story takes on new significance. On more than one occasion, I had the opportunity to witness conversations in the Chunchucmil excavation sites, which I categorize as pedagogic interactions between the archaeologists and excavation laborers. In these encounters, archaeologists stressed to laborers (mostly Kochol residents) the importance of the site and its import in terms of heritage—their heritage. “See what your ancestors built!” In many national legal systems, such as the US and Canada, the issue of cultural descent is a prescribed process and a system which employs very specific definitions of ancestry and descent. Even though descent doesn’t always have to be biological, cultural descent, I would argue, also relies on a notion of biologized genealogy, as well as connection to place. The discourse of archaeology assumes that all people are 100% Maya and that the contemporary population comes from that geographic location, and has been there for centuries. It also relies on Maya people subscribing to a particular ideology of heritage—that there is a (one) Maya heritage that all Maya people share, and that this heritage is located in the mounds.

How can all residents be descendant from the ancient Maya when many were more than likely fathered by white hacendados or hacienda overseers? Doña Hortensia is not from Kochol but from the nearby fishing village of Isla Arenas. She recounts her experience marked by wariness at moving to Kochol:

My husband was a friend of my father’s, quite a bit older than me. He used to come around at our house and drink with my father. We didn’t have much money, and he bought liquor for my father. One day he showed up from his own pueblo to get drunk with my father, this time bringing gifts. The next day when he left, he took me with him. I was only fourteen and had never been away from my family.
My husband was a fisherman, and you can say that’s how he caught me.

I was scared to spend those first few nights in Kochol. My family’s house in Isla Arenas was made of wood poles, and it was very cool at night because the air passed right through the walls. My new husband’s house was of mamposteria. I thought that if I fell asleep inside there that I might suffocate.

Doña Hortensia is a very portly woman who maintains a small store on the main street that runs through the center of Kochol. She and her daughter, Maria de la Luz, laugh when the younger tells me that when she was growing up, her mother Hortensia was the only woman in Kochol to wear a regular dress. All other women only wore huipiles, the traditional Maya clothing. On the day I speak to them, Maria, the daughter, wears a huipil and Hortensia, a skirt and blouse.

It is well-known that a group of chinos lived in Chunchucmil in the early part of the twentieth century. The immigrant laborers were most likely Koreans, not Chinese, who had come to Yucatán as indentured laborers beginning in the late nineteenth century, as henequen boomed. “Oh yes,” remembers Doña Candelaria, a resident of Chunchucmil who is now over ninety years old, “the chinos didn’t live near us, but over toward the planiteles.” She points out the door of her grandson’s shop, toward behind the casco of the hacienda, but it is difficult to judge exactly where she is gesturing as her eyes are covered with a thick milky film of cataracts. School has just gotten out for the day, and my interview with Doña Candelaria is competing with a couple of ten-year-olds trying to outscore each other on a twenty-year-old video game which is so loud as to almost drown out my shouting questions and the elderly woman’s thin-voiced replies. “I didn’t know them myself, but my father did. He worked with them cutting pencas (henequen leaves).” Her hands sit quietly in her lap, folded around a newspaper. Her
grandson sees me glance toward the paper, and comes out from behind the counter to join us. "You know, she reads the newspaper everyday." I compliment her, and tell her that my grandmother is ninety and also reads the paper everyday. Nobody says anything for a minute or so. Then Candelaria speaks up, "The chinos didn't eat the same food as us. They didn't eat tortillas. To this day I don't have how they survived without eating tortillas."

"Salió la Libertad": Cárdenas and the Ejido Grants

At the turn of the twentieth century, more than 400 communities in Yucatán were haciendas producing henequen monoculture. As the market was crashing and revolutionary change was sweeping the republic. Henequen cultivation persisted, but under a new structure. On August 8, 1937, President Cárdenas created the "Henequeneros de Yucatán"/Agrarian Bank.

At the time of the beginning of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), tens of thousands of Yucatec Maya were laboring as debt peons on henequen haciendas. Alongside them were thousands of Yaqui Indians from the Sonora desert and even Korean immigrant wage laborers, more commonly referred to as chinos. It is possible that the Mexican Revolution itself had little resonance for the peons living like slaves in the enclosed life on the hacienda. While many villages throughout Yucatán had been trying to legally claim land appropriated by the powerful haciendas during the Porfiriato, by the early 1920s, few had had any success (Fallow 2001: 18-19).

Liberty came at the hand of Lázaro Cárdenas, President of Mexico 1934-1940. At the time of the start of the Cardenas sexenio, some 30,000 adult male peons were living
with their families on henequen haciendas in Yucatán (Fallaw 2001: 11). For many older residents of Kochol and Chunchucmil, “salio la libertad,” liberty came, with Cárdenas. But the process of expropriating lands from the great henequen haciendas had legally already begun. In the zona milpera, pueblos such as Pisté and surrounding areas were already receiving ejido lands in 1925-1927. But peons constituted a special case in the agrarian reforms. By the mid-1930s, peons were in an increasingly difficult situations, caught between the slow bureaucracy of land reform and the hacendados, many of whom still held the loyalties of their peons (Fallaw 2001: 22).

In 1937 the henequen haciendas which dominated the western half of the state were expropriated by the state. From these properties, 272 ejidos were created in the henequen zone. The lands were to be worked collectively by members of each ejido. Thus, the establishment of the ejido in Yucatán has a double-edge. For many of today’s campesinos, particularly among the oldest generations of men who still make milpa, the Cárdenas reforms are indistinguishable from a time known as the Libertad. At the same time, the reterritorialization of the hacienda system in Yucatán did not signal a freedom from the oppressive labor of large-scale monocultural agricultural production of henequen. It simply shifted the hands of power.

The social and economic organization under the ejido system differed greatly from the hacienda system. Brannon and Baklanoff point out four important differences. 1) the legal protection granted to the ejido curtails the ejidatario’s ability to transfer participatory rights and to acquire resources; 2) the ejidos were configured much differently from the haciendas as production units, they did not possess the same degree of economic and geographical unity; 3) the ejido members do not directly control the
production decisions that relate to their own land; 4) the ejidos are political and economic systems (1987: 62).

The ex-haciendas of Kochol and Chunchucmil have different histories regarding the establishments of their ejidos, the ways in which campesinos have used the land, as well as in the experiences under the agrarian law reforms. Through the ejido grants, new arrangements of social communitiy life were introduced. At the same time, communities were transformed into new kinds of political entities. In the dotaciones, it was specified that the acasilados, those who had houses that belonged to the hacienda property, would keep their homes.

The establishments of both the Chunchucmil and Kochol ejidos begin with land grants received by other non-hacienda polities. Thus, communities were re-organized, and, in a sense, reinvented. Nowhere were these transformations as significant as in the haciendas. Literally, the establishment of the ejido grants changed the haciendas (an socioeconomic system of exploitation of debt-peon labor) into centros de poblacion agricola, or agricultural population centers. The identification of population centers out of haciendas marks a shift of regimes from the disciplinary to the biopolitical exercise of power on the part of the state (Foucault 1978). Biopower is a form of power exercised upon the body which carries a specific anatomical or biological aspect. This shift in the organization of Maya peoples’ lives—from landless laborers to communal farmers—is a form of power which is exercised over a population, such that their individuality is constituted in certain ways that are intimately connected with issues of national policy as well as the predominant political, economic, and legal regimes which characterize a
nation. In this case, indigenous slave-like subjects of the land-holding elite were reconstituted by the state as liberal subjects.

The establishment of the ejido system, materially hinged to the expropriations of the privately held hacienda properties, reterritorialized the Yucatec landscape. This reterritorialization was effected through the both the redrawing of boundary lines on the earth, as well as restructuring the relationships residents held with both the land and their social communities. Not only did “slaves” became farmers, but different plots of earth were reworked under changing labor conditions. In the following section, I present the rather complicated cases of the establishment of the ejido communities of Kochol and Chunchucmil, focusing both on land and the social contestations of the reterritorialization of henequen producion.

### Area Land Holdings 1922

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hacienda</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Size (in hectares)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Santo Domingo</td>
<td>Enrique Munoz Aristegui &amp; Avelino Montes</td>
<td>2,636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kochol</td>
<td>Felipe Lara</td>
<td>4,596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chunchucmil &amp; annexes</td>
<td>Rafael Peon Losa</td>
<td>26, 128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Simon, San Rafael</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Mateo</td>
<td>hermanos Arrigunaga Peon</td>
<td>32, 991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Maria Acu</td>
<td>Emilio &amp; Jose Garcia Fajardo</td>
<td>5, 358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siho</td>
<td>Alberto Garcia Fajardo &amp; Brothers</td>
<td>4,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>Alberto Garcia Fajardo &amp; Brothers</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above chart, collected from archival ejido records, indicates the landholdings of the major haciendas in the area immediately surrounding Chunchucmil and Kochol. The year 1922 indicates that these were the holdings of the owning elite before expropriations were carried out by the federal government in order to create ejidos. The expropriations in the northwestern region of Yucatán took place much later than in the south and east regions of the state (the milpa zone), and most initial land parcels were granted to the former haciendas in 1937. However, this was not the case for non-hacienda settlements of the henequen zone. The expropriation of the Hacienda Chunchucmil began in the twenties, when its first portion of acreage was lost to the small ranchería community of Coahuila. A ranchería in this period was defined as “a collection of milpas and houses under the authority of and dependent upon a parent-community” (Redfield 1950: 2-3). Though not a self-governing community, the ranchería was a population center most typically composed of farmers who maintained subsistence corn plots, many of whom also worked on nearby haciendas as seasonal or day-laborers.

According to the hacienda expropriation laws, a community could apply for ejido status and receive an amount of land dependent on a ratio between the number of adult men in the community population, and the quality of surrounding lands. Lands for the initial ejido establishments were either hacienda properties or from federal territorios nacionales. The rule of the seven kilometer radius when into effect with each ejido application—meaning that any hacienda with territorial extensions with seven kilometers of the requesting community would most likely be affected.
Chuchucmil and annexes:
Sinkehuel
Santa Teresa
San Simon
San Jose 45000 hectares

Land Holdings of Rafael Peon Losa (as of December 1915) in hectares

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chuchucmil and annexes</th>
<th>98</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sinkehuel</td>
<td>11359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Simon</td>
<td>12022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Rafael</td>
<td>4270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dzalam</td>
<td>10571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venecia</td>
<td>13535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61571</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Under the auspices of the 1915 law, on March 13, 1925, Chuchucmil *hacendado* Rafael Peon Losa received notification that the nearby *rancheria* of Coahuila was seeking an ejido grant which would affect his hacienda holdings. He was advised through official notification that he had fifteen days to present land titles and plans to the local agrarian commission. To be expected, this *hacendado*, just like others throughout the peninsula for the next several decades, protested the expropriation. In a letter to the local agrarian commission dated May 4, 1925, Peón Losa argued that the census data upon which the Coahuila *dotación* was based was falsified. Specifically, he charged, twenty-one of those *capacitados* claiming legal age (in this case, twenty-one men claiming to be eighteen or nineteen years old) were actually minors. Further, Peón Losa claimed that one man counted as a *capacitado* did not exist at all. To support his protest to the April 18, 1925 census, Peón Losa challenged that these men could not prove their legal age.\(^7\) There are

\(^7\) It is particularly interesting that Peón Losa would raise the matter of proof of age. In the case of hacienda workers and peons, vital statistics on birth, death, marriage, and all other dates and personal data were recorded in a large record book held by the *hacendado*. This management of vital statistics can be seen as an important form of power manifested by the hacendado over the hacienda populations which operated in a disciplinary mode. In the case of the Coahuila
no documents in the agrarian archives demonstrating support in his favor, nor do we know if his letter was taken at all into consideration by agrarian officials. However, by May 9, 1925 he produced another local census as required by the agrarian commission of the populations living within his hacienda property holdings. Of the 144 total inhabitants, 49 were considered *capacitados*, or men age sixteen or over. In this original *dotación*, or ejido grant, Coahuila received 1,368 hectares of the Chunchucmil hacienda property.

By 1935, the community had grown and was seeking to enlarge their ejido landholding through the granting of an *ampliación*, or land extension. In March 1937, the Junta Censal of the agrarian commission noted 259 inhabitants, of which 67 were designated as heads of households, and a total of 97 men over age sixteen as *capacitados*. Peon Losa, along with the owners of the haciendas at Kochol, Santo Domingo, and Santa Maria Aku bitterly protested the extension.

On September 5, 1935 (Exp. 348), a notice was published once again in the *Diario Official* to the property owners within a seven-kilometer radius of Coahuila. This time, the ejidatarios were requesting an extension of their original land grant, citing poor soil conditions, much of which had to be left fallow for ten to twelve years. The soil was not only worn out, they argued, but the territory in itself was insufficient area to meet their agricultural needs. “We have found ourselves without enough land to carry out our

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8 In some cases, widows of men counted as *capacitados* in the original *dotaciones*, or grants, were counted as well.
9 By May 15, 1925, the hacienda Chunchucmil, in addition to the 1,368 hectares expropriated to Coahuila, had lost 4,822 to Halacho (Exp. 177).
cultivation,” declared the ejidatarios, “and for us this constitutes a tragedy” (Diario Official: 3). Once again, property owners protested the call for further land expropriation.

It wasn’t until the spring of 1939 that the ejido of Chunchucmil was founded, not in its own dotación (grant) of ejido lands, but rather through an ampliciación (extension) of the ejido of nearby Coahuila, a settlement with the political title of ranchería, not hacienda. Although I cannot say with absolute certainty who were the residents of Coahuila, it is more than likely that they were part-time hacienda and cattle ranch workers. They were definitely not peones acasillados, such as those resident peons at Chunchucmil. Instead, they lived in a “free village,” or in this case, rancheria, and traveled daily to work in henequen cultivation.

La citada Comisión Agraria Mixta de acuerdo con las disposiciones agrarias vigentes, procedió a ecabar los datos indispensables para la substanciación de expediente; en efecto, en el censo que se formó con la intervención de los representatantes de Ley, e listaron 45 individuos con derecho a recibir parcela, a los cuáles fueron agregados 97 peones y trabajadores de la hacienda de Chunchucmil haciendo un total de 142 capacitados entre los cuáles no se encuentra ninguno de los que ya fueron beneficiados con la dotación primitiva; que el núcleo peticionario le encuentra ubicado dentro del Municipio de Maxcanú; que los vecinos de dicho núcleo son exclusivamente agrícolas y han logrado un aprovechamiento total y eficiente de las tierras que les fueron dotadas con anterioridad, aunque a la fecha son insuficientes dichas tierras ara satisfacer las neccesidades individuales y colectivas de todos los individuos que con derechos a ejidos se encuentran en el repetido núcleo, como se comprobó por el resultado del censo verificado; que dentro del radio de 7 kilómetros fue señalada como una afecurable a hacienda de Chunchucmil propiedad de los señores María Cristina de Peón de Ailud, Berta Peón de Manero, y Enrique Manero. (CAM, April 26, 1939, exp. 171)

In the original dotación granted to Coahuila in 1925, 8,480 hectares of which 480 were designated for henequen cultivation, the 97 peones and workers of the Hacienda

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10 Residents of nearby Santo Domingo protested this census, demonstrating with machetes, but
Chunchucmil were counted into the 119 *capacitados* (men over age 16 who were able to work). Once again in the *ampliación*, the 97 peons and workers of the Chunchucmil hacienda formed part of the now 142 *capacitados* were counted in the official agrarian census. They solicited the recognition of a new *centro de población agrícola*.

While Chunchucmil was battling Coahuila to establish their own ejido, Kochol was considered a *núcleo* of Halacho. In the early 1920s, Halacho was an established pueblo of considerable size in comparison to Coahuila. Their application for their original ejido grant claims 3,286 residents, with 809 heads of household. On October 25, 1922, Halacho received 19,416 hectares of land expropriated from seven haciendas, with the following breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hacienda</th>
<th>Hectares</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Santo Domingo</td>
<td>487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kochol</td>
<td>848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chunchucmil</td>
<td>4,822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Mateo</td>
<td>6,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Maria Acu</td>
<td>989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siho</td>
<td>747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we saw in the case of the expropriation of the hacienda Chichén Itzá (Chapter 3), the “ruins” figured importantly in the final outcome of which particular pieces of land stayed attached to the *pequena propiedad* that the hacienda owners were legally permitted to retain as their holdings. However, in all of the archival documents I reviewed relating to the ejidos of Coahuila and Halacho, and the subsequent extensions which established those of Chunchucmil and Kochol, nowhere are “ruins” mentioned, even in the topographers’ indications of the “quality” of the land.

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without ensuing violence. From their point of view, taking part in the census as part of the
In some cases, the descendants of the original hacendados held the titles to the *pequena propiedades* that remained after the expropriations of the first half of the twentieth century. In other cases, the properties passed through a series of hands, becoming decreasingly valuable in succession. In almost all cases, the casa principales were vacant and in ruins, apparently abandoned with the sense of their contemporary worthlessness. As indicated above, the last locally known owner of the *casco* of Kochol is Luis O’Horan, but he has since passed away as well. Don Luis is locally infamous for liking drinking and cockfighting, among other activities. He was unsuccessful at sustaining the Hacienda and under the strain of debts, he sold off everything from the Casa Principal. The casco, or main property, was left to his daughters, who “abandoned” it. Now, according to many, there isn’t an owner, and there is a shared sense among many that the casco belongs to the community. Or at least that it should.

*Contemporary Perspectives*

Yucatán’s henequen industry is a classic example of how paternalistic government intervention in an economic activity can retard rather than advance development.” (Brannon and Baklanoff 1987: 185).

According to Don Nico’s account, the dismantling of the hacienda system was already expected, having been professed to local people by a prophet in nearby Halacho. He said that in addition to the ejido grants, soon would come a paved roadway. This was to be followed by previously unknown circumstances of having to purchase drinking water and the introduction of electricity.

*ampliación* of Coahuila would signify an acquiescence to the expansion of this ejido.
Don Maximiliano, who like many octogenarians in Kochol has lost most of his eyesight due to cataracts, leans across his hammock to pat the head of his youngest grandchild, eighteen-month old José. “I was about this size the first time my father took me to the monte, and that’s where I have worked my whole life.”

Don Ernesto, another octogenarian ejidatario, still bicycles, albeit slowly, to his milpa which is located in what the archaeologists call the “site center” of the Chunchucmil archaeological zone, about three kilometers from Kochol’s town center. He, like other Maya milperos, uses a pointed wooden stick between four and five feet long, the xul, to make small holes of about three inches deep in the rocky ground. Farmers in both Kochol and Chunchucmil still, for the most part, use this traditional method for planting corn, without fertilizers or pesticides, considered too expensive for the relatively small subsistence crops. PROCAMPO, the Programa de Apoyos Directos al Campo, introduced direct cash subsidies to farmers in 1993. Currently, PROCAMPO aid is available to milpa farmers in Kochol and Chunchucmil, though the actual monetary amounts are low, only 800 pesos (about $80) per year, per hectare. As the soil has worn thin over the years, even “traditional” milperos are becoming increasingly dependent on fertilizers to produce a subsistence-level yield. “I can hardly do this anymore,” he tells me as we walk over the mounds, planting, “the henequen took all my strength.”

