

Family of the south mexican border, at the first decades of XX Century

Different people, diversity in socio-demographic behavior

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I. Introduction

Southern Quintana Roo and Northern Belize (British Honduras) (Plate 1) constitute an internally differentiated region from the stand point of Lomnitz-Adler's (1995) theoretical framework, with intense social, economical, cultural, and demographic relationships between the two countries. Family and kinship ties within the Mexican southern border society are critical issues in the construction of both Mexican and Belizean nationalities. Hence, the Mexican south border is an excellent example to understand the process of family formation.

This study analyzes birth records in public archives between 1900 and 1935, because during this period several settlements were established on both sides of the Mexico-Belize border by diverse ethnic groups from America, Europe and Asia (Vallarta, 2001). Lomnitz-Adler's (1995) categories of intimate cultures were used to identify families in this region, in the context of a marriage market under stress (Esteve y Cabre, 2004) due to high immigration, mostly of men in productive ages. In fact, natural population growth was less important than social population growth. However, the gross population growth rate slowly increased between 1900 and 1930 (Ortega, 2008).

We understand by intimate culture, inside regional culture framework (Lomnitz-Adler, 1995:51-53), like reconceptualization of the class concept (class culture in words of the author). In other words, this concept is the set of real manifestations of culture class and borders ethnics in side specific environment. Those intimates cultures are based on experience of class in relationship of asymmetry of power, and are intrinsically related with status, power and ethnicity, however not necessarily are just

one status or one specific ethnic group. In this paper, we have three different types: dominant (higher upper class merchants, rulers, higher upper class military), emergent (civil servants, liberal arts, artisans, personal services) and residual (peasants, working-class, woodcutters [Residual b are the mothers that registered their offspring alone]) .

II. Goals and questions

To analyze the marriage market in the Mexico-Belize border region to understand the social and cultural decisions involved in family formation, as revealed by marriage patterns among immigrants during the first three decades of the 20th century. My main question was how did a multicultural and multiethnic society such as that of the Mexico-Belize border develop its marriage patterns, under the restrictions imposed by a hegemonic culture and a stressed marital market?

This is an essential question in the light of current major migration flows between countries, resulting in multicultural, pluriethnic societies. These societies face problems ranging from biological and social mixing to social exclusion, racism and xenophobia (Gutiérrez y Balslev, 2008).

For the former reasons, analyzing how societies were shaped in the past could illuminate our understanding of the path that present-day migrant societies may follow.

III. Hypothesis

Societies in our study region were shaped through intense social ties within hegemonic relationships marked by different kinds of intimate cultures. Each of these cultures adopted a particular marriage pattern, whereby some favored exogamy or intra-group marriage due to stress on the marriage market while others preferred inbreeding in order to maintain their hegemony within the group and in society in general

