

[The Peninsular Mayas: A Socio-Economic Analysis]

1. This profile combines a broad comparative introduction to the Yucatan region, with three socio-economic analyses—one per state—designed to portray the human and cultural richness in the Yucatan Peninsula. The Peninsula includes more than 750,000 Mayas (inclusive of all adults >15 years of age), representing one of the largest concentrations of the Maya population and forming a center of Mexican indigenous cultural heritage. The Yucatan Mayas make up 14.11% of all Mesoamerican language speakers, second only to the Nahuas with 22.67%. Due to their large population, the Maya have had a major impact on the economic, political and religious aspects of the Yucatan, leading many researchers to conclude that in the case of the Peninsular Mayas, it was the Spanish who underwent a major "transculturation".

2. Due to its beauty and advantageous geographical location, the region has been transformed into a prime area for tourism, taking advantage of the Pre-Hispanic and Colonial cultural remains as well as the "mystique" or "exotic otherness" attributed to the current residents. Parallel to the touristic exploitation of these resources, has come an intense discrimination and marginalization of the native residents, limiting their equal access to social benefits.

3. To explain such complex processes and conditions, the profile has been divided into four sections. The first is a general introduction to the Peninsula with a chapter for each of the states conforming its geopolitical make-up. This information has served to facilitate the classification process of the five indigenous regions and transcends the scope of the existing state proposals, giving a broader, more comprehensive regional overview. The five indigenous regions being addressed are: (i) the central border, which has the largest Maya population; (ii) the northern Yucatan, previously known for its henequen production; (iii) the Caribbean ; (iv) the Peninsular meridian, currently undergoing high intense colonization; and (v) the urban bastions, points of particular importance, as the study has shown, since almost 25% of all contemporary Mayas reside in six of these peninsular cities.

4. Campeche, for example, begins with a brief physical description of the area, including its major natural resources, of which the most predominant and abundant is petroleum. The research showed that based on its richness of resources, many trading partnerships were established with neighbors from the surrounding areas of Yucatan, Tabasco and Quintana Roo during the Pre-Colonial and Colonial eras with the main port giving Campeche a strategic edge historically and many alliances. Population density of the state is low overall, at 11.3 inhabitants per square kilometer. However, 71.2% of these people are concentrated in 27 of the Northern municipalities,

leaving the remaining 2,609 municipalities very sparsely populated. Five Campechan Indigenous Municipalities: El Camino Real, Los Chenes, Champotón, and the meridian zone have the highest concentration of indigenous language speakers.

5. The analysis of the Yucatan was a more complex process than for the other two states, due to the extensive literature available; as well as because of the more than one-hundred indigenous municipalities (the unit of analysis). (In comparison, Campeche has ten indigenous municipalities and Quintana Roo only eight.) Yucatan along with Oaxaca, is one of two states in Mexico where the indigenous population constitutes a majority, with the important difference that Oaxaca residents have multi-ethnic kinship ties, whereas the Yucatan population, for the most part, belongs to a single ethnic group.

6. The Yucatan Maya are, however, by no means homogeneous. Those Maya residing in the now degraded and economically-depressed, hemp producing region have very different concerns than the Maya from the Southern, Eastern and Northeastern zones (categorized as the Ticul-Tekax-Oxkutzcab and Peto, Valladolid and Tizmin), those living in the more traditional Eastern communities, and the ever-increasing numbers of Maya living in the urban centers. In each of the mentioned regions there are historic, demographic, educational, health, economic (including out-migration), political and culture-related aspects addressed, each is thus set in its contextual dimension.

7. There is a concentration of communal tenure in the Peninsula which varies by State but comprises the majority of landholdings. The area under ejidos and communities comprises between 62 and 85% of the land areas in each of the three states of which only 17-20% has been parceled into individual plots under the PROCEDA land administration program.

8. The part entitled "Marginality Data," shows the alarming levels of marginalization which have to be endured by the Maya. In the Yucatan in the hemp-growing region to the north, more than 60% of the population has not completed primary school and 12% are illiterate; the most frequent cause of illness in the population is gastro-enteritis and respiratory infections. In the central part of the Peninsula where the three states meet (65% of the Mayas of Campeche and 63% of those of Quintana Roo) includes many poor farmers who survive by a diverse set of low-income generating strategies. Here the maternal language is spoken more publicly, housing is almost exclusively "mayan style", there is hardly any sanitary infrastructure, and rates of school drop out and illiteracy are much higher than the state or municipal norms.

9. As in the Huasteca, community sizes are small: Campeche has 1950 localities of which 94% are smaller than 500 inhabitants. In Quintana Roo, 90% of the population lives in 7% of the 1303 localities; the remaining 93% house 10% of the population in communities of less than 500 inhabitants each. In Yucatan, there are 3,150 localities, of which 93% have less than 500 inhabitants. Social organization follows almost the same pattern of "calpulli" or socio-military groupings that were present in the mid-1800s when the Mayas of the Peninsula rebelled against the Mexican republic seeking land and autonomy.

10. The third state, Quintana Roo, experienced a large decrease in the population in colonial times due to new diseases and other calamities brought on by the Europeans. The nineteenth century brought about a re-population partly due to the "Castas War," led by a group of Mayan rebels, who organized themselves in a separate theocratic/ militaristic system and avoided Spanish colonization until the beginning of this century. The indigenous regions of the state have suffered greatly under its re-discovery by the tourist industry. One of the findings is a high indigenous growth rate (3.7% annually) due to improving natural conditions and to immigration, not only from within the Mexican territory, but also from neighboring Central-American countries.

11. The Quintana Roo analysis touches environmental issues, including the damaging effects of certain forest activities, as well as the potential of community natural resources management, thus emphasizing the richness inherent in the tropical forests—which account for 63.2% of the total territory. The profile documents important traditional and environmentally-friendly agricultural methods for maize-growing; and highlights the overlap of indigenous populations with natural reserves and national state parks. There are three distinct indigenous zones in the state: (i) sites of tourism and urban development, (ii) the Maya region and (iii) the colonial region. The state's economic and social development is also analyzed in each of these regions. The analysis is based on the following: agricultural tendencies; major industries; animal husbandry; kinship organization; marginalization indicators; incidence of self-employment; the newly introduced salaried work in the tourist industry, a trend which is strongly linked to feminine out-migration (a topic that has been explained further within the study). Finally, the conclusion reflects on political movements, indigenous organizations and indigenous autonomy, portraying clear differences among the various regions; differences rooted mainly in the diverse historical experiences and the intensity of regional development.

12. The striking findings of this regional profiles is:

- a) the very different income strategies of Mayas, depending on whether they are found in depressed agricultural regions far from basic services or whether they are pursuing

multiple income strategies in the tourism industry and as temporary migrants to areas of commercial agriculture;

- b) the continuing low levels of educational attainment, which concentrate employment opportunities in low-skilled jobs, many of them taken by rural women on a temporary basis as domestics, often in highly exploitative relationships with their employers;
- c) the concentration of tourism industry jobs for Mayas in very low-paying jobs and until now limited role of local communities in the eco and culture tourism;
- d) extreme poverty in the former hemp-growing areas and the overall lack of credit and investment resources, including technical options for Mayan farmers;
- e) the richness of the Mayan production system in diversity of animals and plants and use of ecological niches, and the importance of women's role in production of homegarden plants and animals, and in the production of artisanal Mayan products; and
- f) the poor quality of educational services, with a strong disconnect between the goals and objectives of the bilingual education systems and the attainment on the ground.