Of the 106 municipalities in the state of Yucatan, 62 are in the “henequen zone,” located in the central and northwest of the state, covering 34% of the state’s territory. The regional divisions of zona henequenera (henequen zone) versus zona maicera (corn or milpa zone) still hold hueristic value in everyday Yucatán. However, today, in the so-called henequen zone, very few work in the production of henequen. In the past two
decades, the agricultural sector has lost footing in terms of importance in the regional economy. Fewer people participate in agricultural activities: statistics show that only forty percent of the economically active population, or *población económicamente activa* (PEA), is dedicated to activities related to agricultural and cattle-raising (SEDESOL 2000).

Residents of Kochol and Chunchucmil worked in henequen cultivation for several decades following the abolishment of the hacienda and the establishment of the ejido. Henequen cultivation was the principal occupation for Mayas in Northwestern Yucatán until 1970. By this time, Yucatán had clearly lost its early twentieth century status as one of the wealthiest states in Mexico, having become instead, one of the poorest: “rich in population growth and poor in capital and technical resources” (Brannon and Baklanoff 1987: 3). In the first half of the 1970s, state started to really scrutinize losses, lack of demand in international market-first because of availability of synthetic materials, and other supplies of natural fibers, namely Brazil and Tanzania. The first dramatic cut of payrolls of Banrural, in 1978, cutting 20,000 ejidatarios from the receipt of henequen subsidies, but didn’t help clear huge deficits, lack of market demand, and absence of new cultivation, harvest, and fiber-processing technologies.

The 1980s recognized the serious problems in the industry, and attempted several programs to diversify the agricultural output of the henequen zone. In 1984 a program known as the “Reordenación Henequenera” was instituted in hopes of reorienting the zone toward more diversification including *maquiladoras* (factories), tourism, and the construction of the *Puerto de Altura* in Progreso. It had little effect. Though by 1988 some 9,378 jobs were created outside of the henequen industry, these did not sufficiently
constitute an "alternative" to henequen production. Concurrently with lackluster restructuring programs such as this, more and more workers were cut from government-sponsored cultivation of henequen. At the outset of the 1970s, the last full decade of henequen cultivation, there were approximately 95,000 families dependent upon henequen production. In the next few years, this number was cut in half.

Viewed in retrospect, it is clear that henequen production in Yucatán has followed a path a neoliberalization, marked most notably by the parcelization of collective ejido and the withdrawal of the state over the last two to three decades. The industry somehow held on into the decade of the 1990s, when it still had a hold on some 463,399 people, accounting for 34% of state population. The final liquidation came in 1992, a big year for agrarian reform in Yucatán. 27,096 ejidatarios actively working in henequen were cut off from government subsidy, and 12,231 men over 50 years of age were jubilado, or retired. Yucatán state Governor Manzanilla, himself a descendant of hacendados, promoted the idea private property over the collective ejido. Strongly in favor of the Article 27 reforms, he initiated the parcelization and individualization of collective henequen ejido. However, this was accomplished without the elimination of the state’s control over production. The interventionist regulatory role of the state impeded a free and clear ownership of land on the part of the ejidatarios.

After the final liquidation of henequen and the establishment of PROCEDE, the agency through which land-titling would take place, the avenue for ejido privatization was cleared. But the road was not a smooth one for all. To date, Kochol has gone through PROCEDE's certification process, and ejidatarios do now hold certificates to specific parcels of land. The Chunchucmil ejido, on the other hand, has not passed
through the process (nor has the municipal seat of Maxcanú). These *ejidatarios* do not hold certificates to their land. This is due to a decades-old dispute between Chunchucmil and its neighboring communities, namely Coahuila.

In the past five to seven years, both critics and supporters of the 1992 "reform of agrarian reform" have realized the problems with Mexico’s land-titling program. Mexico’s experience is echoed across Latin America. “There is a widespread belief that land privatization (i.e., the granting of individual property titles) and abolishing of old restrictions are important instruments for producing a more efficient—and more equitable—distribution of the land, and creating a basis of sustainable land use” (Zoomers 2000: 59). Yet modernization and democratization have hardly been the results of most privatization programs featuring land-titling programs. Instead, a variety of problems plague the registry and titling programs. In the case of Mexico’s PROCEDE, four years into the program, only slightly more than 40% of Yucatán’s ejidos had completed the certification process (Baños Ramírez 1998: 30). The reasons for lack of conformity with the titling program are multiple. For some ejido communities, the actual extent of ejido land and boundary lines continue to be in dispute with neighboring ejidos, in some cases, such as Chunchucmil, since their establishment. Land certification and titling has only proved to exacerbate these local disputes and promote deadlock in terms of continuing with the PROCEDE program. For other communities, land registration and titling is a complicated formality which some see as really not worth the effort. If an ejido has enough land for those who wish to farm, and there are no intervening facts which would inflate property values (such as archaeological vestiges, beachfront property, historic built-heritage, etc.), why bother with getting a piece of paper that says
what is already agreed upon in practice? Additionally, many farmers fear new taxation
will come along with property certifications.

Just as the cultural patrimony “privatization” proposal discussed in Chapter 2
carried an ambiguous concept of privatization, so does the land privatization that came
with the 1992 agrarian reforms. The idea that this law privatized the ejidos has to be
highly qualified. If an ejido community passes through the PROCEDE process, and
individual members receive certificates, and if they wish to sell, there is yet another set of
procedures that must be passed through. A land parcel cannot be sold straight away to
just anyone, particularly to a person from outside of the ejido community. If a land
parcel is to be sold, it must be first offered to other ejidatarios, and next, to non-ejido
members with rights to hold ejido land (a prime example here would be the widow of an
ejidatario). Even if a certificate is granted, the land parcel itself (as a physical property)
still may not be sold: technically, if the assembly of ejidatarios agree, a certificate might
be sold, not the land itself.

While land privatization is playing out on the level of the ejido, there is another
phenomenon occurring as well- the (re)privatization of the hacienda cascos: the shells of
the hacienda system are being purchased at an alarming rate by big business developers
with not only monumental bank accounts, but political connections beyond reproach.

Part 3: Luxury Hacienda Hotels: the Repatronage of Northwestern Yucatan

Early one morning I found Don Gregorio on the property of the Casa Principal,
clearing an overgrown corral with a coah, a scythe-like tool. Clearing the property of its
head-high tangled brush is a twice-yearly job for the caretaker. Gregorio, in his mid-
seventies, has been caring for the house for almost thirty years. In contrast to the Kochol
property which has three (much younger!) custodians, Gregorio works alone. Their work is overseen by Alejandro Patrón, part owner and manager of both hacienda properties. The work of clearing is physically brutal, and Gregorio worked alone all morning while awaiting the three Kochol workers who were supposedly on their way to Chunchumil to help. Because of the intense heat, Gregorio works outdoors from seven o’clock in the morning until eleven. The ground is wet from the previous day’s rain and the mosquitoes move about in swarms. The smell of the freshly cut weeds mixes with that of animal dung, the former not quite balancing out the latter.

We sit on the remnants of a low wall that at one time separated two corrals. “There was a time when these corrals were full, full of cattle,” Gregorio tells me. He takes a long drink of water from an ancient two-liter Coca-Cola bottle he carries with him to work on a henequen fiber rope he knots around his waist, as do most local men when working outdoors. “And the trees!” he gestures to the area above the high wall which separates the garden from the corrals. Avocado, sweet orange, sour orange, lime, and mango flourished under the hand of a local gardener in the boom days of the henequeneros. One avocado tree still stands, but this year it didn’t bear fruit. The garden is neatly kept, but doesn’t give any sense of lushness or abundance. Not a single mango achieved maturity during the past archaeological season, when much to the chagrin of some of the houses’ residents, young boys grabbed and ate even the greenest of the fruits.

During my Fall 2001 stay in Chunchumil, I saw Don Gregorio first thing most mornings. He was always not surprised to see me, and it became a habit that he passed to me the heavy set of keys to the Casa Principal, held together by a Houston Astros keychain. “You need to use the bathroom?” he asked. Long over the embarrassment at
what under other circumstances are rather private affairs, I nodded and took the keys, my fingers automatically sorting through them to find the small key for the padlock on the tall, heavy double doors of the bathroom. The facilities at the Casa Principal are amongst the only instances of indoor plumbing in Chunchucmil, and therefore, highly prized by myself. Whenever I returned the keys each morning, Gregorio took the role as both secretary and mentor for my day’s research. “Did you make it over to the comisario’s house last night?” “Did you find Doña Magdalena in her daughter’s home as I told you she would be?” I developed a sense of who was at home in the morning, who spent these few cooler hours of the day in their milpa; which families had most of their members gone during the weekdays working in Mérida; and what few people remained through the week to make their living locally, operating one of the several small shops or working in other agricultural ventures, such as raising papaya. Sometimes, discouraged, I have to answer “no” to Gregorio’s inquiries into the “progress” of my research. Though a lot of what he asks he already knows the answer to- I stick out like a sore thumb in this small, quiet town- it is not difficult to track my movements. It is already eight-thirty in the morning and hot. He asks what I have planned for the day, contributes his advice, and wishes me a good day. He thinks I have strange work, though he is neither suspicious nor close-minded.

Through this daily exchange, Gregorio introduced me to particular social networks in Chunchucmil. The “map” of the Chunchucmil that he unfolded for me was of one of various communities within the pueblo. The primary network is one centered on the Pentecostal church and its members (hermanos), and their relations. Gregorio’s templo is one of two evangelical Protestant churches in Chunchucmil, which also has a
Catholic church congregation.\(^{11}\) Gregorio’s participation in the religious life of the Pentecostal templo informs his own telling of his life history. Before he converted to Pentecostalism, Gregorio drank. Now he completely abstains from alcohol and avoids companions who are drinkers. He is the father of twelve by two different wives, as he remarried after the death of his first wife. His youngest son is a slight, precocious boy of nine years, Gregorio Jr., or “Gordo” as he is known around town. Gordo taught me how to ride a horse, use a slingshot, and often accompanied me to interviews. He usually fell asleep after the first twenty minutes or so, sitting on the floor, propped up in a doorway.

Another morning, much like yesterday, and the day before. I meet up with Gregorio as usual, only today he is not hacking down weeds, but opening up the various outbuildings on the hacienda property to check for roof leaks and rain damage. It is almost the dry season, but recent afternoons have brought torrential rainstorms. The century-old structures are for the most part still-standing, but are approaching the danger of collapse. I help Gregorio sweep puddles of water out the doors of the former plantation store. We observe the roof-beams. One principal beam is supported by a tree-branch wedged between floor and ceiling. Chunks of plaster have fallen and smashed on the floor around it. Though the structural damage would condemn the building in the United States, Gregorio considers it a “good building” only it is a shame that the current owners aren’t quicker about restoring the property. Satisfied that the interior will now dry, we leave the doors unlocked and open, moving to the next job: “Let’s go see Don Ale’s house.” I laugh out loud at the irony of Gregorio’s innocuous statement. The

\(^{11}\) While common understanding of the religious landscape of Yucatán is that the majority are Catholics, this may not be the case on a local level. Evangelical Christianity is quite popular in small towns throughout Yucatán. The most common denominations are Presbyterians and Pentecostals.
house, built in the traditional oval Maya style, is modest, to say the least. Here we find more puddles, and a definite rotting stink. The fact that “Don Ale” is Alejandro Patrón Laviada, brother to Yucatán’s governor Patricio Patrón and enormously wealthy businessman, reinforces the idea of him as the owner cannot be further from that of Patrón as a resident.

Immediately behind the gutted, and seemingly haunted, building that housed the desfibradora machinery is another house Gregorio cares for, this one also in the typical oval Maya style, but with a modern door and windows, with a recent thatched palapa addition to the back and large, clean solar with running water. This house is also owned by the Banamex group, but rather than calling it Don Ale’s house, Gregorio refers to this one as the house of the co-director of the archaeological project. “Why is it his house? Did he ever stay here?” I asked. Gregorio answered no, but thought it would be a good idea for the director of the archaeological project to live in this house after he retires from his academic job in the United States.

“Where else can you see something like this?” Don Gregorio paused to look back at the expansive grass quadrangle framed by the Casa Principal, machinery building, and storage buildings. I thought the question was rhetorical, and let a moment pass while he basked in his pride. But then I realized he was looking at me, expectantly. “Well, I think that in the United States we would call this a quadrangle,” I said, awkwardly translating the term as cuadrangulo, a word nonexistent in Spanish. He nodded. “There is something like this, for example, at my university in Texas,” I added. “But it’s not as pretty as this, is it?” I looked across the grass field, closely shorn by random grazing animals, to my right, at the stark presence of the machinery building, gutted now for
years, its façade littered with graffiti. To my left, at the slumping bodega, a series of single-story connected buildings alternately having served as the hacienda foreman’s home, the plantation store, and a cantina. And finally directly in front of me, the Casa, a heavy, columned structure, said to have been grandiose in its time, the nicest in the countryside, still standing while most of its contemporaries have decayed. I knew that this question was indeed rhetorical, for I didn’t know how to answer, anyway.

For the past several years, representatives from large private enterprise have been buying up former hacienda properties around northwestern Yucatan. Along the Maxanú/Chunchucmil corridor, a stretch about twenty-five kilometers long traveling along which one will pass five former haciendas, one casco, that of Santo Domingo, is owned by the community. Restored with state and municipal funds, the casa principal in Santo Domingo is attractive, painted with the traditional colors of red and white, and serves as a center for community activities and events. Three of the five cascos are owned by the Fomento Cultural Banamex, A.C.: Santa Rosa, Kochol, and Chunchucmil. Many residents of Kochol and Chunchucmil claim not to know who the casco owners are, arguing that they are indeed the well-deserved property of the community. The case of Santa Rosa is quite different. Originally the property of the hacienda brothers Garcia Fajardo, Santa Rosa is a nineteenth century hacienda which was restored, remodeled, and updated into a beautiful and comfortable “replica” of a nineteenth century hacienda with all of the modern conveniences such as a gourmet kitchen and swimming pools that would be expected by visitors paying top dollar for lodging.12 The Hacienda

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12 It is interesting to note how the Hotel is described in advertisements. The hacienda is alternately dated as colonial, seventeenth century and eighteenth century. In fact, it is a nineteenth century establishment that functioned into the twentieth. It is interesting how the
Hotel Santa Rosa is located just a few kilometers from Kochol and Chunchucmil.

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc., through its Sheraton, Westin, St. Regis/Luxury Collection, Four Points, W Hotels and Caesars subsidiaries, offers more than 690 hotels in 72 countries with 125,000 employees and is one of the leading hotel and gaming operations in the world.

One Mexican tourism magazine article refers to what I call here the "repatronage" of Northerwestern Yucatán in the following manner:

In the early 1990s a group of adventurous hoteliers began to buy some of the abandoned hacienda buildings in order to construct very exclusive hotels outside of the conventional tourism routes. At first, the idea seemed a little absurd, but there was something deeply romantic to it and as the years have passed, it has had excellent results. (Gatopardo)

In the state of Yucatán alone, banking magnate Roberto Hernández has used the non-profit cultural foundation arm of the Banamex corporation to purchase around 25 former haciendas, several of which are already converted into luxury hotels, while many more are slated for upcoming development projects. One particularly well-known property is the Hacienda Temozon, where then-President Bill Clinton stayed on a trip to Yucatán in 1998. As economically depressed as any rural, ex-hacienda community in northwestern Yucatan, Santa Rosa had high hopes for any development project that could pull the small community of several hundred inhabitants out of the decades-long economic slump it was experiencing, which was intensified after the henequen liquidation.

When Banamex purchased the property and began the major renovation project, residents clung to the promises of revitalization that would come with the opening of the Hotel Hacienda Santa Rosa. After several years in operation, the reality of the articles which show photos of the church tower which reads very clearly "1909" in the same
relationship between the hotel and the community has set in. Promises of local jobs for many community residents forced to travel to the capital city for work were fulfilled only for a small number. The eleven-room hotel could not possibly sustain employment of more than a dozen or so workers, the majority of whom occupied low-paying, unskilled positions.

Knowing the outcome of the hacienda renovation at Santa Rosa, do the residents of Kochol and Chunchucmil await a similar fate? The answer is different for each town. Chunchucmil, the ex-hacienda with a reported population of 900-1,000 inhabitants, is, on the whole, slightly more enthusiastic than Kochol, whose residents seem to have low expectations for hotel renovation and tourism development. These differences in outlook stem from a variety of reasons. In the first place, the casa principal at Chunchucmil, which would serve as the core of a hotel facility, is in much better shape than Kochol’s casa principal. One would surmise that it is simply easier to imagine a luxury hotel in Chunchucmil, because it presently stands as habitable. In fact, the house has been occupied for at least six months each of the past three years by the members of the archaeological project, Pakbeh. Also for this reason, perhaps, residents of Chunchucmil are more accustomed to having foreign visitors residing within the ex-hacienda for temporary, though extended, periods of time. Another reason that support would be higher in Chunchucmil than in Kochol is because property owners of the structures of the compound have made better efforts in communication with the residents of Chunchucmil over those of Kochol. Property owners have also made “deals” with Chunchucmil political leaders to negotiate, for example, where the Catholic community residents

description label the house as colonial.
would attend mass in the case of the renovation and closing of access to the chapel as well as the preparation of another empty piece of property in town as an alternative soccer field. Additionally, residents of Chunchucmil, as of the summer of 2002, were already beginning to see certain realities of the refurbishing project taking place as one of the casco’s main buildings, which had alternatively served as the residence of the overseer, a cantina, and then a storeroom went under reconstruction.13

The purchasing of the properties in Chunchucmil and Kochol by the Banamex foundation calls into question the usufruct rights that residents of both ex-haciendas have enjoyed without issue for years. In both Chunchucmil and Kochol, the extensive grassy courtyards (kept trim by grazing animals such as goats, horses, and even a pair of sheep) around which the structures are situated are sportsfields. Regular soccer games are played in this area, and a government-sponsored recreation development program in the 1980s installed basketball courts in these areas as well. The courtyard in Kochol also serves as the location for the annual community fiesta. Each May, a bullring is constructed in front of Kochol’s casa principal, complete with a two-tiered pole and palm leaf spectator area. In both ex-haciendas, the hacienda cascos thus serve as community centers, though this should be carefully qualified. Children of both communities feel free to climb the steps and sit on the porches of the main house in each town, as well as, in the case of the better-cared-for Chunchucmil property, eat the mango and guaya fruit from its trees. In Chunchucmil, a couple that I lived with for a time were married in the late 1980s in the hacienda’s chapel and had their wedding party on the house’s long, shady

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13 At the end of my fieldwork, it was unclear what the newly reconstructed building would be used for. While future plans called for an archaeological museum, short term plans may include housing for the archaeological project in this space while the house itself went under reconstruction.
porch. Not to be dismissed in terms of another social function, the old machinery building in Chunchucmil is a favorite hangout for men drinking together, especially in the evenings.