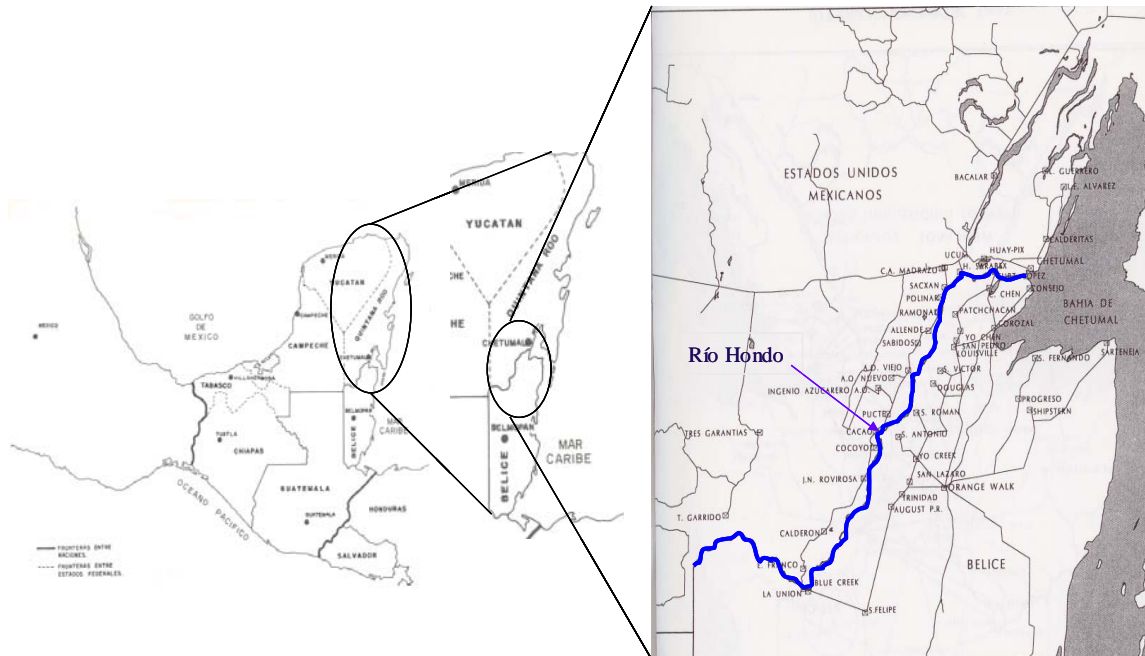


Plate1. Study place: South of Quintana Roo, México - North of British Honduras (Belize)

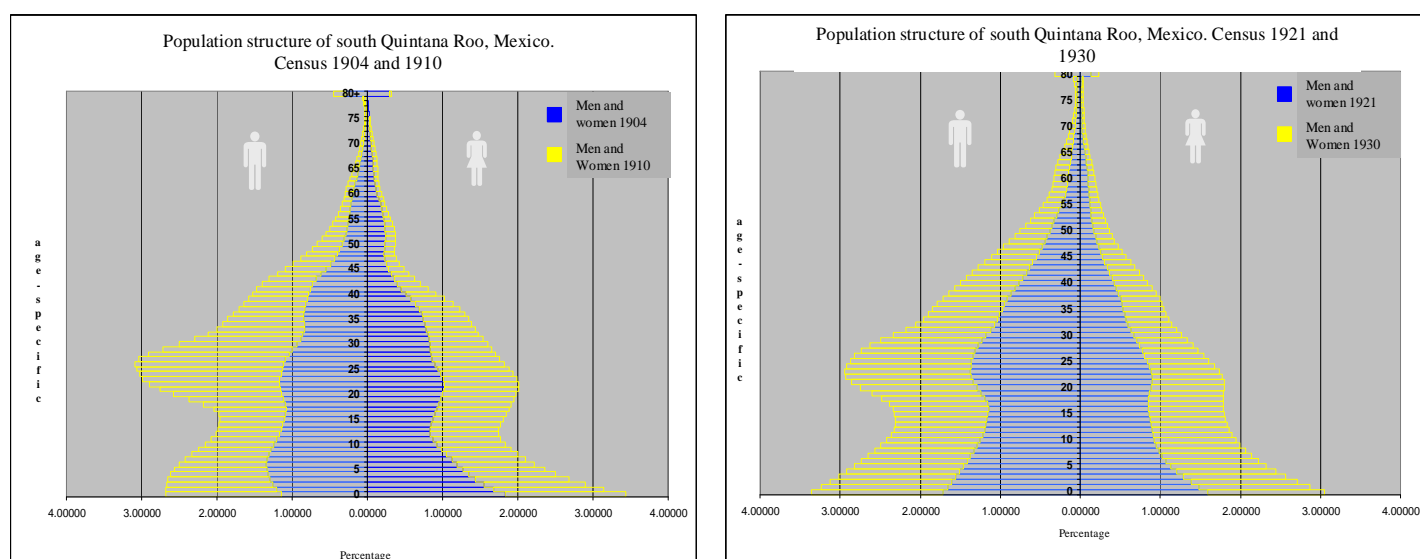
IV. Methodology

A) To recreate the age structure of the population and analyze the marriage market I used data from Mexican Population Censuses (1904, 1910, 1921 and 1930), and I corrected and smoothed the demographic pyramid's structure (Livi-Bacci, 1993; Spiegelman, 1972).

B) I identified 415 couples or families. From these, I used methods described in Henry (1983) to reconstruct 863 mothers and 821 fathers of the Mexico-Belize border between 1885 and 1955. I assigned each family to an "intimate culture type" (i.e., Dominant, Emergent or Residual). These categories are used in the regional cultural analysis theoretical framework, where class and ethnicity are merged in a single operational concept (Lomnitz-Adler, 1995) (Table 1). Finally, I calculated the percentage of exogamic and endogamic marriages within each intimate culture type.