In both towns, there is a noticeable lack of specific information held by community residents regarding the property ownership of the hacienda cascos. In terms of legal property rights, the cascos do not belong to the communities. In Kochol, many residents do not know exactly who the properties actually belong to, and many assume, by nature of the way in which the space is used, that they indeed belong to the community. Several prominent ejidatarios that I spoke with in the course of my research blame a former town official for losing the casco to Banamex during his administration. They argue that he sold the property which had been held by the community to Banamex for his own personal profit.

Current and former town officials, who were involved in some of the legal maneuvering by the Banamex foundation in the sale and purchase of the casco, point out where the actual property lines are situated, and argue that the community hasn’t fully “lost out” on “their” control of this land. The ejido of Kochol retains a key portion of the casco property, specifically, a portion of the courtyard, equaling nearly half, situated between the main road (running from Maxcanú to Chunchucmil) and the casa principal.

As a guest researcher with the Pakbeh archaeological project in the spring and summer of 2001, I, too, lived in the casa principal of Chunchucmil. The house was rundown, but picturesque and surprisingly cool even in the nearly unbearable heat of late afternoon. The old, leaking roof had been sealed the year before with a smooth cement cap, yet anyone who attempted to sleep without a mosquito net risked a face full of
falling plaster in the middle of the night. The house’s double-bathroom with modern plumbing was one of the biggest bonuses of the living arrangements. Improvements to the house were made at the expense of the property’s owners, Banamex.

Members of the archaeological project on many occasions expressed certain anxieties toward living in the casa principal of a former henequen hacienda. Some felt quite keenly the undeniable geography of power that the house, as a potent symbol of the hacienda system, represented. An interesting slippage of terms complicates this anxiety: the house was typically referred to in everyday speech by a majority of project members (during the time of my stay) not as “house” in either English or Spanish (casa), but instead, as “the hacienda.” At the same time, older Maya residents continue to use the term hacienda to refer to their town, whether Kochol or Chunchucmil. Rather than finding an “intentional” agreement between the two uses of this term, I find the opposite—a quite unintentional equation of a variety of elements in play, on the part of both archaeologists and local residents. This ensemble of elements orchestrated around the term “hacienda” include 1) older residents’ continued use of the term which carried the weight of the political categorization of the settlement in their parents’ times, and possibly in their on youths; 2) a metonymic inversion or reversal of the term for a socioeconomic system (the hacienda system) for its material embodiment through the physical structures that are, in effect, the topoi of local memory of the hacienda system; 3) a colonialist (in the general sense) notion of living “on the hacienda” associated with privileges of both race and wealth.
Conclusion: *Patronage and Patrimony*

It is often said around Yucatán that the communities in the Northwest of the peninsula, in the “henequen zone,” have lost their Maya culture because of the hacienda system. The constrained social lives, constant forced labor, arranged marriages, and so on stripped these Maya of the cultural context of Maya identity. Could it be possible, as well, that none-too-distant generations of slavery have created a contemporary population that is more used to being docile? That the hacienda system stripped away Maya Culture and instituted in its stead a culture of docility? Is the inherited legacy of the hacienda system an indigenous population of docile descendants?

Don Nico from Kochol knows that not every community in Yucatán was organized into a hacienda system, but he shakes his head and says, “Who knows how those people were able to survive without their *patrónes.*” Because the haciendas were created to be, in a sense, worlds unto themselves, peons, despite the consciousness of exploitation, found the prospects of self-sufficiency more daunting. Fallaw (2001) points out, “Since 1915, peons who truly despised an *hacendado* could leave, resulting in a migration that left behind a more loyal peon population” (25). He continues, “Rather than being the huddled serfs yearning to be freed from a feudal regime, peons were generally supportive of landowners because of economic codependence as well as traditional patron-client bonds” (ibid.). Some local residents are proud of their grandparents’ generation and the hard work they did on the hacienda. Others might echo this sentiment, though mix it with the critique of a contemporary perspective. Don Nico
says that his grandparents built the finca of Kochol.\textsuperscript{14} Doesn’t this give them rights to the hacienda? “The henequen industry should never have been entered by the government. But in the 1930s, neither land reformers nor hacendados felt that “peasants were psychologically or culturally suited to run henequen production themselves” (Fallaw 2001: 22), assuming that the indigenous population would never adjust to life without a paternalist protector. What are the connections between patronage, patrimony, and privatization? I contend that in the historical case I have presented here, they are deeply interconnected, as well as mutually supportive.

This chapter has illustrated how changing relationships between people, land, and institutions of power may be understood as different kinds of patrimonial regimes. Through oral, written, and official documentary historical sources, I have attempted to create, much like for the case for the case of Chichén Itzá, genealogies of space in order to illustrate the complex historical embeddedness of three key figures: henequen, haciendas, and hotels. The following the chapters will return tour inquiry back to the contemporary situation and the occasion of the archaeological development project at Chunchucmil.

\textsuperscript{14} The terms “finca” and “hacienda” seem to be used inerchangeably in Kochol. Patch (1976: 35-36) gives an historical account of the changing names of the haciendas. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the rural farms were called “estancias” or “sitios,” the latter if there were not as yet cattle on the property. The word “hacienda” began to be used in the eighteenth century, precisely at the time when the agricultural/cattle bi-productive plantations were emerging in Yucatán. Subsequently, developed derivative terms such as “hacendado” the title given to the owner of the hacienda. According to Patch, this term did not come into currency in Yucatan until the nineteenth century. Thus, as far as the current local usage of the terms, the “hacienda” (of which Kochol technically was, combining agriculture with cattle) is one kind of “finca”.
Chapter 6

Territorial Patrimony: Archaeology, Ejidos, and Space-Claiming Techniques

The archaeological zone of Chunchucmil, located in northwestern Yucatán, is situated in a landscape replete with ruins. From the modern roadway between the Maya communities of Kochol and Chunchucmil, even the casual observer may note up to a dozen mounds, some eighteen to twenty meters high. In the dry season, the mounds are more noticeable as crumbling, yet imposing structures of cut stone. This is what attracted archaeologists to the site ten years ago—a vast site located at a key position near the Gulf Coast. Even before excavation started, it promised to support a theory regarding ancient Maya trade connections and political affiliations extending beyond the Peninsula itself. Of course, for the generations of local people, the mounds were neither new nor discovered. For many (especially older) residents of the surrounding communities, the mounds are part of the “natural” landscape, having been the shape of the land since their grandfathers’ times. Thus, a mound, which to the casual outsider’s eye would be impressive, both mysteriously and unidentifiably “ancient,” to the local person is a natural feature of the terrain. Rather than archaeological features upon an empty landscape, the current residents of Kochol and Chunchucmil ascribe another significance to the land and the mounds, seen as coextensive. This land is their ejido, the communal lands designated to the people who had been debt peons to the wealthy and powerful henequen planters as discussed in Chapter Five. The inception of an archaeological excavation project in the site in 1998 brought not only a new source of wage labor to

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1 Chunchucmil, in addition to being an archaeological site, is also the name of a nearby town.
2 Specifically, it was expressed to me that the mounds were “natural” rather than “man-made.”
these communities, but ushered in a new discourse of the land and property and a new ideology of patrimony.

The Maya communities in and around the Chunchucmil archaeological zone, several of whom have ejido, or federal land-grant holdings overlapping the zone’s boundaries, have complex histories regarding their land allocations and tenure. Land—how much is held, for how long, under what legal frameworks, and perhaps most important of all, by whom—is the primary signifier in the organization of everyday life in these communities. Many older landholders are, at the present, only a generation or two away from the debt-peonage lived by their fathers and grandfathers on the henequen haciendas that covered the northwestern part of Yucatan beginning in the late nineteenth century. Land reform in the wake of the Mexican revolution broke up the large landholdings of henequen cultivation that generated the region’s largest period of economic growth to date. But the establishment of the ejido, or collective landholding system, did little to “free” the hundreds of thousands of Yucatan’s indigenous Maya population. Rather than becoming the emancipated, participatory, land-holding citizenry that was the ideal of Liberal reforms, these Maya people experienced a recolonization of both their land and labor, this time by the state. Yucatan became one “great hacienda” with the state as hacendado, or owner, only this time without the paternalism that, while from many perspectives despicable, sometimes served to protect the workers from further exploitations. Until just recently, these ejidos continued to labor in henequen cultivation, barely earning enough to sustain a family, supported nearly entirely through state and federal subsidies. As part of economic modernization programs on state and federal
levels, henequen was liquidated in the 1990s, and around the archaeological zone of Chunchucmil, cultivation ceased entirely.

Yet the land’s signifying power surpassed an exclusive association with henequen and the socioeconomic system of the hacienda that had supported its cultivation. Local communities, on five to seven-year cycles, have attempted to stick with agriculture. Through thick and thin, these communities, particularly Kochol, have tried various crops and cultivation methods to regenerate their local economies. Habanero chile, grapefruit, and most recently, papaya along with the ubiquitous corn milpa are not only crops, but signs of economic life and diversification in these communities, which some might see as struggling or merely surviving literally in the shadows of the decaying structures of the former haciendas.

In the days of the henequen haciendas, a father’s patrimony to his son was a terrible legacy- his lifelong accumulated debt to the hacienda’s tienda de raya, or hacienda store. But now, decades later, patrimony is valuable, productive, and protected. For residents of Chunchucmil and Kochol, their patrimony is their land. Patrimonio ejidal, as one Kochol municipal authority called it—patrimony of the ejido. Although the term itself is not in general circulation among these landholders, the concept it describes is a common-sense understanding of the role and value of the lands granted to these communities through the ejido system. Patrimonio ejidal is a concept that exists even among the younger generations, many who have little or no agricultural experience having left the towns to seek employment in nearby factories and the capital city of Mérida. In this chapter I will demonstrate how the concept of patrimonio ejidal already codes and territorializes the space of the archaeological zone. How does archaeology,
with its reliance on the concept and material markers of cultural patrimony, contend with its patrimonial competitor—*patrimonio ejidal*?

Many current residents of Kochol and Chunhucmil claim to have no knowledge of the mounds (only 3-4 kilometers from each town center). Some claim that their participation as hired laborers in the excavation project has been their only interaction with this particular landscape. But others have stories about the mounds. I first met Don Emiliano as we worked side by side digging, sifting dirt, and hauling rocks as part of the 2001 field season of the Proyecto Pakbeh (officially known as the Chunhucmil Regional Economy Project), a US-based archaeological project funded by the National Science Foundation, National Geographic Society, and other sources to carry out survey, mapping, excavation, and other investigations at the Chunhucmil archaeological site. Emiliano, a laborer on the project, Kochol town elder, and former Comisario Ejidal (perhaps the highest political position in the ex-hacienda) and I, cultural anthropologist and ethnographer, found many reasons to take breaks from the hot sun and heavy work of excavation to share conversations about ourselves, where we came from, and, most of all, about the mounds that covered nearly the entire expanse of Kochol’s ejido land. Don Emiliano’s grandfather was a henequen cutter in the *tiempos de esclavitud* who worked for Rafael Peón Losa, owner and *patrón* of the hacienda. At the time, stories were circulating around the hacienda, speculating on what might be inside the *muul’ob*, or mounds that covered the very rocky low-scrub karst topography which makes up most of Yucatán. One day, the henequen workers, despite their better judgment, went to work digging down into the top of the largest mound on the orders of the patron. They worked
all day dismantling the twenty-meter high structure. The work was quite difficult, involving moving hundreds of large stones. By six o’clock that evening, the end of the workday, the men had not nearly completed the job of the mound’s “excavation.” The foreman of the job suspended work for the day, and the workers returned to the hacienda. The next morning, when they all returned to the site to finish the excavation, the mound was completely reconstructed back to its original state without a trace of the dismantling carried out the previous day.

This story has several variations. One variation does not involve the direct orders of the hacienda patrón. In this version, a man and his son go out into the monte one day, and come upon a large mound. Overcome by curiosity, the older man begins digging into the top of it, persuading his son to join him in the difficult work. Exhausted after a few hours of work, they settle down for a meal and a rest. With their backs to the mound, they sit on some rocks and eat their pozole. When they turn back around toward the mound, it has changed back to the state in which they found it, showing no trace of its dismantling. This is an ambivalent, or doubly-meaning, image of the mound: both constructed and deconstructed. In this story, what is taken down with one hand is reconstructed with another.

The image serves as an allegorical comment on the impossibility of the work of cleanly dismantling—or deterritorializing—the assemblage of what is the archaeological zone. It is an image of the impossibility of the existence or persistence of, in the words of Deleuze and Guattari, a “fully coded signifying regime” which defines the archaeological landscape. The existence and persistence of multiple meanings, and multiple

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3 Refers to henequen boom of the 1850s until the Cárdenas land reforms of the 1930s, when the
de/territorializing practices demonstrate that significance cannot be contained by a geographic notion of space, and that history and memory play an important role in the way the space is practiced today. Through an analysis of the territorializing practices of modern archaeological science, heritage institutions, and private enterprises this chapter ethnographically examines how various groups of people including foreign archaeologists, non-profit cultural foundations, and the residents of the Maya community of Kochol, Yucatán practice and imagine the transnational space of the archaeological zone of Chunchucmil.

The physical space of the archaeological zone of Chunchucmil is a network of coexisting territories: 1) site of “ancient Maya civilization,” 4) henequén hacienda, 3) ejido, and 4) archaeological zone, each of which is implicated in the other, and each with their own histories, practices, ideologies, carrying different sets of meanings. These elements comprise the problematic of defining the territory of this space. What are the contending practices that territorialize and deterritorialize it in different registers of legal, political, and lived space? As I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, the archaeological resources of the Yucatán Peninsula are important monuments for the Mexican state in the promotion of national cultural heritage and the tourism industry. Additionally, they are sources of multiple social and personal meanings for the Maya people who live in and around them. Within the contemporary landscape of México’s Yucatán Peninsula, archaeological zones are heterotopic spaces, serving the geographical, historical, and economic imaginations in contradicatory and contestatory ways on

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4 According to most recent dating estimates by archaeologists, the site was occupied in the period 200 BCE to 1250 CE.
regional, national, and international levels. Through an analysis of the territorializing practices of modern archaeological science and heritage institutions, this chapter ethnographically examines how people practice and imagine the transnational space of archaeological zones in a manner that approaches deterritorialization.

Part 1: *De/Territorializations of the Archaeological Landscape*

*Landscape, assemblage, and territory*

While a landscape may be thought of as the features of a terrain bestowed upon by nature, recent appropriations of the term by cultural geographers and archaeologists demonstrate the realization that "landscapes are created by people through their experience and engagement with the world around them" (Bender 1993: 1). New theoretical directions are being taken in landscape archaeology (Bender 1993, Tilley 1994) and in heritage studies, where landscape is a focus of a politicized discourse on site management issues (Hewison 1987; Fowler 1992; Bender 1993; Ucko 1994, 1995). At the same time, organizations such as the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and UNESCO have attempted to redefine material manifestations of cultural heritage away from an exclusive centering on single monuments or structures toward the more inclusive concept of the cultural landscape. The first expert meeting on World Heritage cultural landscapes held in La Petite Pierre (France) in 1992 drafted the categories for cultural landscapes of outstanding universal value. These categories were adopted by the sixteenth session of the World Heritage Committee in 1992. Cultural landscapes represent the "combined works of nature and of man" as described in Article 1 of the World Heritage Convention. Landscapes are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or
opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal... The term "cultural landscape" embraces a diversity of manifestations of the interaction between humankind and its natural environment" (UNESCO 1998). Thus, UNESCO has found the concept of landscape as a bridge between the categories of natural and cultural heritage.

The concept of landscape is particularly useful for understanding the relationships between people and ruins. Local perceptions of ruins may not always fit archaeological representations or explanations of a site. Nor are all local perceptions within a given locale similar. As Kumar (1999) points out: “The ‘perception’ of a landscape, as much as the self-perception of a social group, is deliberate in its construction and acceptance; it has historical actors, a temporal context, and it attempts to obscure internal dissent and/or marginalize challenge from groups defined as ‘outsiders’” (159). Kumar’s case study of a reservoir in New Delhi demonstrates that dissimilar perceptions on the part of different groups were not just the result of social and ideological factors. Rather, different groups over time ascribed different meanings to the cultural heritage site. These new meanings are “a product of attempts to control and resist changes that were being introduced in the nature of the settlement and land management of the area” (160). In the case of locals’ perceptions of the site of Chunchucmil, we will see that variations in local perceptions of the ruins, or mounds, are not explicitly deployed as politicized positions. Quite to the contrary, many local perceptions do not publicly circulate, particularly in the arena of official discourse on the archaeological meaning and importance of the site. Which is not to say that the varying perceptions are not, in themselves or their social or cultural context, political.
Landscape archaeology has begun to reveal the ideologies embedded in space and place; as well as the contestations of these ideologies. Bender (2001) distinguishes the elitest way of seeing landscape that emerges alongside the development of mercantile capital in Western Europe because this point of view “ignores the labor that has gone into landscape and obscures the relationships between landscapes” (Bender 2001: 3, emphasis in original). Instead, a broadened definition offered by Bender utilizes landscape “to understand the way in which people- all people- understand and engage with the material world around them” (ibid.).

The concept of landscape is useful for our discussion of privatization, as it adds nuance to the concept of ownership. “To possess or to own a landscape means to identify it systematically; it entails its intellectual creation and implies responsibility for maintaining it….If landscape refers to an ideological framework, it cannot be ‘owned’ in a typical material property sense” (Ayres and Mauricio 1999: 299). The authors go on to suggest that landscapes, as cultural heritage resources, are a kind of intellectual property, a confounding idea for typical Western notions of property ownership based in materiality.

What significance does focus on landscape have for spatial analysis of territory and its movements? Though it has a certain “useful ambiguity” (Gosden and Head 1994), landscape falls short as an analytic concept. Though it bridges artificial categorical divides such as natural and manmade, the landscape concept is stuck in the interstices of twin illusions. Landscape analysis, though it has offered an opening-up to archaeology, grapples often unsuccessfully with exposing the “illusion of transparency,” the illusion that a space is clearly and readily intelligible, without any secrets or traps.
Simultaneously, and equally unsuccessfully, landscape analysis attempts to promote the realistic illusion, the illusion of natural simplicity (Lefebvre 1991: 27-28). The notion that the landscape of Chunchucmil is archaeological is one example of an illusion of transparency at work in perceptions of the landscape. However, for local residents who interact in various ways with the mounds, a critical tension exists among the elements comprising the landscape: between the land itself and what marks the land—or the space that encompasses both—and the mark of human labor upon the land. The concept of landscape does not help us resolve this tension because it does not work through the problematic of spatiality. Inquiries into the constituent terrain of landscape are not inquires into the production of space.

Thus, I again return to the distinction between an analysis of things in space versus an analysis of space in itself. Henri Lefebvre establishes a trialectics of space: the lived, perceived, and the imagined (38-39). Harvey (1990) expands this using Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* to explain the dialectical relations within the three dimensions of space outlined by Lefebvre (218).

Lefebvre’s concept of social space, inflected through the trialectic he establishes, has an affinity with the Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas of assemblage and territory. An assemblage is “a multiplicity made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them, across ages, sexes, and reigns—different natures. Its only unity is that of co-functioning” (Deleuze and Parnet 1977: 69). An assemblage is any number of elements or fragments gathered into a single context. Though neither a thing, nor composed of things, per se, an assemblage can operate to bring about any number of effects. As opposed to a tightly organized, hermetic, or
coherent whole, the assemblage functions through lack of organization in order to constantly draw into its body any number of disparate elements. Social spaces, like archaeological zones, “interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves upon one another. They are not things, which have mutually limiting boundaries and which collide because of their contours or a result of inertia” (Lefebvre 1991: 87). Described as such, social spaces are a kind of assemblage.

“Every assemblage is basically territorial” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 503). For Deleuze and Guattari, “The territory is not primary in relation to the qualitative mark; it is the mark that makes the territory” (1987: 315). Instead, “territory is an act rather than a space” (1987: 314; 1983: 145). If not by fixed coordinates in space, nor in time for that matter, how are we 1) to define territory and 2) to use it as an analytical category in socio-cultural research? We thus must look for the marks and inscriptions upon the land rather than at the land itself as a pregiven, auto-signifying entity: the mark or inscription of ancient buildings, a city of Maya civilization transformed into ruins- a site of archaeological zoning. In the case of Chunchucmil that we will shortly see, territories are formed and reformed both through iteration of “the land” as geographical space and as a grounding concept to support social, political, and identity claims through the mark of human labor: whether the planting of corn or papaya by Kochol’s ejidatarios, the same pushing of a shovel or hauling away of stone carries different meanings, different sets of values aligned along different social and political agendas.

The spatio-political practices of marking and unmarking, coding and decoding territories not just of transnational spaces, but territories/territorializations of histories, of peoples, and of knowledge itself may be characterized through a new term:
neoterritoriality. In *AntiOedipus* (1983), Deleuze and Guattari introduce the concept of the neoterritoriality:

Civilized modern societies are defined by processes of decoding and deterritorialization. But what they deterritorialize with one hand, they reterritorialize with the other. These neoterritorialities are often artificial, residual, archaic; but they are archaisms having a perfectly current function, our modern way of 'imbricating,' of sectioning off, of reintroducing code fragments, resuscitating old codes, inventing pseudo codes or jargons...These modern archaisms are extremely complex and varied. Some are mainly folkloric, but they nonetheless represent social and potentially political forces (1983: 257, emphasis in original).

The description offered here of the “neoterritoriality” resonates well with the archaeological zone, whether it be seen as organized by the state, or as an enclave, orchestrated by para-governmental groups, private or civic interests, or other third or fourth sector social actors and agencies.

- First, the zone is “artificial” in that is constructed through an artifice of both space and time. Spatially, the limits of an official zone don’t directly correspond to either the limits of ancient settlement, nor those of modern jurisdiction.

- Second, the archaeological zone is “residual” in the sense that it is filled with detritus of both the present and the past, in other words, filled with leftovers (manifested as marks or inscriptions on the landscape)- whether taking the form of built architecture, ceramic sherds, wells, or even traditional practices.

- And third, the archaeological zone, understood as a neoterritoriality, is “archaic” through the necessity of both the invocation and evocation of the ancient past in its current functioning. In other words, the archaeological zone is a modern spatio-juridical designation which is hinged upon the scientific and socio-cultural currency of “the archaic” or ancient.
With this suggestion of the archaeological zone as a neoterritoriality, the following is a discussion of a series of territorializing, and, by implication of the process, deterritorializing acts. All involve the assemblage of archaeology and the state, and multiple social actors: the Mexican INAH and its academic and administrative representatives, foreign archaeologists and their students, and residents and ejido landholders from the communities of Kochol and Chuncheucmil. These actors are multiply-positioned and multi-vocal, and no voice is taken for granted as representative of a homogenous group from which it emanates.

1. **Zoning as Territorializing Practice**

   Although ruins are a part of the natural and cultural landscape of Yucatán, there exist particular legal regulations defining and demarcating what areas are technically archaeological zones, legally protected and administered by the state, via the INAH. Although, according to the Mexican Constitution (as discussed in Chapter 2), all archaeological vestiges are property of the nation, not all are defined and administered equally. The delimitation of archaeological zones is the responsibility of the Subdirección de Registro Público de Monumentos y Zonas Arqueológicas (SRPMZA) within the INAH.

   The delimiting of an archaeological zone is an act through which evidence of pre-Hispanic culture, part of the cultural patrimony of the nation are protected. Their safeguarding is one of the fundamental archaeological activities of the INAH. (Sánchez Caero 1995: 187).

   “Archaeological evidence” may take the form of artifacts or monuments and delimitation is seen as a means of safeguarding heritage through legal protection. Until the 1980s, delimited areas were based on “monumentality,” meaning that in a delimitation process,
site centers (those determined through investigation as being ceremonial/religious or civic centers) formed the core of an archaeological zone. In the 1980s, the practice changed to create more expansive and inclusive archaeological features of an area into the officially boundaryed zone. Zones were created to include, along with monuments, ancient living and cultivations areas, adding to the monumental architectural vision a human and ecological dimension (Sánchez Caero 1995: 193).

Delimitation of an archaeological zone is an intermediate stage in the declaration of an official archaeological zone. Delimitation works hand in hand with a process of cataloguing or inventorying the archaeological monuments and materials. Little more than 1% of archaeological zones in Mexico are delimited, and 18 have been protected through presidential decree. In a delimited and declared archaeological zone, a variety of regulations come into effect regarding land use, sale, and expropriation. A site delimitation establishes two categories of area internal to the zone. In the center, or Zone A, land use is restricted to archaeological investigation, maintenance, and services basic to the good functioning of the zone. Zone B, or the neighboring (surrounding) area, partial restrictions regarding land use exist (Sánchez Caero 1995: 195). But are they always put into effect? And what about questions of compensation if the zone is coterminous with ejido land? The process of delimitation and declaration is just one aspect of what I call “zoning.” In the following accounts from the archaeological site of Chunchucmil, I will explore how this “zoning” includes not only the spatio-juridical practices of the INAH, but concomitant local, national, and international processes in the cultural, social, and economic realms of everyday life of a zone and the different sets of actors involved in practicing this space.
Although surveying and mapping on the part of archaeologists has been going on for nearly ten years, excavations began only recently, in the summer of 1998. The Chunchucmil Regional Economy Project (CREP), otherwise known as Proyecto Pakbeh, a group of archaeologists representing various US universities, has been employing Maya laborers from Kochol in the work of clearing land, test pitting, excavation, and masonry for architectural consolidation. Foreign projects are allowed to work in Mexico only through explicit permissions and guidelines set through the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), a centralized federal agency that, in accordance with a constitutional mandate, oversees all archaeological sites deemed national territories. Though the existence of the ruins at Chunchucmil has been officially recognized for decades, no sustained investigation had taken place in the site before the CREP. In 2001, the site of Chunchucmil was granted by INAH the official status of zona arqueologica, though the site has no guards or nightwatchmen, is not fenced in or otherwise visibly demarcated as to its official boundaries, and ejidatarios from Kochol regularly use the land to make milpa and have recently begun planting other crops within the zone itself. This “zoning” is a territorializing practice par excellence: it codes both the landscape and the relationships people have with that landscape. The spatio-juridical process of establishing a zona, what can and cannot happen in the space, as well as what may or may not happen. It sets forth rules as to how close farmers may plant to the mounds, how they must not burn their fields in the manner of swidden (slash and burn) agriculture to which they are accustomed in order to clear the land and enrich the poor, thin soil characteristic of the region.
But this “zoning” or “enzoning” is not a primary territorializing practice on an otherwise “smooth space” or empty, unmarked landscape (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 474-500). Historically, the area has been demarcated, boundaried, and parcelled. Upon the foundations of an ancient Maya commercial center, the land has continuously been, over several centuries, cleared and planted, built and leveled, to make way for a variety of human activities. Now that the land is finally in the hands of the Kochol ejidatarios, many see it as a target for yet another territorialization, this time, in its most physical and visual sense. Archaeologists (who, presently, do not count an INAH representative among them) have publicly raised the issue of the legal right of the INAH to come and enclose the site with a fence or wall as a threatening action. The possibility of this radical territorialization alters the status of this community-owned ejido land quite dramatically:

“Soon I myself won’t be allowed on my own land without paying an admission fee!” said an angered and worried ejidatario from Kochol, echoing the sentiments of his colleagues. “The INAH will have to come here and present a plan to all of the ejidatarios.” Said another:

Look, this isn’t Chiapas, and here in Yucatán we are tranquilo, but if this happens, we’ll have something to say about it...If we are respected, we will be respectful. If the archaeologists want to come and work here, adelante. Go ahead. But they are going to have to answer to the people. Nosotros campesinos tenemos derecho, tenemos terreno. Somos ricos por el terreno. [We campesinos have rights, we have land. We are rich for the land we have].

2. Planting as Territorializing Practice

When the site has been selected, the land to be cleared is measured in mecates (kaan), each a square, 20 meters to a side. The mecates are measured with a stick, or with a piece of string. The milpero takes a meter as the distance from the tip of his middle finger to the outer margin of his breastbone. Around the contemplated field a narrow little path is cut and a stone or little heaps of stones is placed to mark each metate corner (xuuk). The milpero sights down these markers to make sure that they are aligned (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 43).
Throughout the past three years of excavation work with laborers from Kochol, talk about the Project and its members, the finds at the sites (though these have, to date, been undramatic to the untrained eye) and the excavation work itself has definitely been food for thought, and of late, is growing into terms for debate. In the latest local political contest, two factions within the same political party were divided along lines delineated by, amongst other key issues, a "for" or "against" the archaeology project. Though the ejidatarios and other residents of Kochol are hearing more and more about plans beginning to be implemented by the archaeologists and their hired development consultants to open the area to tourism development,\(^5\) this isn't a tangible reality for many community residents, who are uncertain and even unwilling to give up the ejido land—much of which lies within the new boundaries of the archaeological zone—that they have only held for two or three generations.

In late June 2001, three ejidatarios began clearing three mecales (60 square meters) of land in the space deemed "site center" by the archaeological project to plant a new papaya field just meters from an excavation site (where papaya cultivation had previously not been practiced). Papaya growing is an agricultural industry started in Kochol in 1998 as yet another stab at reinvigorating the local and regional economies of former henequen haciendas in northern Yucatan. Beginning in the 1980s, various government-sponsored agricultural programs were introduced and in the past five years, almost 80% of the families have become involved with papaya cultivation. Economic

\(^5\) The development "package" is being created by the archaeological project, with support from a well-known Mexican banking mogul and hacienda property-owner, along with his associate, the brother of the governor of Yucatán. This is a complex topic to be addressed in my in-depth study
crisis reached a high point in Kochol 6-7 years ago, as an unprecedented number of both men and women left the pueblo to seek employment in Mérida. A women’s cooperative of growing habanero chile began, but the intricacies of growing the delicate product made its cultivation unpopular and cost-intensive. In came the papaya program, and something clicked with the people of Kochol. In the past five years, almost 80% of the families have become involved with papaya cultivation. Twenty-four-year-old Efrain is part of what one may slightly romantically call Kochol’s “Lost Generation,” those who spent their teen and young adult years away from the day to day activity of the pueblo, working and living in the capital city of Mérida, about an hour and a half away by bus. But his is a lost generation that has, in a very literal sense, come home again. “When I was very young,” Efrain explained to me as we toured his two mecates of papaya, “I would go out with my father to the henequen fields. I did that for about five years. Then I went to work en el otro lado” (literally, the other side, referring to Mérida).⁶ He continues, “Now with the papaya, I can stay here in my pueblo.” Pueblo life is eminently preferable for most residents of Kochol over city life in Mérida, and the sentiment is reiterated in many parts of the Peninsula. “In Mérida, if I need a tomato, I have to go buy a tomato. If I need a lime, I have to go to a supermarket and pay for it,” says town elder and former comisario ejidal, Don Emiliano. “In Kochol, I can get all of these things from my own solar.” He and his two grown sons worked several rotations on the archaeological project in an arrangement between the directors of the archaeological

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⁶ This phrase is more commonly used throughout Mexico to refer to the United States.
project and the secretary to the *comisario ejidal.* Under this arrangement, men of Kochol who had completed their community service *fagina* were eligible to work for two weeks with the archaeologists, earning by local standards a decent wage. Because of the pre- and self-selected labor pool, any given two-week rotation of workers brought important Kochol community leaders to the excavation sites (former *comissarios*, the Pentecostal church pastor, and of course, the *secretario ejidal*, who self-assumed the position of foreman of the workers). For younger workers who might have spent their teens and twenties away from the pueblo six days a week (whether in school or working in a nearby clothing factory or as a mason in Mérida), the excavation work brought them out to ejido lands that they had not set foot on in several years. For the older generations, the three-kilometer bike trip from Kochol proper to the archaeological site-center provided an opportunity for other outdoor activities: some came to the sites with machetes strapped around their waists to cut wood before returning to the pueblo, others would trek to nearby cenotes or natural wells to bottle the water they insisted was “*agua purificada*.” Through the time I spent working alongside the people of Kochol, I have come to realize that the clearing of land, digging, and hauling of rocks which make up the primary activities of archaeological labor has a perfect symmetry with the agricultural work that is the primary occupation for many Kocholeños. For members of all generations, the 6am to 1pm excavation workday was just one of many scheduled work activities for the day. Many went back to town just for a bite to eat with their families and

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7 The *comissario ejidal* is the most important elected authority in Kochol, overseeing everything involving the ejidos and the ejidatarios. In the 2001 season, the *comisario*, Don Ramon, was nearing the end of his three-year term and apparently was willing to have his secretary handle the relations with the archaeologists. Thus the secretary, Don Marcelino, became the “point person” for the archaeologists in Kochol.

8 Workers ranged in age from mid-teens to mid-sixties, with the very occasional septuagenarian.
a quick rest before continuing the workday harvesting or maintaining their papaya fields (often well into the evening when large semi-trucks pick up the fruit for export to Mexico), or, depending on the month, burning or planting their milpa. 

Does this discourse of the land with all its meanings and potentials collide with the configuration or emplacement of “the land” in other territories such as that of the archaeological zone? It certainly does, as demonstrated by the following example involving the ongoing dispute between residents of Kochol, archaeological project members, and the INAH regarding the name of the archaeological site. The beginnings of excavation at Chunchucmil in 1998 initiated the ascription of new regimes of value and ownership in Kochol’s ejido land. Just as a milpa yields corn and the papaya fields produce a cash export crop, the archaeological landscape yields a material bounty: pieces of ceramic, slivers of obsidian, and the occasional pottery vessel. Though there was little for the lay person to be greatly impressed by, the excavation did yield some artifactual treasures from the earth within the Kochol ejido. “What happens to the artifacts taken out?” the hired laborers from Kochol were quick to ask. The current practice of the project is to keep all findings at their headquarters, which happens to be in the casa principal of the Chunchucmil hacienda. Large or important pieces are periodically transported to storage at the INAH regional anthropology museum, the Palacio Canton, in Mérida. “What is taken out of the ejido land is ours.” This sentiment caused such a point of controversy in the 2000 season that project directors, in an attempt to neutralize the arguments, changed the name of the project to the Pakbeh Project, thereby removing the name “Chunchucmil” from the labels on sherd bags. The problem is greater than this

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9 Milpa harvesting does not generally coincide with the archaeology season as it takes place in the
simple label-change can solve. As far as the INAH is concerned, the site is officially
designated as Chunchucmil. Compounding the problem is the historical relationship
between the pueblos of Chunchucmil and Kochol, as described in Chapter 5.

Ejido land surrounds the pueblo of Kochol, and most of the more than three
hundred ejidatarios agree that the amount of land itself is sufficient to meet demand for
growing papaya. Some future-looking papaya growers paint the picture a little
differently, pointing out that a papaya crop only lasts for a year and a half before the soil
has to be left fallow for at least a year. With much of the ejido land parcels immediately
surrounding the pueblo currently filled with papaya, this means that growers are soon
going to face the problem of sufficient land resources to plant the next crop. In the
coming seasons, they will be moving away from the lands immediately surrounding the
pueblo, to the ejido lands two and three kilometers from town, into the area which has
now been officially deemed by Mexico’s INAH as an official archaeological zone.

One morning in early July I pulled my bike up alongside Don Oligario’s on the
main road that connects the five pueblos between Maxcanú and Chunchucmil and we
pedaled out to his new papaya field in the site center, hailing his various buddies, one of
whom, Don Abelino, was planting corn in the traditional Maya style just at the roadside,
on the slopes of a ten-meter-high mound. Don Oligario is what you might call an
agricultural guru of Kochol. Locally respected for his knowledge and success in planting
and raising various crops, most recently papaya, Don Oligario had accumulated enough
capital to purchase and install a gas-powered water pump to irrigate fields where there is
no available electricity. Having come to understand the deeply personal and political

Fall, while papaya harvesting is a nearly constant activity.
significances of the self-sufficiency and economic security that comes with the ability to use the resources they have at hand, I still wondered about the real motivations of planting the papaya alongside the excavations. I broached the question awkwardly, “So you’re running out of land closer to the pueblo and you all really need to use this land out here?” “Yes, that’s right.” He smiled. “This is virgin soil, very fertile.” “You know,” he continued, “the archaeologists were out here yesterday questioning me. I thought you might be one of them. They were bothered, but then I told him we wouldn’t go anywhere near the mounds.” He smiled again (nervous, because I might be one of them? Or knowing, because we both knew this was exactly the right thing to say?). We stood together in the hot morning sun and watched his compañeros walk through the cleared area with their herbicide backpacks and spray-guns.\(^{10}\)

3. Archaeological Labor

Another form of territorialization that began to take effect on the Kochol ejido within the archaeological zone of Chunchucmil is based in labor. Specifically, the introduction of the scientific investigation of the site introduced a new wage-labor economy to the Kochol ejidatarios as they began to be hired by the project to work as day laborers in the site excavation. Just as we saw in the series of twentieth-century transformations of labor at Chichén Itzá, the development of the Chunchucmil site involves historical transformations as well, but in a different socioeconomic framework. As described in detail in Chapter Five, the same men who were sons and grandsons to the debt-peons who worked in slavery-like conditions for the owners of the henequen

\(^{10}\) Don Oligario prepared his field, but never ended up actually planting the papaya trees.
haciendas were laboring on the very same parcels of land where henequen had been cultivated. Archaeological labor, for these men who are living in a space still layered with the memory of slavery to the patrónes of the henequen hacienda, is another kind of working of the land. And, more importantly, it is a working of their land, granted through the ejido reforms of the 1930s: it is simultaneously both a natural and cultural patrimony writ local over and above the national.