V. Results

Population structure and marriage market, southern Quintana Roo, 1904-1930



Source: Population Censuses, 1904, 1910, 1921 and 1930, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Table 1. Couples, parity and maximum number of births per mother * by intimate culture in the Mexico-Belize Border Region

Intimate Cultures	Group characteristics in Quintana Roo, south District			Group characteristics in Belize, Corozal District		
	Couples	Parity	Maximum number of births/mother	Couples	Parity	Maximum number of births/mother
Dominant	7	1.57	2	1	1	1
Emergent	75	3.43	11	42	4.14	14
Residual A	238	2.82	11	434	4.0	13
Residual B	2	1.5	2	64	2.02	10
Total	322			541		

Source: Vital statistics, 1885-1955 *Universe = 415 mothers

Table 1 shows the number of couples per intimate culture type, with their parity, and the maximum range of births by women. The Dominant intimate culture has the minor amount of couples meanwhile the Residual have the mayor amount of couples. This is accord with an outline of every complex society, because the culture Dominant have the hegemony, an for that in numeric terms is the minor inside of the population. Meanwhile, the Residual haven't the hegemony y for that reason would be the gross of

the population. The last, the Emergent intimate culture would be the class media and tangentially have the power in the society.

Mothers in the Dominant intimate culture type had the fewest births, while mothers in the Residual type (subtypes A and B) had the most. This is consistent with expectations for a complex society, where a dominant culture holds the means of production and hegemonic power, hence being smaller in numbers than the rest of the population. Meanwhile, the Residual culture type does not own the means of production and constitutes the larger proportion of the population. Finally, the Emergent culture type constitutes the rising middle class, holding a marginal share of power within society.

B) Endo/exogamy in the past society of Quintana Roo.

Table 2. Patterns of endo/exogamy for individuals in the South District of Quintana Roo and Corozal District of Belize per intimate culture

Male and female parents' birthplace		Intimate culture				Total
		Dominant	Emergent	Residual A	Residual B	
South District, Quintana Roo	Neither parent native to Quintana Roo or Corozal	1.7%	8.5%	24.8%	0.3%	35.4%
	Both parents native to Quintana Roo		1.0%	2.4%		3.4%
	Both parents native to Corozal		2.0%	9.5%		11.6%
	Father native to Corozal and mother native neither to Quintana Roo or Corozal		5.1%	6.8%		11.9%
	Mother native to Corozal and father native neither to Quintana Roo or Corozal	0.3%	1.0%	11.6%		12.9%
	Father native to Quintana Roo and mother native neither to Quintana Roo or Corozal		3.7%	8.5%		12.2%
	Mother native to Quintana Roo and father native neither to Quintana Roo or Corozal		1.0%	6.5%		7.5%
	Father native to Quintana Roo and mother native to Corozal		0.7%	3.1%		3.7%
	Mother native to Quintana Roo and father native to Corozal		0.7%	0.7%		1.4%
	Total	2.0%	23.8%	73.8%	0.3%	100% (294)

Source: Vital statistics, 1885-1955

Exogamy is greater in percentage out of the region in the south of Quintana Roo, in other words, both parents aren't of the region (35.4%), while the endogamy take up the second place lesser in the whole cases. Parents that have couples from Corozal, as well as, parents are from this District take up the lesser percentages of the whole sample (3.7% 1.4% y 3.4%)

Couples where neither member was native to Southern Quintana Roo or Corozal constituted the highest percentage in all intimate culture types (Table 2).

Differences between intimate culture types are within the rest of the couple categories.

Among the Emergent and Residual intimate cultures, there are couples in every

category. Following couples where neither member was a native of the region, were those where the male partner was native to Corozal, but the female was neither a native of Quintana Roo or Corozal.

Residual A culture type, which included the most couples in the sample (73.8%), differed from the while the Emergent type have the most important intimate culture by amount of the whole sample (73.8%), and the difference with respect Emergent culture is in the category Mother native from Corozal and father is not from region (11.6%).

VI. Discussion and conclusions

Pressures on the marriage market led to different marriage behaviors or patterns of family formation. Through the first thirty years of the 20th century, there was a clear imbalance in the age structure of the population, with a surplus of men in the productive age classes.

Nevertheless, the effect of this pressure on the marriage market was not equal for all sectors of the population, because the Dominant intimate culture showed more had the greater behavior endogamy among the integrants of his group, and overall people from outside of the region.

Endogamic behavior, although occurring in all groups, it even is present in all others groups, the exogamic behavior is stronger en the Residual intimate culture. This is because this group tends to be more flexible in its reproductive behavior (*habitus*, sensu Bourdieu 1976), in order to ensure its biological and social reproduction when the availability of partners is restricted.

It would be important to establish if such flexibility acted as a means to marry up or whether its function was merely reproduction for this important sector of the southern Quintana Roo border society.

The data consistently show that different kinds of families settled on the Mexico-Belize border, and that their behaviors responded to how they inserted themselves in a complex society within a hegemonic culture, from the standpoint of a regional culture analysis framework.

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