The archaeologists worked with the ejidatarios of Kochol through the Secretary to the Comisario Ejidal. Thus, Don Marcelino became the project’s “point person” in Kochol for two major kinds of activities: providing workers and relaying information to the proper authorities for calling community assemblies. Don Marcelino was a key person in the archaeological project’s functioning. For the project, Marcelino both produced and controlled the project’s vision of Kochol.

Those who spend significant amounts of time working for the projects are quick to develop their “archaeological eye,” training a new perspective on a familiar landscape. At the sifting tables, I doubt that many ceramic sherds, even the smallest fragments, were dumped into the backfill piles. On countless occasions, I sifted and stared at the debris in front of me on the screen, seeing nothing significant, only to have the worker standing across from me pluck out three or four ceramic pieces with the sweep of his hand.

Other workers, namely masons, were brought in from Maxcanú, the nearest large city, to work at the site. This was toward the end of the season when archaeologists were faced with the INAH regulation that all excavated structures have to be consolidated each season. Although many residents of Kochol, if asked, would state their profession to be albañil, or mason, archaeologists chose workers who had previous experience in
excavation consolidation at the archaeological site of Ovkintok. The bringing in of outsiders to work on the Kochol ejido was a delicate matter with a rather messy past. In the initial season of excavation, Project archaeologists used the crews from Chunchucmil that had already been assembled to work on various preliminary aspects of the work at the site, namely mapping and clearing critical areas of brush. When an elderly Kochol ejidatario went to the ejido land that had become coterminous with the archaeological site, as he customarily did to make his milpa, he came across a group from Chunchucmil working to clear the land. Though the events only occurred a few years ago, the rest of the story is now legend in Kochol, told each time with higher drama. The stooped, elderly campesino “flew” back to town to inform his compañeros of the “invasion” that was occurring, right under their noses. The church bells were frantically sounded, bells which had once been rung to summon exhausted hacienda peons to yet another day of backbreaking work in the henequen fields were now used to assemble the town’s ejidatarios for an emergency meeting. It was an obvious issue of territory: Chunchucmileños should not be working on Kochol ejido land. But the greater wrong lay in the fact that the archaeology project was working in the Kochol ejido, and salaries were being given to Chunchucmil residents. In this event, the productive power of the Kochol ejido land was transformed. Local residents neighboring Kochol from different ejidos were benefiting from the land-product of Kochol. Later, the argument was augmented to concern that which was physically extracted from the land, such as artifacts. But at this earlier moment, it was the presence, and non-invasive or extractive activities taking place in the Kochol ejido, that drew alarm, then protest, which resulted
in another transformation of the ejido land- to a space of wage labor for land-altering practices through the methods and ideologies of modern archaeology.

The story of Don Francisco and what he stumbled upon one Spring day in the Kochol ejido is most likely to be related in a context of continuing tensions between residents of Kochol and the archaeological project, at moments when other disputes arise, minor or more significant, whether the archaeologists are themselves aware of a problem or not. The archaeological project is about to enter the last month of the field season of 2001. Tensions are running a little higher than usual, as director, assistant directors, and other staff members contemplate finishing their planned work for the season. It is the time in the field season when, in order to comply with a critical INAH mandate, any excavated structures must be consolidated. For the co-director currently in residence, there are related anxieties. After three seasons of excavation, there is little to show to impress a non-academic audience. He expresses to the group a desire to forego the consolidation in favor of more excavations, which would hopefully produce “goodies” to attract the attention of potential patrons.

The consolidation is costly to the Project, as higher weekly salaries are owed to the professional archaeological masons. In addition, the Project staff rotates among themselves to take on the inconvenience of driving some twenty kilometers each morning at five-thirty to pick up the masons, the two round-trips per day exacerbating the Project’s transportation costs, as the cost of gasoline continued to rise throughout the season. On one particular day I am accompanying five masons from Maxcanú, who are working with the assistance of two Kochol residents in the consolidation of a small structure at the Mooch group. The Kocholeños working today have spent much time
throughout the season with the Project, and appear to be somewhat put out at the circumstances which have made them *chelanes*, or helpers in the masonry work at hand. In theory, these helpers will learn the work this season in preparation of leading a Kochol-based staff of masons in the next season. One assistant director becomes frustrated at these *chelanes*, complaining that Kochol has sent two old men (one in his early forties, the other a bit past fifty years old) rather than young people who are more suitable for apprenticeship to archaeological masonry. They spend the entire workday in the wearisome and mind-numbing task of moving rocks, with very little interaction with the Maxcanú group. It is only into the next weeks of work that there is a thaw between the Kochol and Maxcanú workers, and they begin to join in with some of the trivial banter that helps the workday pass more pleasantly.

Presently in the site of Chunchucmil, there are no entirely reconstructed buildings; only portions of walls, exposed floors, and some stairways are visible. It is difficult for a non-specialist to surmise what the exposed areas actually are. The masons from Maxcanú/Oxkintok do distinguish between regular masonry work, known as *obras*, and that associated with archaeological consolidation. This distinction thus implies a specialized knowledge of archaeological structure consolidation, but more importantly, illustrates a degree of experience on the part of these particular masons. I am surprised when much of the work carries on unsupervised, and alarmed when direction is asked of me. The masons take it in stride, coordinating tasks between themselves, using an experienced eye to reset stones, reforming collapsed and crumbled walls of ancient structures. I would have thought the process of consolidation, a task of reconstruction, to be more “scientific,” or exact. But when a stone doesn’t seem to fit with the line
established by the length of string tied to two sticks, another is found to take its place. If the facing side sticks out too far, the back is chiseled away. If a top stone sits higher than its neighbors, the bottom is hacked off to lower it. After a row of stones is set in place, another line is made above it, and so on, to form the lower section of a wall, about a meter high. The stones are then numbered with a thin white paint, and the wall is dismantled, the stones set in their numbered rows on the ground nearby, away from the structure. The rows are then realigned, more adjustments are made, and they are mortared in place. While the mortar is still moist, it is painted with an earth and water mixture, with the proper terra-cotta color produced through trial and error. The painting of the mortar around the set stones is the only task in which I am permitted to participate. The head of the group is about fifteen meters away, setting up stones at a nearby structure, but manages to watch my simple work like a hawk. I didn’t think it was something that could actually be messed up. But in no time he is kneeling next to me demonstrating a better technique. I quickly catch on, and in subsequent days, I am clearly expected to do the painting. The days pass quickly, and soon we are finishing the second week of consolidation. It is one o’clock in the afternoon, very close to quitting time, and the heat of the July day is fully upon us. The head mason uses a mallet to knock the final stone of a row into its proper place. The stone refuses, and the same mallet helps a chisel shave off a few critical millimeters. The mason stands back to gain better perspective and something still doesn’t look quite right. He says to us, smiling, “Suficiente para la patria.” Good enough for the nation.

This partial reconstruction of the ruins, as a task of both skilled and unskilled laborers, takes place more or less outside of the “pedagogic regime” of archaeology (in
which archaeologists tell locals what ruins are and that they were built by their ancestors). The workers had no idea what they were reconstructing. There is no image of a whole structure to which the reconstruction aspires. (There were rumors of a drawing, a plan, but I never saw it. It was later reported to have been lost on the first day of work.) Yet this didn’t seem to matter, as the more crucial point was to assemble the parts as integral unto themselves, one row, leading to one wall, and so on. Returning to the site several months after the end of the 2001 field season, at the soggy finale of Yucatán’s rainy season, I can barely make out the structure I painted at the Mooch Group. I compared the overgrown structure to the perfectly cleared, newly restored monuments at Chichén Viejo, which I had visited through the courtesy of site managers just a week earlier. Does the development of the ejido land into an “attractive” archaeological zone, appropriate for tourism, create a “non-work” place (Lefebvre 1991: 24) out of the labor of Kochol’s ejidatarios? A space of leisure which occludes the production of space through labor, much like what custodians at Chichén are dealing with, question of their visibility at the site as they maintain practical and moral ordering of nation’s cultural heritage.

Part 2: “Patrimonio Ejidal” and State/Archaeology Articulations

At the outset of the 2002 archaeological field season, project directors met with Kochol ejido leaders. By this time, anxieties which had previously swum beneath the official position of the community regarding the archaeological excavations in their ejidos reached a more public consensus: there would be no work by the archaeologists carried out on their land. The demand that would satisfy the ejidatarios to allow the
continuance of the archaeological project was simple, yet difficult to distinguish among the tensions with the archaeologists, as well as the internal dissension between the residents of Kochol themselves.

"You know what," an INAH employee commented to me, "sometimes archaeologists get too involved with the local communities. They make complications where they shouldn’t." While the INAH representative was bearing the brunt of the frustrations expressed by the Kochol ejidatarios, archaeologists sat by. As one said in the beginning, "For once we are just here to listen." Thus, in this instance, the members of the archaeology project were the silent interlocutors of the March 27, 2002 meeting. The previous dialogues, discussions, and presentations over the course of several field season created a palpable tension that night on the Kochol basketball court, raised in flashpoints of anger expressed by the Kochol residents. The meeting came at a critical time for them, as they had just been denied their 2002 season excavation permit, the official reason being the failure to satisfactorily complete the Informe, or report, for the 2001 season. Rumors suggested that the problem lay deeper, in the project’s proposals of local museum development, complicated by the legacy of Yaxunáh that shadowed the project in the eyes of the INAH. As INAH director Luis Millet stated to me, "An archaeological permit is just what it says: it grants permission for researchers to carry out academic, scientific investigations."

The asamblea is the usual format for discussion of issues pertinent to the residents of Kochol. Even though there have been periodic public meetings, there still seems to be a problem of "correct" information dissemination. The major fear on the part of the ejidatarios going into the meeting was that their ejido would be embargado, or
confiscated from their hands. They worried that the land would become inaccessible to the very people to which it, supposedly, pertained.

Just two days before, Monday, March 25, two female members of the archaeological project met with a group of women health promoters to speak about the archaeological project and the benefits that supporting the project and its development plans would bring to the community. This self-selected group of almost thirty women see themselves as progressive and community-oriented. One told me, just minutes before the meeting, that those in town who didn’t want to support the archeology project were “ignorant.” On the other hand, other residents of Kochol see the *promotoras* as the disciples of the *doctora*, a young woman from central Mexico who was serving her required public service duty staffing the Kochol clinic, an underfunded facility that served as the main health facility for several communities. She has spent her entire term in Kochol maligning the people about public health issues. The biggest issue is the (now former) abundance of pigs wandering the streets. When I asked Don Tomás, *comisario municipal*, if he thought it was true that unpenned pigs present a community health threat, he replied, “Yes. This is what the doctor tells us. If the pigs are loose in the street, they eat whatever they come across. If the pigs eat garbage, then we are eating garbage when we eat the pig.” Indeed, a Kochol without pigs looks like a different Kochol. Add to this new image a lot of fresh paint, a recent trash cleanup, and an always-smiling *comisario*, and maybe Kochol is different. Or is it?

The INAH representative, a lawyer by training, spent a considerable amount of time explaining the INAH: its mission, functions, and duties. This was done in a down-to-earth manner, with lots of everyday examples. He emphasized the shortfall of
resources the INAH was experiencing, which is exacerbated by the incredible amount of archaeological ruins in Yucatán. If there are 106 municipios in Yucatán, and more than 2,000 archaeological sites, he explained, it could mean that there are up to twenty sites in each municipio. He stressed that Kohol’s situation was not unusual—most archaeological sites coincide with ejido land. For most ejido communities, this does not represent a conflict.

The representative, aware that archaeologists or others might have promoted anti-INAH sentiment in the town, played down the power of INAH, explaining that it is an institution, the INAH is an office building. In the Mexican context, calling something an institution almost erases its power and capacity for actually affecting anything. He responded to concerns expressed on the part of the ejidatarios regarding the name of the site. To those who wanted the site to carry the name “Kohol,” he countered: Chichén Itzá is not called Pisté, Uxmal is not called Santa Elena, Ovkintok is not called Maxcanú, etc. While it is a valid point, what the representative missed in this example is that the site name is coincident with that of a contemporary town. The problem arises not strictly because of this coincidence, but because the archaeological site is not spatially coterminous with that entity whose name it shares. Namely, the archaeological site “Chunchucmil” shares territory of five ejidos: Coahuila, Halcho Chunchucmil, Kohol, and San Mateo.

Since the passage of the reforms to Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution in 1992, the national protectionist stance toward the ejido has loosened considerably. Now, through the program PROSEDE, a community can obtain certificates as titles to particular parcels of land. With a supporting vote of the ejido, these pieces of land may
be sold outside of the ejido. The Kochol ejidatarios have completed the PROCEDE process (whereas Chunchucmil and even the municipal seat of Maxcanú have not) and hold the certificates for their land. Knowing that it puts the land at greater risk, they expressed fears that the INAH would force them to sell the ejido lands within the archaeological zone. In response, the representative made it clear that INAH is neither interested, nor able to buy lands. The INAH does not own archaeological properties, he emphasized, and most are either ejido or propiedades particulares, those held by private ownership. Because of the overlap in questions of territory, jurisdiction, and landholding and ownership, there are often points of connection between questions of ejidos and archaeological properties. While practice and circumstance draw them together, juridical frameworks separate them. “Questions about your ejido should be directed to the Procuraduría. The INAH is not an ejido authority. If the questions regarding the continuation of the archaeological project are based in concerns about the status of the ejido, then the Procuraduría should be consulted,” the INAH representative advised. “The INAH is not a land authority.”

(Excerpt of dialogue exchange between IR, INAH representative and KE, Kochol Ejidatario, and KC, Kochol Comisario, with comment by A, Pakbeh Project archaeologist)

**KE:** But when the permissions aren’t granted, even under the law they can’t enter the land to work.

**IR:** Yes, that’s right. This is what the law says.

**KE:** I wanted to make that clear. Did you come here to help your compañeros or to benefit the community?

**IR:** This is what I am trying to explain.

**KE:** *Already you’ve been talking for half an hour.*
IR: Which compañeros? Do you think that I know them (archaeologists)?

KE: *Didn’t you just say you work for the INAH?*

IR: Do you think I know all of you?

KE: *Exactly. You don’t know us.*

IR: I didn’t come here to support anyone’s side. I came to explain what the INAH is.

KE: The people are conscious of what is going on. The more you talk, and talk, and talk, *aqui no puedes a lograr nada.* ...You came here to get permission from us for your compañeros to work in our ejido.

KC: While we are interested in the general explanation you were giving, the Comisario Ejidal was trying to tell you that there are some problems in the mounds where the archaeologists are working. The short of it is, the people have not reached an agreement about their work. We would like for them to present their workplan to us. The archaeologists want to do their project, but the people of Kochol don’t want it.

KE: (addressing archaeologist) In this area, they are planning on planting coconut trees, and then they will close it off.

A: I have never said this!

KE: And then no ejidatario will be allowed to enter his own property.

“Our problem is the rumors that have spread around Kochol,” said one archaeologist. “They are worried that the INAH is going to come in and close off their land.” Other project members have echoed this sentiment, expressing that it is not the intention of the archaeological project to restrict access or activity on the ejido land within the boundaries of the official zone. Contextualizing the relative powerless of the project relative to the INAH, project members have frequently, and publicly, held up the government agency as a threat to the community. Residents of both Kochol and Chunchucmil had previously had little if any contact with the INAH, as opposed to a
greater familiarity with governmental agencies such as the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI), an institution lacking an important presence in these communities. The primary orientation of local residents toward institutions of archaeological investigation is solely the Chunchucmil Regional Economy Project. This isn’t surprising, given INAH’s serious shortage of resources and personnel, leading to an inability to maintain any sort of a presence at most of the archaeological sites in the state.

The project was still required, of course, to obtain permissions for excavation and other investigation practices. A problem arose early in the 2002 field season regarding these excavation permits. The excavation permission application filed by the project hit a snag in the INAH’s national Consejo de Arqueología specifically regarding a passage contained in the project report related to community development projects that they were involved in. Specifically, the project was in the initial planning stages for the creation of two museums: a living museum to be situated within the archaeological site, and an artifact museum slated to be housed within the pueblo of Chunchucmil, located about four kilometers from the site center.\textsuperscript{11} The INAH position on this was made clear in an interview I conducted in March 2002 with the Director of the Centro Regional Yucatán in Mérida, also a member of the Consejo de Arqueología on a national level:

Archaeological projects have one function. For foreign archaeologists, their job is to investigate academic archaeological issues. Now with the issue of development projects- they would have to have other kinds of orientations and authorizations. An archaeological project is a project authorized as a project with an academic character.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11} These plans will be discussed more extensively in the concluding chapter.

\textsuperscript{12} Los proyectos arqueológicos tienen una función. Los arqueólogos extrañeros su función es hacer cuestiones de tipo de arqueología, académico. La cuestión ya de proyectos de desarrollo, tendrían que tener otro tipo de orientaciones y otro tipo de autorizaciones. Porque digamos, no es una cuestión...El proyecto arqueológico es un proyecto que se autoriza es un proyecto de carácter académico.
Several weeks after the confrontational *asamblea* in Kochol, project directors were asked by the *ejidatarios* to draft and sign a statement to be authorized and held by the authorities of Kochol stating that the project had no intentions of confiscating the community’s *ejido* lands. INAH officials were also asked to co-sign the declaration, but the agency representative refused. “If we start making contracts like this with every *ejido* that has archaeological remains, it would become very complicated for us, both practically and legally.” Even without the INAH’s signature, the document was drafted and signed. Around the same time, permissions were finally granted by the *Consejo de Arqueología* in Mexico City. The Chunchucmil Project was back on track, and the 2002 field season continued with business as usual.

**Part 3: Ceremonial Inscriptions**

In May 2002, Pakbeh archaeologists initiated plans to hold a ceremony in the archaeological site center, a portion of which overlaps the territory of the Kochol *ejido*. There is an established tradition of ceremonies such as these in the history of Maya archaeology, at least in Yucatán. The ceremonies performed at archaeological sites are of a general genre of cleansing ceremonies, the *hetz luum*. These ceremonies also seek permission for working upon specific areas of land, especially if this work is to be invasive into wither soil or mounds. Why would such ceremonies be held, and what ends do they serve? More importantly, for whom are they performed?

In the course of talking with people who had ancestral connections with the early Maya laborers who worked with the archaeologists at Chichén I stumbled on a phenomenon remarkably similar to what Redfield describes in his 1932 AAA
presentation “Maya Archaeology as the Mayas See It.” Redfield claims that the archaeology of Yucatán has given rise to a particular set of beliefs among the contemporary Maya (remember, he was researching and writing in the 1930s), particularly the stories of the *aluxes*:

The *alux*, a people quite distinct, are living today. They are a mysterious and mischievous people whom it always best to avoid and often wise to propitiate... The *Alux* may easily do one harm, and they never do one good. Most of the older men have seen these little people, and are familiar with their appearance. They are about a foot high, and look like very small children, except that they are the color of clay and wear beards and crowns. They are hollow inside, so that rain enters them at the top and runs out at the toes (1932: 304-305).

Many stories of *aluxes* circulate presently in Pisté. What Redfield claimed in 1932 still stands, for the most part, true: “The *alux* are a favorite subject for storytelling; men tell of their uncanny adventures with them meeting them in the bush, or observing the results of their pranks in their homes” (305). I know now where they dwell: mostly in caves, or near cenotes. And it seems as though one may keep them away by smoking a cigarette, a warning that humans are approaching.

Redfield, it seems, did not know what to make of the stories of the *aluxes*, especially as these narratives, as told by the Maya people, were well-interwoven with references such as Noah’s Ark and the Tower of Babel. He comes to the conclusion that unless the “real” Maya elements of these tales were learned from the archaeologists, they “represent a battered remnant of native tradition” and goes as far to say, “there is no reason why some of these beliefs may not have resulted from entirely new interpretation placed upon archaeological artifacts since the Conquest” (1932: 306).

*Loj* ceremonies are simultaneously preventative measures and problem-solving strategies. This means that while they are designed to propitiate spirits or other beings
that inhabit a cave, a milpa, a houseplot, a cenote or other landscape feature, the
ceremonies I learned about throughout the course of my ethnographic research were
necessitated by some sort of problem or disturbance- an abnormality- that has already
occurred. Don Sepo, restaurant and hotel owner in Piste, worked on the crew who
installed the “luz y sonido” light and sound show at Chichén. The light and sound show
was another facet of the “revamping” of the zone that came with the same “improvement
package” so to speak, as the demolition of the INAH workers’ houses in the early 1980s
(see Chapters Three and Four). The light and sound show was originally installed at
Chichén Itzá in 1984. Don Sepo told me a story that I was to hear often repeated. It is a
story about the disturbance of the grounds in the wide plaza between the Castillo, the Ball
Court, the Venus Platform, the Skull Rack, and the Temple of the Warriors. In order to
install the lights, speakers, and other electrical paraphernalia to generate the night-time
show’s effects, workers had to dig and tunnel into the ground between the buildings.
Additionally, the equipment was installed in some of the structures themselves, including
the top of the Castillo. The light and sound show was engineered by a German company
who had, in 1976, installed a similar system at the nearby archaeological site of Uxmal.

After the lights and other equipment were set up, tested, and presumably ready to
go, the system continually failed. Repair personnel were repeatedly called in to check
and recheck the lights, cables, and speakers- only to find that there was nothing
technically or mechanically wrong with the system. Clearly the aluxes, having been
disturbed, were at least making mischief if not foreshadowing a more serious sign of
things to come. It was then that the INAH called in a h’men, a Maya holy person (similar
to a shaman), to perform a limpieza ceremony- a ritual cleansing of the site.
This story is similar to that concerning an archaeological excavation at the nearby caves of Balankanche, four kilometers west of Chichén Itzá. In September 1959 a travel guide came upon a “sealed and hidden” section of the caves. The guide notified his employer Fernando Barbachano, Sr. owner of the land (Hacienda Chichén) and long-time local hotel proprietor, who, in turn, notified a group of archaeologists with the National Geographic Society-Tulane University Dzibilchaltun project who were carrying out various investigations in the region. Remarks one of the project’s archaeologists E. Wyllys Andrews regarding a preliminary inspection of the site: “After spending an entire night in the cave, it was clear we had one of the most striking archaeological finds of recent times... During our first midnight explorations, the cavern looked like a juicy archaeological plum” (Andrews 1970: v, 5). What wasn’t immediately apparent was the gravity of this “discovery” beyond its implications for the archaeological record.

Andrews continues:

Early in the project\(^{13}\) we were contacted by the *h-men* of nearby Xcalacooch. He informed us that, because of the sacred nature of the cave, it would be necessary to perform various rituals to propitiate the cave deities and escape the danger of supernatural retribution for our profanation. He named the ceremony *Tsikul T’an ti’Yuntsilloh*, which means, “Reverent message to the Lords.” We were delighted, of course, and told him to make the necessary arrangements (6).

The investigation team, comprised of representatives from Tulane University, the National Geographic Society, and the INAH found another object of study in the ceremony, recording the prayers and other proceedings of the event. The ceremony is recounted in a curious appendix to the archaeological monograph produced by Andrews. A witness/participant and then Director of the Centro INAH Yucatán Alfredo Barrera

\(^{13}\) The “discovery” of the sealed area took place on September 15, 1959. The ceremony was held on October 13 of the same year.
Vásquez, provides a detailed and often humorous depiction of the ceremony. He quotes the *h'men* on his preparatory visit to the site: “I have come...to determine what will be advisable to do to protect those who have violated these sacred precincts. It is necessary to do something so that nothing bad will happen to them. The *Yum Balames* who are in the cave are displeased, and they must be pacified” (Barrera Vásquez in Andrews 1970: 72). Barrera Vásquez tells of the elaborate ritual, the offerings of thirteen chickens and a turkey, the constant drinking of *balché*, a ceremonial alcoholic beverage, and the roles played by both archaeologists and local townspeople old and young, from nearby Xcalacoop. The ceremony included, in part, a ritual known as the *ch'a' chaak*, a common ceremony asking the deities for rain. One passage in particular describes the participation of several Maya children who, on cue from the *h'men*, lined up in front of the ceremonial altar within the cave to make various frog and toad, as well as thunder and lightening noises required in a prayer. This narrative account of the proceedings is followed by the transcriptions of the prayers in Maya and Spanish.

At the Mayaland Hotel, a nearly seventy-year-old establishment at the gate of Chichén Itzá, a similar ceremony was held in 1999, presided over by a *h'meen* from Xcalacoop, a small town just after Pisté and Chichén heading towards Cancun from Mérida. Don Nico has had a long career in which, in addition to being a *h'meen*, has worked for many years with Project Chichén archaeologists and is currently employed by the Mayaland Hotel as a musician. He plays the saxophone in a group of four men who provide the musical accompaniment the traditional *jarana* dancers who entertain afternoon diners at the hotel. Don Marcelo, acting out of a certain humility, is not straightforward with me about being a *h'meen*, but I was told by many to seek him out-
for indeed he was. The social position of a h’meen in a Maya community is not elevated or venerated. This “doer” is simply respected for doing his job. And because he works in close contact with the supernatural, it is trusted that he will do his job well. Don Marcelo was not hesitant in any way about answering any question I posed to him, but did not typically offer much beyond the range of a particular question. A person may become a h’meen “por herencia,” meaning that it was passed down as a patrimony from a father or other older male relative, or one might become a h’meen after an apprenticeship. A h’meen typically works alone, and as we joked during the interview, they are not unionized.

In 1999, Don Marcelo was contracted by Fernando Barbachano Herrera, owner of the Chichen Mayaland Hotel, to perform a limpieza, or purifying ritual, on the hotel property. The Mayaland Hotel is one of the oldest in the area, and actually is situated within the ruins of Chichén Itzá, although the hotel structures are technically outside of the INAH-delimited official archaeological zone. The extended Barbachano family has properties throughout the Yucatan Peninsula, at some of the most strategic locations in terms of the tourism circuits: Chichén Itzá, Uxmal, Cancun, and downtown Mérida. When Barbachano inherited the control of the hotel from his father, he requested the ceremony, and hired Don Marcelo to perform it. According to the h’meen, the ceremony was requested and performed because of the beliefs of Don Fernando. Note that this is explicitly NOT an “indigenous” ceremony performed as an expression of the religious or spiritual beliefs of local (Maya) people. It is possible, and I would argue, that local people “believe” in the power of such a ceremony, but would be unwilling to request the
ceremony on their own behalves, as people who work in the space of the hotel and its properties on a daily basis.

The purpose of such a ceremony, known as a loh, is “the propitiation and exorcism of evil spirits” (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 175; confirmed in interview with Don Nico). The specific ceremony performed by Don Marcelo was to secure the workplace, to prevent accidents or mishaps, and to generally protect the area and its inhabitants. This twenty-four hour ceremony (some last as long as seventy-two hours) is similar to the cha chaac, the popular ceremony to ask for rain. The ceremony performed at the Mayaland Hotel is a “ceremonia de primicia para los dueños del terrenos,” (an offering-ceremony for the owners of the land). There is a wonderful double-entendre to this phrase. The spirit-guardians of the land, in Don Marcelo’s vocabulary, are interchangeably called “dueños” and “duendes.” Thus, when he says that the ceremony will be an offering to the “dueños,” literally owners, of the land, he implicates Barbachano and the spirits in the same breath. For they are both at play. Not one of ancient world, and one of modern world, but a circumstance where a multi-millionaire businessman and a group of mischievous Maya spirits may be at work in the same space.

Ceremonies can be private or very public affairs. Often, a h’meen or yerbatero will engage in ceremonial activities to cure an individual of illness brought on by exposure to malos vientos. This would take place in a person’s own household. Redfield and Villa Rojas (1934) note that “the loh ceremony is apt to be not a private or familial matter, but a communal act, comparable in significance and in seriousness to the cha-chaac” (175). For Don Marcelo, it is a good thing for many people to witness a ceremony, especially as it is for the benefit of a community, such as the workforce of the
Mayaland hotel. In the case of the Mayaland *limpieza* ceremony, there were not more than seven or eight people present at any given time in the twenty-four hour period. Barbachano himself joined in the important ceremonial activity of walking to the four corners of the property, to say prayers and make offerings. The four corners of the Mayaland property, at least for the purposes of this particular ceremony, are as follows: the Cenote Xtoloc, the back of the ClubMed Villas Arqueológicas, the Mayaland turn-off on the main road between Pisté and Xcalacooch (toward Valladolid), and the back of the Hotel, across from the entrance to the small pueblo of San Felipe. These four corners are marked by crosses, candles, and other remnants of offerings, past and present.

The basic activities of a *loh* ceremony consist in the *h’meen* reciting prayers in Maya and making various food and drink offerings. Don Marcelo does not use any written texts; all of the prayers he uses are memorized. In a ceremonial context, prayers are uttered- or rather, muttered- at a rapid pace and low volume. They are not spoken clearly and directly to observers or participants. Don Marcelo is a Catholic, and feels that the work that he does works well, and indeed has worked for a long time, in harmony with Maya beliefs about the spirit-world. “*Los que son muy pegados a la lectura de la bibila rechaza el trabajo de los h’meenes, pero la mayoría de la gente tiene creencia*” (Those who stick to reading the Bible reject the work of the *h’meen*, but the majority of the people are believers), he says.

As we can see from the above examples in and around Chichén Itzá, *loh* ceremonies have an important practical dimension, and are accepted and encouraged by a variety of agents: local Maya, Yucatec (white) businessmen, and archaeologists. In the following pages, I would like to pose the hypothesis that archaeology (though not to fully
discount the role of Protestant groups) plays a definite role in the contemporary beliefs of Maya pueblo residents. As we noted above, *aluxe* and narrations of their activities maintain their presence in contemporary life. In Chunchucmil and Kochol, I had trouble eliciting "*alux* stories." The initial stages of my research in these towns chronologically followed my fieldwork in Pisté, where these accounts were repeatedly, even incessantly volunteered. In Chunchucmil, where I conducted interviews before Kochol, the mere word "*alux*" was enough to bring a conversation to an uncomfortable impasse.\(^{14}\) Where there wasn’t an impasse, there were some hesitant offerings, always couched in the grammar of "I have heard other people talk about the *aluxe*, but I never saw one myself." No one, it seems, had ever seen one him or herself, yet everyone had an uncle, cousin, or neighbor who might have encountered an *alux* walking down the road at dusk, in their *solar* at night, in the *monte* gathering firewood, or even going to school. But then the dialogue often opened up a bit, after I demonstrated my own avid curiosity. "Well, I haven’t seen one, but one day I was walking to my milpa and I heard the sound of rocks being thrown." Or, another common account places the protagonist in the evening in their hammock, and they hear a sound in the kitchen, of a wooden spoon stirring inside of a cup, such as the noise produced in the making of a chocolate drink.

Comparative study between Pisté/Chichén and Kochol/Chunchcumil offered me insight into a very interesting, and somewhat counter-logical insight. I make the following suggestion hypothetically: in a place with more development, residents actually become more comfortable with the markers of "Maya Culture" as they carry a certain currency when oriented to outsiders, while in a place where there is no "outside"

\(^{14}\) Whereas in Pisté, for example, the word "*alux*" did not even have to be mentioned to elicit *alux*
audience, such as that provided through tourism, residents have less of a connection to those same “telltale” signs of Maya Culture. The illogic of this has to do with the now-commonplace insight provided by social scientists among others regarding tradition versus modernity. In this case, we might take Robert Redfield as exemplary, especially with his paradigmatic folk-urban continuum. With higher degrees of development, more contact with the “outside” world, higher education levels, higher economic situations, etc- people should be farther away from folk beliefs in such things as aluxes. It follows that with a greater degree of isolation, less technology, less contact with the “outside,” lower degrees of education, and the like, folk beliefs would be stronger and more persistent. What I found in Chunchucmil and Kochol initially surprised me, but on second thought, should have been exactly what I expected. It should not be surprising that residents of the more rural areas are less likely to discuss issues such as belief in the presence of aluxes. This is for at least two reasons. First, there is a degree of guardedness that the residents of Kochol and Chunchucmil practice when speaking of such things, especially to an outsider (in this case, an American anthropologist who locally has the status similar to a schoolteacher). This guardedness may be related to a verguenza, or embarrassment, at the stuff of folklore- what would an educated person from the United States think about aluxes? A second reason is based in the absence of a discourse of promoting Maya Culture in this region of Yucatan. This absence may be attributed to 1) the hacienda history and form of social control it presented to several generations of Mayas in this region; 2) the dearth of appropriate or culturally sensitive social programs; 3) these communities are outside of the tourism circuits. Simply put, the
residents of Kochol and Chunchucmil, on the whole, do not recognize Maya Culture as a marketable patrimony.

"Ya pasó la época de los aluxes." The time of the aluxes has passed. So says seventy-eight year old Don Nico of Kochol. "They still exist, but the don't have the same power they did when I was a boy," he continued. We were sitting inside his daughter Doña Victoria’s small store, housed in one of the old hacienda buildings along the main street of town, passing the worst hours of a particularly hot May afternoon. What was the time of the aluxes like? How was it different from now? I wondered, and asked him. This was before electricity, he explained. The streets were illuminated with faroles de papel, paper lamps with candles rather than electric streetlights. The low light they cast upon the street created a shadowy atmosphere advantageous to wandering brujos, or witches. The brujos could move easily on the low-lit streets amidst uncorraled animals including pigs and cattle. The designation of a historical time period in which aluxes were more abundant is articulated, thus, to degrees of village size, population, and density. Spatial differentiations marking the boundaries between residential areas, milpas, and monte (forest or bush) are markers of different realms of alux activity. Aluxes like to be near humans, as it is from humans that they receive offerings such as food, alcohol, or cigarettes— all of which they like and with which they might be propitiated. Yet, in the bush, a human being has the responsibility of warning any aluxes that might be nearby and unaware that human beings are near. Warning signals the human might give include walking noisily or smoking a cigarette—two decidedly human
practices. Also, the presence of certain kinds of technology, such as electricity, affect the auspiciousness of an environment for *aluxes*.

Narrations of the appearances and activities of *aluxes*, as well as the characterization of what they do— in terms of good and evil—are mixed. The following commentary comes from an elderly resident of Kochol, who is a Presbyterian:

The aluxes live in abandoned houses— but also in houses that are occupied. They play with you, play tricks on you. The time will come in which you will see one...it is your luck. You have to use your mind to see them. But you cannot touch them— they are only made of air. The aluxes are both male and female, and appear to humans of the opposite sex. The aluxes are the *espiritu malo del niño* (bad child spirits) and they do bad things.

Even today, with a popularity of various Protestant groups, Catholicism serves as a “baseline” religious tradition. In Piste, Kochol, and Chunchucmil, Protestant groups, particularly the Presbyterian, have an enormously popular following. But there is always a sense that those who are members of the Presbyterian, Pentecostal or Assembly of God *templos* are “converts” although in some cases these groups have a thirty-year or longer local presence. According to one elderly resident of Kochol, “We are all born Catholics.” In Kochol, for example, there are five *templos* and a Catholic church. All are thriving, yet there is a greater popularity associated with the Protestant *templos*, which are attractive to people for a variety of reasons. Among these are the discouragement of drinking, the ritual informality of services, the lay leadership, and the presence of activities nearly every night of the week. Perhaps the most appealing aspect of the *templo* services is the combination of prayer with live music. While a rural *templo* might not have its own musical group, traveling groups regularly visit areas like Kochol and Chunchucmil for special occasions and “retreats.”
“On the eighteenth of this month there will be a ceremony in the cerros,”
announced Don Chumin. “Los que trabajan alla,” literally, those who work there, is a
typical way of referring to the archaeologists, “[they] want to see a ceremony, so they are
going to have it in our ejido.” It was all arranged, although the details unfolded little by
little- a yerbatero was coming from the nearby municipality of Halacho to perform an as
yet unidentified sort of ceremony.

“Where did you find this out?” he asked me, surprised and not a little suspicious.

Just now, Don Chumin told me.

How did he know?

He said that the comisario ejidal told everyone.

Well, we weren’t told anything. Have you met this guy, our comisario?

Sure, I did an interview with him about a month ago.

He doesn’t know how to get along with the people. He’s working with the
gringos behind our backs.

The Comisario Ejidal, Marcos (no one referred to him more formally as “Don”
Marcos), was elected in November 2001 by the narrowest of margins—just one vote. He
was young, and even those who must have voted for him, were by now, only six months
later, lamenting his inexperience. According to rumor, one of the assistant directors of
the archaeological project approached the comisario ejidal with the ceremony plan—not
a proposal to be discussed—but as an already done-deal. Participation was “open to all”
but anyone who wished to attend would have to put their name on a list, and later obtain a
“ticket.”

He then informed a group of ejidatarios who were present at an asamblea
being held to discuss the annual community fiesta plans. This meeting had particularly

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15 For some reason, which I was not able to discern, the word “ticket” was being used in English,
rather than the usual Spanish boleto.
low attendance, and the ceremony plans were not publicized as an agenda item. By announcing the ceremony plan and procedures at an asamblea convened for the purposes of planning the annual pueblo fiesta, many Protestants were left out of the loop, as they do not participate in any fiesta activities for religious reasons. Was this announcement planned as such? Or was it simply a matter of convenience for an elected leader who was having problems with his constituents? The archaeologists did make at least one self-serving tactical move— to avoid the public asamblea.16

"We are definitely not going," said another group of three ejidatarios, easily a generation younger than Nico, Chumin, and Sixto. One went on to explain that the archaeologists were planning a big "show," entrance to which would require a ticket. The final date of the ceremony ended up as June 15, a month after the originally scheduled date. The problem had been with finding an appropriate yerbatero, though there were many to choose from in the immediate area. I arrived by nine o’clock in the morning, but preparations had been going on for days, most intensely since the evening before. Most of the preparation involved the large amount of food to take part in the ritual and then distributed among those present. It was a long, particularly hot day marked by intermittent downpours doing little to provide relief from the scorching sun. There were already a dozen or so people at work, most of them involved in cooking ceremonial foods in huge pots over open fires. As the hours went by, archaeologists made several trips with their field vehicles to the town centers of Kochol, Chunchucmil, Coahuila and San Rafael to offer rides for those residents who wanted to participate in the ceremony. As it turns out, the "ticket" system was not in effect. In all, no more than approximately

16 Particularly as the previous asamblea was contentious, and filled with conflict between the
seventy-five people were present at the ceremony held in the Kochol ejido at the base of a large cerro, or mound. At the end of the day, none of the local residents not directly affiliated with the yerbatero, only a small percentage of Kocholeños among them, knew what the ceremony was about or why it was performed.

Conclusion: *Monumental Ambivalence*

Many residents of Kochol and Chunchucmil were left somewhat uncomfortable with the archaeologists’ ceremony, embarrassed at how much money was spent, and some were even angry at the unfair distribution of the ceremonial food at its conclusion. The example of the loh ceremony at Chunchucmil demonstrates how the archaeological zone is a multiply inflected social space, the meanings of which exceed the significations of both the “the land” and “the ruins” as well as the practices of agricultural work or archaeology. The “land” is not a clean slate, nor is it natural or neutral. The land itself has a spatial genealogy, a history and coexistence of different inscriptions, codes, and territories. This is what makes it particularly meaningful as patrimony or inheritance.

On the one hand, “monumental ambivalence” refers to an enormous or overwhelming ambivalence on the part of the residents of the archaeological zone’s neighboring communities toward what they could theoretically claim as their cultural heritage. On the other hand, the phrase “monumental ambivalence” could refer, more deeply and complexly, to their undecidedness or indecisiveness (or an uneasiness) about the mounds actually being monuments. In the first instance, the efficacy of such a claim that the ruins are the cultural heritage of the local communities would remain to be seen. I am inclined to think that it is a moot point, especially if anyone attempts to express the archaeological interests, and those of the Kochol ejidatarios.
idea, indeed the belief, that the mounds were actually built by of another race of people not related to them- if this is expressed, they will be judged as mistaken, uneducated, maybe stupid, and certainly not savvy in the heritage discourse that circulates on regional, national, and international levels amongst academics, heritage professionals, as well as bureaucrats. The second possibility (monumental ambivalence as the lack of conviction that the mounds are actually “monuments”) takes us a bit further into questioning the constitution of heritage or patrimony.

Regardless of the common-sense saliency of the local understanding of the mounds as “natural,” archaeological development has unleashed a host of new coding regimes onto the landscape. These include the following factors:

- **Economic:** as residents become wage laborers in subsistence agricultural land.
- **Social:** as residents realign themselves into new groups, identifying along pro- or anti-archaeology lines.
- **Cultural:** as contemporary Maya people are interpolated into relationship of continuity with those of the ancient civilization.
- All of these are inherently **political**, particularly as the state is ceding their constitutional mandate to regulate archaeological zones to NGO and private enterprise, who are, in effect, carrying out para-statist development programs.

As archaeological development continues at the site of Chunchucmil, the Maya residents of its surrounding communities are increasingly faced with the question of what is their heritage, and how they will negotiate the new semiotics of the landscape. What promises does archaeology make? In terms of patrimony, does cultural heritage enjoy a privileged position over inherited ejido land? Does national patrimony efface local patrimony, the
public good over the rights of particular citizens? Looking more toward the bigger picture, and on a global scale, does World Heritage make global citizens?

The moment of deterritorialization is always present in a territorializing practice, the potential for making meanings and enacting practices, of identifying oneself and community, however contingent or ad-hoc these processes might be. Deterritorialization does not mean emancipation, nor does it imply or guarantee a “political success.” It is a useful way to analyze practices and discourses of contestation within a specific spatio-juridical complex, such as the neoterritory of an archaeological zone. In other words, the counter-occupation of the Kochol ejido *cum* archaeological zone by the papaya growers—both a process of territorialization and deterritorialization. As Deleuze and Guattari write, what territorializes with one hand deterritorializes and reterritorializes with the other. What I have attempted to demonstrate here is that deterritorialization is not an endpoint or goal, it is an always present potential, it is a step in an ongoing process.

Archaeological development at Chunucmil in the past few years has raised issues for both archaeologists and local residents around this idea of the land and its meanings, not unlike the cases of hundreds or perhaps thousands of sites around the world. After all, living does not stop at a heritage site’s borders. But nor does it begin there. In the next chapter, we will specifically consider how the connection between archaeological sites and living Maya communities is established through the discourse of development.

In closing, I return to the opening scene of this chapter, the INAH-sponsored slide show one evening in Kochol with the following anecdote. At the slide show’s conclusion, a thirteen girl, lifelong resident of Kochol, pulled me to a quiet corner and
asked, “Is it really true that thousands of people come from all over the world to walk around those ruins?” She was fascinated by the images of throngs of people we had just seen touring Chichén Itzá. Though practically living amidst ancient vestiges, she did not think of herself as a person who had ever visited Maya ruins. She keenly perceived, however, the differences in register carried by the term “ruins” knowing that crowds of visitors in the unrestored mounds of Kochol, would indeed be a sight to see.
Conclusion

Archaeology, Development, and "Descendant Communities"

Imagine that an employer arrives in a little-known region where his interest is aroused by an expanse of ruins, with remains of walls, fragments of columns, and tablets with half-effaced and unreadable inscriptions. He may content himself with inspecting what lies exposed to view, with questioning the inhabitants—perhaps semi-barbaric people—who live in the vicinity, about what tradition tells them of the history and meaning of these archaeological remains, and with noting down what they tell him—and then he may proceed on his journey. But he may act differently. He may have brought picks, shovels, and spades with him, and he may set the inhabitants to work with these implements. Together with them he may start upon the ruins, clear away the rubbish, and, beginning from the visible remains, uncover what is buried. *If his work is crowned with success, the discoveries are self-explanatory:* the ruined walls are part of the ramparts of a palace or a treasure-house; the fragments of columns can be filled out into a temple; the numerous inscriptions, which, by good luck, be bilingual, reveal an alphabet and a language, and, when they have been deciphered and translated, yield undreamed-of information about the events of the remote past, to commemorate which the monuments were built. *Saxa loquuntur!*

Sigmund Freud, *The Aetiology of Hysteria* (1896)

Early on in his career, Freud gave a paper introducing his theory of the aetiology of hysteria, in which he employed this rather vivid analogy with archaeology. On discovering a ruin, he said, we can content ourselves with inspecting what lies about on the surface and then proceed on our journey, *or* we can prepare by bringing along picks, shovels and spades and clear away the visible remains to discover what is buried. Only then can the fragments of columns be filled out into a whole structure. Freud crowned his argument that buried traumas are the key to understanding and treating neuroses with an archaeologically inspired exclamation, appropriately delivered in Latin. *Saxa loquuntur!*

The stones speak.

Derrida critiques the passage, most appropriately so, as "properly hallucinatory" (59), with its assumption of the transparency of Enlightenment conceptions of the social
sciences, or better, the field sciences. Elmer, following Derrida, clarifies the
“hallucination” along both epistemological and historical grounds:

...[the hallucination is] epistemological because it concerns an "ecstatic instant"
in which "the origin . . . speaks by itself;" apparently unaffected by the labor of
the traveler and his workers (58); it is historical because the effacement is not
merely of the accumulated "rubbish" around the site, but of the very situatedness
of the site in the "vicinity" of these "semi-barbaric people" whose "tradition"
respecting the ruins cannot count as explanation, but who are subtly or violently
incorporated into this laborious return to the origin by being "set to work with
these implements." By being drawn into this technical project, by being armed
with these "implements," the luckless locals would seem to efface themselves
along with their history. The dream of a perfect technical re-appropriation of the
past, neither mediated nor obscured by the rubbishy "inhabitants," reveals itself
also in the transformation during the course of the passage of the "inscriptions"
themselves, which are "unreadable" at first, but later are described as,
astonishingly, accompanied by their own translation (Elmer 1998: 6).

The stones seemingly speak on their own accord, as they are anthropomorphized through
the diligence—and luck—of the archaeologist/ psychoanalyst. Yet there is another factor
in this fantastic hermeneutic: the local informants and their testimony. He proceeds by
"questioning the inhabitants" and notes down what they tell him. Not satisfied simply
with that, he may "set the inhabitants to work" and "together with them" he may start
upon excavating the ruins. Freud's method is a kind of anastylosis, to borrow a term
from the lexicon of historic building preservation and restoration. Anastylosis is a type
of restoration which aims to make the spatial character of a ruined structure visually more
comprehensible by reinstating its lost original form, using the original material that is
both in suitable condition and is located at the site. The process works with a spatio-
structural puzzle: a puzzle in which one might have all of the pieces, but not the finished
picture, either actual or imagined. The appeal of this method for many conservators is its
negation of "a priori" reconstruction work. Also, that it avoids the problem—both
philosophical and practical—of the anachronistic presence of modern materials within ancient monuments.

Through an ethnographic case study of a developing archaeological zone in Yucatán, Mexico, this study critically addresses another kind of anastylosis applied to a different spatio-structural puzzle of sorts: the re-membering (from supposedly dismembered pieces) of the local histories and the contours of contemporary communities and social life for the residents of “archaeologized landscapes” who find themselves interpolated into the “heritage assemblage.” What are the contending practices that characterize a heritage site in different registers of legal, political, and lived space? What are the prospects for dialogue between archaeologists and their science with the people who live in and around the sites when there exist incongruous interpretations of both history and the landscape itself? This ethnographic anastylosis moves us beyond the question of “Who owns the past?” into a more compelling questioning of the contours and narrations of the multiple pasts that constitute the landscape. Rather than seeking to reveal the perfect or miraculous whole that somehow exists among the stones crumbled in ruins, the ethnographic anastylosis intervenes through the very same in-situ material (the material at-hand) in order to interrogate the simultaneous processes that are continuously constructing and reconstructing, territorializing, deterritorializing, and reterritorializing not only these polysemic, speaking ruins, but the totality of the discourses and practices emergent in the production of space of the archaeological zone.

*(Re)territorializations: Rethinking the Comparative Study*

Throughout this study, one site of ethnographic research, Písté/Chichén Itzá, serves as a theoretical and historical foil for another, Kochol/Chunchucmil. In the 1930s,
Redfield created Chan Kom as the “village that chose progress.” One cannot ignore that a key motivator of Chan Kom’s decision to “progress” arose through the intimate contacts between the people of Chan Kom and the Carnegie Institute’s researchers present just a few kilometers away at Chichén Itzá. Castañeda (1996) chooses Pisté to demonstrate the village that, by default, didn’t choose progress. Pisté, unlike Chan Kom, argues Castañeda, “has not entered into anthropological memory and its imagination of culture” (39). “Indeed,” he continues, “it has been erased from the ethnographic mappae mundi through which anthropology plots its contesting classifications of sociocultural forms to their proper space-time localities via the operations of theory building” (ibid.). Castañeda continues, “The spatialization of zero-degree culture (in Pisté and elsewhere) is the underbelly and girding of an apparatus of knowledge through which culture is territorialized in Yucatán, that is, through which the topography of Yucatán is inscribed, practiced, and imagined as a system of cultural sites (and citations)” (44-45).

While I agree that the territorialization of Yucatán is indeed accomplished through the apparatus of knowledge, I would emphatically add that there are other apparatus underlying the territorializing practices as well. This emanate from, following Ferguson (1990), the anti-politics machine. Though the anti-politics machine is indeed articulated to the apparatus of knowledge (in Foucault’s sense of power/knowledge regimes), an analysis of the territorializing practices of the anti-politics machine pays specific attention to the spaces of the production and dissention of knowledge/power, in the case, within archaeological zones.

In the eyes of many, Pisté cannot be saved- it is completely sold-out to the tourism industry, “a tacky tourist town” in the words of one well-known Maya
archaeologist. Some of the same network of scholars who find Pisté actually odious are trying to save Kochol. Socioeconomic indicators emphasize the need for development in former hacienda communities, like Kochol and Chunchucmil. These communities, should, start, albeit somewhat belatedly, begin to choose progress. "Progress" here refers to modernization, industrialization, community organization, and specific forms of infrastructural development. As I will elaborate, progress for the communities around the archaeological zone of Chunchucmil specifically refers to the adoption of an positive, embracing attitude on the part of local residents toward both archaeology and tourism development.

Maya communities across Yucatán are characterized and thus compared not only according to the anthropological sciences (ethnography and archaeology), popular media, and public opinion, but by Mexican government agencies as well. According to Mexican government Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL), in the Maya communities of the henequen zone:

- 15 percent of the population over 15 years of age is illiterate
- 50 percent of the population over 15 years of age has not completed a primary school education. The average level of education is fifth grade, being less in more rural areas.
- 30 percent inhabit dwellings without sewage systems or some type of toilet and defecate outdoors.
- 10 percent of the dwellings do not have electricity.
- 30 percent do not have running water.
- 60 percent of the dwellings are overcrowded
- 20 percent of these have earth floors and are unhealthy. People continue to die from illnesses common to the poor, such as diarrhea and colds.
- 58 percent maintain the other 42 percent of the population.
• 75 percent of the households earned two minimum salaries in 1995.

• 57 percent, in 1995, were still under two minimum salaries, and of these, 20 percent earned less than one, finding some other occasional work to insure that the family did not die of hunger. This 20 percent is the Maya population that suffers with greater harshness, the combatants of the hopelessness of poverty. (SEDESOL 2000)

Though I do not have the omniscient detailed knowledge like ethnographers of the past seem to, I did spend time living in the communities my own study addresses (Pisté, Chunchucmil, and Kochol), and have had a chance to observe some of these areas addressed by the above SEDESOL study. In these communities, no one is dying of hunger, although it is probable that standard nutritional levels are not met. Locally produced products make up the majority of the daily diet: corn, chiles, squash, a variety of fruits, eggs, chicken, and pork. Vendors often come through town, with small furniture, mattresses, or new and used clothing, but most other items are bought in Mérida or Maxcanú. For some residents of Kochol and Chunchucmil, a trip to Mérida is a mundane, everyday experience, while for others it is an extreme rarity. While there are teenagers who spend most of their week in Mérida, there are women anywhere from their late twenties to old age who barely know the city, and express a certain fear in traveling there. There are also school-age children who have never made the hour and a half trip to Yucatán’s capital. While one 34 year old man from Chunchucmil travels every afternoon to work the overnight shift at a pork factory on the outskirts of Mérida, an eighteen year old from Kochol left his family and girlfriend, moved in with a distant relative in Mérida to work as a busboy at Vip’s, a popular, fairly upscale restaurant/coffee shop, and hasn’t returned to Kochol for months.
In terms of education, it is rare for a young child not to go to school. In Chunchucmil, the primary school director will actually go and find truant children and speak with their parents or caregivers. However, many young children are predominantly Maya-speakers and school is taught in Spanish.¹ Both communities have “Telesecundarias,” which are secondary school classes are taught through satellite-TV instruction. There are both secundarias and preparatorias in nearby Maxcanú, particularly aimed toward agricultural/technical training, but the expense of uniforms, food, and transportation make these schools cost-prohibitive for most families. One also has to consider that a sixteen-year-old who might have the desire and qualifications to enter a prepa in Maxcanú serves their family better by going to work— as, for instance, a domestic worker or construction laborer in Mérida, or at the clothing maquiladora in Maxcanú.

In terms of housing and amenities, it should not be assumed that lack of running water or indoor bathrooms are characteristics of poverty or necessarily unhealthy. Most homes in both Chunchucmil and Kochol are clean and well-ventilated. Most of the homes have benefited from government programs to pour concrete over earthen floors. It is true that toilets are a rarity, but most residents have well-balanced mini eco-systems in their solares, or yards, and manage to contain and/or recycle sewage and other waste-matter. Most households keep a variety of animals, ranging from pet dogs, cats, and birds, to ponies and horses, and several types of chickens (those kept for egg production as well as those destined for slaughter). A government program was recently introduced

¹ The Public Education Ministry practices a policy of not having teachers work in their own communities. Thus, in many cases in Maya speaking areas of Yucatán, the teachers do not speak any Maya.
in Chunchucmil, whereby a male and a female member of a household could jointly receive 100 chicks to raise for market sale.

While the SEDESOL statistics are probably, for the most part accurate, they carry the particular tone taken by state-sponsored programs toward poor and/or indigenous communities. In Chunchucmil and Kochol, residents take great offense to certain of these characterizations, particularly that of illiteracy. According to the comisario municipal of Kochol, Don Tomas Balam, the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI) is one of these organizations that treats communities with paternalism and homogenization. "To them, we are all illiterates. They use the term "indigenous" to describe us. Indigenous means illiterate. How can I say this? We don't have anymore INI programs here."

Chunchucmil/Kochol Tourism Development Plans

I have been struck by the degree of fascination and interest when I have organized tours of the site for our workers. Their eyes wide at the images, and bubbling with questions, comments and parallels with their own lives, houses and artifacts, they are excited by ideas about interpretations of the site. Far from being alienated from their past by this engagement within a global system of universal scientific knowledge, their sense of local identity and community seems enlivened and strengthened (Hodder 1998: 131).

Sustained archaeological investigation has been taking place in the site of Chunchucmil since 1993. Although the make-up of the Project changes each season, key leaders including one director (PhD) and one assistant director (student) have consistently been with the project for several seasons. In a simple tourist brochure prepared by the project, the archaeologists give the following introduction to the site:

The archaeological site of Chunchucmil was a Classic Maya city of perhaps 2-30,000 people at its height. Many mounds can be seen on either side of the paved road that heads east from the village of Chunchucmil, and we believe that the site
may have extended for an area of 16 square kilometers from its center just north of the paved road. People were living at the site from the late Preclassic Period, or approximately 200 B.C.E. until the Late Postclassic period, or 1250 C.E.

The Project postulates that Chunchucmil was an important regional trading centers. Because it is located very near the Gulf coast (present-day Celestun), the inhabitants of the site had access to (and control of) the coastal salt deposits, which represent the second largest saltworks in Mesoamerica. The Pakbeh tourist brochure clearly states: “The modern Maya of Chunchucmil and Kochol have lived in and around the ruins for generations, have protected them from looting, and have a keen interest in developing the local tourism industry.” Also, the Brochure encourages visitors to “ask locals about the mounds and what they mean.”

As a social science researcher caught somewhere between the archaeological project with its representatives and the residents of Kochol and Chunchucmil, I was afforded (thanks, frankly, to the generosity of both sides) a unique analytical perspective on both the relations between the project and the communities and the interpretation of the character and motive of each side on the part of the other. Perhaps most significantly, ethnography, while it certainly does require the active participation of community members as willing informants, does not require the highly orchestrated and circumscribed participation of many local residents in the public activity of archaeological excavation. Ethnography, while not a secretive or illegitimate enterprise, is not—at least in Yucatán—carried out through often extremely formal agreements between the researcher(s) and state officials, town authorities and large portions of the local communities. And, perhaps most significantly, nor does ethnography require the contracting of local labor in order to carry out the goals of investigation. Due to these
extremely important shades of difference between the in-situ research goals, methods, and field practices, among others, I was able to work with a degree of flexibility that, as I stated above, allowed me to move between the project and local communities. It is through my own particular insight into how each group viewed the other, to which I add another layer of my own perspective, that I characterize the particular "anti-politics machine" of heritage, archaeology, and community development that I present here.

During the 2001 Field season, the project began to put tourism development plans into action. The wrote letters on behalf of (literally, "from") the residents on either side of the archaeological zone addressed to the Centro INAH Regional in Mérida, and carbon-copied to Roberto Hernandez, the Governor of Yucatán, and themselves. The Chunchucmil letter began, "We would like to request on behalf of the people of our village that INAH establish a community museum in the pueblo of Chunchucmil." The second letter is a little different, requesting that "INAH establish an outdoor museum in the ruins of Chunchucmil which are situated in Kochol ejido lands." Both letters state that the archaeologists will aid in the training of staff for these attractions. In the case of the Chunchucmil museum, the letter states that the archaeologists are willing to provide the artifacts which result from their excavations and that funds for all will be generously provided by Roberto Hernandez. Both letters close with a sociological comment on these pueblos. The letters state equally, "We feel that with tourism rapidly developing in western Yucatán, this visitor attraction could provide an important source of skilled employment and entrepreneurship, particularly for our young people who are increasingly leaving the village for unskilled employment in Mérida and Cancun."
A meeting was held on May 13, 2001 for a discussion of the preparation of a proposal for the Kochol Living Museum, or the *Museo de la Casa Antigua*. I was in attendance (for observation, not participation), along with the two project directors and three other assistant directors/staff at the Project’s headquarters, the Casa Principal of Chunchucmil. The meeting was convened after the circulation of a preliminary outline proposal drafted by one of the project directors, and commented upon by others (myself excluded). The museum project was at this stage conceived of via the format of a “business plan,” meaning that it concerned the economics and logistics of the museum development, and only secondarily, through discussion, were ideological issues raised. The first section- Necessary Capital Improvements- contains eight points: parking, toilets, refreshment area, fencing, admission booth, signage, reforestation, and rest areas. To be frank, the archaeological site is not exactly a lush, tropical paradise. It is a harsh landscape. The sun is quite intense for most hours of the day, there are few trees (none in certain excavation areas), and, since it is agricultural land (either milpas or fallow), there is no old or “high” plant growth, *monte alto*. Any sort of project involving people coming to the site requires at least some of these infrastructural improvements. The interesting thing is, if the site had all of this, it would be better-equipped than most of the archaeological zones in Yucatán, even those with a strong INAH presence. At the heavily excavated and restored site of Mayapan, for instance, there are no refreshments available, nor at the Puuc site of Xlapak, or the northern coastal site of Xcambo. Most sites have bathroom facilities, but often these are subject to lack of maintenance and cleaning, not to mention presence of running water at the site. Kabah, for example, an

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2 These were working titles, rather awkward in both Spanish and English.
important and lovely site along the Ruta Puuc, does not have running water. At Xcambo, INAHI-contracted but non-unionized caretakers draw water from a well within the archaeological site. None of these should indicate, however, a lack of necessities for the visitor. Presumably visitors arrive via some type of transportation, and that same transportation (car, regular bus, tourism bus) can usually get them to a nearby pueblo or other service-center without too much delay. Also, it is important to keep in mind that the custodios at any given zone spend a lot more time on-site than any visitor, or even archaeologist. Therefore, the lack of certain facilities at a zone, particularly the lack of clean running water, is a problem for consideration above and beyond the needs of a tourist.

In terms of “Other investments” the plan calls for the participation of a “Development Anthropologist” and the establishment on the part of the Project of a formal means of coordination between Chunchucmil and Kochol. Project members and directors consistently stressed the importance of knowing what the communities in closest vicinity to the archaeological project both need and want in the context of what the archaeological project could materially offer, what sorts of programs it could support, or in what ways it might contribute to other community-based projects. Thus, it was considered that an anthropologist, working specifically in an applied anthropological framework, would be able to capture the communities’ wants, as well as diagnose their needs.

The final category of the Museum plan takes on the topic of “Kochol Village Organization,” and carries under it such points of consideration such as business skills, language skills, artisan skills; improve ejido organization; enhance awareness of negative
impacts of tourism; educate villagers about maintaining a picturesque nature of the village. One archaeologist argued this last point, initially commenting, “What is picturesque about Kochol to maintain?” the archaeologist queried, to a group that answered with some amount of laughter. The question was followed by a key point that keeps well in-line with the circumscribed nature of the proposed museum project, stating that the goal was not to try to attract people to the village itself. After all, she continued, certainly the intent of the project should not be an intrusion on the living space of the community residents.

Just as I commented above on the harsh ecology of the Kochol ejido coterminous archaeological site center, I have to say, with the shame of all of the Western visual biases that I surely embody—Kochol is not a typically pretty place. But in March of 2002, nearly a year after these plans were being laid out, Kochol got a “makeover.” In an impressive display of community cooperation, Kochol rid itself of the biggest stain on its outward appearance and on its subsequent negative reputation: the pigs loose in the streets. Kochol’s pigs are not the small pink- and somehow smiling- animals of cartoons. They are, instead, enormous dark brown, black, or reddish beasts which forage anywhere and on anything they can to fulfill their hunger. In the rainy season, which is almost half the year, the low-lying land of Kochol, even along the main street, inundates with water, creating perfect mud-holes for the pigs to relax and cool off. A complicated system of sidewalks, constructed through the benevolence of a government project, allows residents to avoid the floods and mud—and pigs—but only on the main street.

In my research, I could find no indication of a correlation between any of the activities of the archaeological project and the “cleaning up” of Kochol. However, I
remain intrigued as to the relative temporal coincidence of public talk in Kochol about
development and the cleaning-up of the town. The community-improvement project was
supported by local sources: the town doctor, who spread information about pigs as a
source of disease, and the town mayor, a genial second-term *comisario municipal*, who
implemented the new regulations concerning wandering pigs with a smile and an iron
fist: any pig found loose will be confiscated by authorities. Given to skepticism, I
wondering how long the pig rule would last, after all, loose pigs made Kochol! I even
referred to Kochol sometimes in my writing under the pseudonym “Ke’ken Cah”- pig
town. But my doubts vanished one May afternoon when a small brown pig wandered
onto the soccer field in front of the ruins of the Casa Principal. My companions, three
older men, leapt to their feet, denouncing the small *cuchino*, just out for a snack.
“Someone call the authorities!” With a few shouts and some whistles (he was literally
“called”), the *comisario* was summoned to take care of the situation. When a bad
reputation falls from one, there is always another pueblo waiting to carry the burden:
now nearby Santo Domingo’s streets are noticeably filled with uncorraled pigs.
Kocholeños just shake their heads as they pass by.

The proposal and discussion of touristic/archaeological development plans
occasioned the articulation of certain characterization of the communities and their
residents, as well as After spending much time in Kochol as well as with the
archaeological project, I suspect that there is something about the landscape of Kochol
itself that supports the image that some of the archaeologists strongly maintain as to the
“organization” or perceived lack thereof in this former henequen hacienda. It is
worthwhile to consider this question of “organization” historically. As we saw in the oral
histories of twentieth century life in the henequen years, residents of Kochol, as well as those of Chunchucmil, were hyper-organized through the disciplinary exercise of power under the social and agricultural system of monoculture henequen production. This happened in two subsequent phases. Initially, as I demonstrated previously, this occurred through the traditional hacienda system, in which Mayas and others were slaves to the rich and powerful white landowners. The second phase is significant in terms of tacit changes in the social and economic organizations of life still-dominated by henequen monoculture—when ejidos were established and the State assumed patronage of henequen cultivation. The constant throughout this century of transformation is the top-down orchestration of hacienda (then village) life which appears from the outside to be well-organized society. There were rules of personal behavior, control over individuals' very corporality, body movements, the physical aspects of social interaction, down to what food people ate. Disciplinary techniques, as I described in Chapter Five, were instilled upon the Maya laborers in order to increase the efficiency of labor production, which reflects a need on the part of hacienda owners and managers for “organization.”

This organization is manifest through spatiality. Foucault (1977) in *Discipline and Punish* demonstrates how the distribution of individuals in space is a particular technology of power. Mitchell (1988) identifies a spatially enacted method of order and discipline (with a particularly colonial flavor) he calls enframing. “Enframing is a method of dividing up and containing, as in the construction of barracks or the rebuilding of villages, which operates by conjuring up a neutral surface or volume called ‘space’” (45). This method, inspired by Foucault (1977: 141-149), breaks down social life into discrete and ordered functions, each hinged to a specific location, creating frames or containers in
and through which lives and practices are divided and organized, and thus controlled. Though Mitchell sets his concept within a colonial schema, it can illuminate as well state practices of effecting control and containment over the countryside, particularly in practices of legislating relationships between indigenous people and land tenure. While several decades distance the ejido distributions from the legal creation of the archaeological zone at Chunchucmil, both represent similar territorializations. However, particularly put forward by the foreign archaeologists working in the zone is a disjuncture, not connection, between these territorializations. The history is either not known, or little understood. Or, is it that ancient history is much easier to reconcile there amidst the ruins? Meanwhile, Kochol farmers work for wages in the excavations carried out on their own land, thinking and moving between these multiple, overlapping territories within a space, that for others, is a site of ancient Maya cultural heritage, protected from continuance of the agricultural practices of the contemporary Maya residents by a regime of federal cultural property laws.

While in certain sense organization can serve to benefit a social group, particularly in terms of the creation of political strategies, the other side of the phenomena of “organization” is control. This control comes through a strategy of containment. Archaeologists/developers of the Chunchucmil project often articulated the “problem” of Kochol as a problem of community organization. One frustration aired by a variety of personalities involved in the archaeology and development plan was the absence of a unified voice emanating from Kochol. Clearly, if those 2,000 plus residents don’t have one opinion, they are unorganized. The other side of strategic essentialism-
development project needs a prototypical indigenous persona through which to implement ideologies.

For one development-oriented sociologist who worked briefly with the Project in 2001, Kochol did not have an effective system of organization because they were not using pre-Hispanic organizational principles, such as councils of elders and such. I once attempted to engage him on thinking about the ejido as a customary and effective form of community organization. He refused to recognize the ejido as such, dismissing it for its non-indigenous-identity-politics orientation.

Clearly, the town of Kochol can work together to make a radical change in the community. Which returns this discussion to another of the points of discussion in the Living Museum proposal, which I already mentioned above: the archaeologists’ tacit assumption that the community’s organization is somehow lacking, and that the Project should have some hand in finding a corrective to this problem. The museum proposal is not the only place one might find fragments of the discourse on the “problem” of Kochol. They are as prevalent as pottery sherds around the mounds. After the events of the first half of the 2002 field season, surely the Project wouldn’t have survived a stronger ejido organization. There already exists so much doubt and mistrust towards the archaeologists on the part of the ejidatarios, that a strengthened group, with even more solidarity, would have permanently evicted the Project from their lands. Not knowing the contours of the ejido organization of Kochol, certain archaeologists of the Project said it needed improvement, not considering that this perspective might easily be negated by a closer awareness of the ejido, its history, and its role in the community.
Docile Descendants and Illegitimate Heirs

Maya Indian farmer Diego Uc returned from his field one day in December 2000 to find Mexican federal police waiting at his one-room adobe house in the Yucatán tropics. With barely a word, they put him in a van and drove him three hours to federal prison in the state capital of Campeche. "You have business in Campeche," they told me, and they took me to jail," Uc, 58, said recently at his home. He stayed in prison for nine months, his health failing and his family living on handouts from relatives. Uc's crime: moving plain, melon-sized stones on land he owned since 1982. Authorities said the stones formed part of a protected archaeological site, which Uc damaged....The case pit two sets of national authorities against each other: those who protect archaeological sites left by Mexico's ancient people and those who promote the rights and culture of living Indians descended from those civilizations. Uc's stones may well have been put there by his ancestors (Orlandi 2002: 1).

Is Diego Uc a docile descendant or illegitimate heir to Maya cultural heritage?

The alleged crime of Diego Uc places him squarely within a changing conception of Maya people and their relationship to the material vestiges of ancient Maya culture: is he a docile descendant or an illegitimate heir? To argue that Uc's removal of stones is not a serious offense against the state, one would have to argue for the former. A de facto argument supporting patrimonial rights to the stones would have to be based in the clear social fact of him actually being a descendent of the ancient Maya. Not just any ancient Maya, by the very individuals that placed the stones in an arrangement which has, through the territorializing practices of archaeology and the state, been brought into the nation's patrimonial regime. Or might he, as a landowner, argue for the legitimacy of his actions according to a different patrimonial regime based in usufruct property rights?

Is Uc's "crime" worse than that of the INAH custodios at Chichén Itzá who use a different sort of descent-based patrimonial claim to assert their right to economically benefit from the sale of refreshments and souvenirs inside the federal territory of the archaeological zone? Does Uc's crime stem from his, albeit innocent perhaps, inconformity of the juridical regime which insists that these stones and landscapes in
general be protected and not utilized? Is Uc so different from the ejidatarios of Kochol who wish to reclaim their own ejido land in the center of the Chunchucmil archaeological zone through the planting of corn or papaya?

Michel de Certeau writes, “From birth to mourning after death, law ‘takes hold of’ bodies in order to make them its text. . .a living tableau of rules and customs. . .actors in the drama organized by a social order” (1984: 139). He emphasizes, "There is no law that is not inscribed on bodies. Every law has a hold on the body". The laws of cultural heritage condemn Uc’s removal of the stones, yet other “laws” seek to free him, the laws of rights of cultural inheritance. These “laws” like those de Certeau speaks of, have two registers. The first register contains the policies and procedures, mandates, and punitive repercussions in the management of cultural heritage materials. The second register is not so easily identifiable in documents such as the Constitution, the INAH’s Ley Orgánica, or the Ley General sobre Monumentos. For Maya people who live in and around ruins in Yucatán, they can be both docile descendants and illegitimate heirs in both registers. Obeying the law, in the first register, would make Diego Uc an appropriately docile descendant. Historically, residents of Chunchucmil and Kochol have been thrust into the role of docile descendents as for generations they were slave-like laborers to the hacienda system. Accepting without question the archaeological interpretations of the Chunchucmil site on the part of local residents, along with willing participation in tourism development plans, would construct these Yucatec Maya as docile descendants. Moving back to the case of Chichén Itzá, the custodios of the archaeological zone, attached as they are to the everyday life of the zone, caring and
protecting it for generations amidst the throngs of international tourists—clearly they, too, are docile descendants.

At the same time, all of these social actors play out the dialectic: they are also illegitimate heirs. Kochol's ejidatarios have illegitimately inherited the newly established archaeological zone. Legally, the land remains theirs, as per Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, but the mounds-turned-monuments complicate the juridical field of this space: archaeology seeks to supercede agriculture, reterritorializing what had only been relatively recently deterritorialized from the henequen hacienda system. Indeed, the local social, economic, and political arrangements at Chichén Itzá, allow for the entrepreneurial practices of the INAH custodios, over and against legal dictamen. So they are, in this sense, illegitimate heirs. For the thousands of other Maya residents around Chichén Itzá, certainly the INAH custodios are flagrantly illegitimate heirs. How does this select group have the right to inherit the nation's patrimony? But for many, this logic needs only the slightest of twists to justify their own interests and practices, "The site is patrimony of all of the nation/world/humanity, and I am Mexican/Global Citizen/human being."

The construction of both docile descendants and illegitimate heirs works within the heritage assemblage, which we might also understand as an anti-politics machine, composed of national law and policy, institutional practices, sui generis international heritage regimes, global economies, and multiple publics. It follows that the legitimacies and currencies of inheritance and decent work at the nexus of patrimony and privatization. Recall that privatization of archaeological ruins in Mexico reached a point of national debate in April 1999, when a proposal to amend the Constitutional mandate
that all archaeological monuments are national property was presented in front of the Mexican senate. The amendment proposed opening up these resources of cultural patrimony to private concession (of which foreign archaeological projects constitute one kind). The 1999 privatization "scare" mobilized many, especially those in the National Institute of Anthropology and History (the federal agency which has jurisdiction over archaeological zones) into vociferous opposition, against the selling-out of the nation's patrimony to private investors and big-business enterprises.

While the "privatization" proposal, to date, has not passed into constitutional amendment, it provided an occasion and a strong motivation to critically analyze the relationships already existing between private sector interests and heritage sites in Yucatán. The emergence of "privatization" at the intersection of global economics and Mexican nationalism not only raises the ilk of institutional constituency of the heritage assemblage, but continues to threaten the local practices (in this case, indigenous Maya) of asserting patrimonial claims to cultural heritage (here I focus specifically on archaeological heritage sites). In both cases, local Maya have been historically constructed, by archaeology, the state, as well as the private sector, as both docile descendants and illegitimate heirs. Indigenous residents of archaeological (or archaeologized) landscapes have historically been constructed as docile descendants playing a political and cultural role in the appropriate role in the Nation's articulation of vestiges of ancient civilization or culture (ruins) to Mexican Modernity. Under emergent conditions of neoliberalism, these docile descendants are joined by private sector entrepreneurs in becoming "illegitimate heirs" in their attempts to reterritorialize the nation's patrimony. The estate of the patria is shrinking while claims upon it by
indigenous groups, national and international governmental and nongovernmental organizations, and an array of private sector interests are geometrically multiplying.

As this entire study has been concerned with the idea of archaeological zones as "territory" and the practices through which this zones are constituted, managed, used, and represented as de- and re-territorializations. Given that these processes are intimately connected to an analytical perspective on the spatiality of these zones, perhaps a spatialized methodology would be appropriately employed in order to apprehend their complexities. If one were to attempt to ethnographically "map" the modern social, political, and economic histories of archaeological zones in Yucatán alongside national and international cultural property law, regulatory institutions, as well as the intensification of neoliberal policies through privatization, how would this project differ in both kind and scope, from the map of cultural resources I critiqued in the opening of Chapter 1? The multiple territories of heritage require a map which is "open, connectable in all its dimensions, and capable of being dismantled; it is reversible, and susceptible to constant modification" (Deleuze and Guattari 1991: 21). In order to better grasp a politics of heritage beyond concerns for site management and tourism, it is necessary to "map," in the sense given here, heritage to the overlapping territories of multiple discursive regimes: legal, economic, spatial, and so on. The gaping hole in the social scientific study of the local-level instantiations of the intensification and ever-widening reach of neoliberal economic programs, especially those manifest through privatization, in the cultural sphere opens a door for new, critical analyses to which I hope this study contributes.
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Los Pinos


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Comisión Agraria Mixta, Registro Agrario Nacional. Mérida, Yucatán.

**RP**
Registro Público de Propiedad. Mérida, Yucatán.

**CIW**
Carnegie Institution of Washington. Washington, DC.