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Contemporary U.S. Expatriate Artists in San Miguel De Allende, Mexico: Challenges of Transnationalism and Acculturation

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CONTEMPORARY U.S. EXPATRIATE ARTISTS IN SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE,
MEXICO: CHALLENGES OF TRANSNATIONALISM AND ACCULTURATION

by

ANDRÉS GAMÓN, BA, MA

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the faculty of the University of the Incarnate Word
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Andrés Gamón

CONTEMPORARY U.S. EXPATRIATE ARTISTS IN SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE,
MEXICO: CHALLENGES OF TRANSNATIONALISM AND ACCULTURATION

Andrés Gamón, PhD

University of the Incarnate Word, 2014

The purpose of this interpretive qualitative study was to explore the transnational lives of contemporary U.S. expatriate artists living in San Miguel de Allende, a colonial town in the state of Guanajuato, Mexico, and the effect that location and the acculturation process have in their artistic production. The focus of this study was on U.S. expatriate artists living in San Miguel de Allende and how their transnational lifestyle influenced their artistic production, their integration into the local community, and their relationship with other Mexican and international artists living in San Miguel de Allende. Two research questions structured this qualitative study: (a) How do the contemporary U.S. expatriate artists living in Mexico make sense of their transnational lives and experiences? (b) How does the intercultural contact influence their artistic expressions and body of work?

Nine participants were selected utilizing the snowball sampling technique and were interviewed through open-ended questions. The analysis of the data revealed five themes that are presented and related to the research questions and professional literature.

The study found that the U.S. expatriate artists were able to live comfortably in both cultures and identified the social network factor as the most common connecting thread that wove through all of the participants' comments. The constant influx of international artists mixed

with the local art community provided the unique setting for the intercultural exchange of ideas and experiences that influenced the artistic perspectives of the U.S. expatriate artists.

This study specifically helps to fill in a void regarding knowledge and available scholarly research and literature on the perspective of contemporary U.S. expatriate artists in San Miguel de Allende. The findings of this study not only confirmed earlier studies but also contributes to the expanding field of transnationalism and acculturation. This study provides multilayered perspectives of the expatriate artists in keeping their familial and cultural links to their homeland through social networking and digital media ICT technology. The digital media ICT network allowed the artists to produce and distribute their work in a transnational global context unlike the traditional productions that occur in the context of the same time and space.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Expatriate artists from the United States have long exhibited a desire for transnational migration to other countries in search of places to practice their art. There has long existed a tradition between the United States and Mexico of transnational cross-cultural exchange that is unique because of the close proximity between the two countries. U.S. expatriate artists, because of their constant connection between both countries, bring a distinctive set of skills transferable to their transnational cultural experiences between their native country and their adoptive Mexican community. This transnational lifestyle is one that reflects the cultural influences of both countries. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the transnational and cultural journey of U.S. expatriate artists in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico.

The term transnationalism was first used by Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton (1992) to emphasize the emergence of the social process where the immigrants establish social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders:

Our earlier conceptions of immigrants no longer suffice ... now a new kind of migrating population is emerging, composed of those networks, activities and patterns of life encompass both their host and home societies. Their lives cut across national boundaries and bring two societies into a single social field ... a new conceptualization is needed in order to come to terms with the experience and consciousness of this new migrant population. We call this new conceptualization "transnationalism," and describe the new type of migrants as transmigrants. (p. 1)

In examining the cultural aspect of the U.S. expatriate, Fahlman (2001) noted that expatriation has long been a distinctive aspect of American cultural thought for many American leading artists and writers. The unique cultural and artistic expectations of transnational expatriate artists from the United States has been one that has taken them to other countries in search of places to practice their arts and crafts. This can be interpreted as artists who at their

very core of experiencing life have been drawn to traversing the lines of cultures in order to set apart and make use of the essential elements that define their work.

Context of the Study

This research study described and analyzed the transnational lifestyle and acculturation experiences of contemporary U.S. expatriate artists moving back and forth between the United States and San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico (Figure 1). This research study presented the perspective of the contemporary U.S. expatriate artists as it examined transnationalism and acculturation challenges and the effect, if any, that this lifestyle had on their creative processes. This work focused on how they craft their art, and how they adapt to the local community, with other U.S. artists, Mexican artists, and other foreign artists living in San Miguel de Allende.



Figure 1. Map of United States and Mexico.

Recent studies have centered on a multidisciplinary approach focusing so far on the role and focus of the destination of U.S. retirees in Mexico (Banks, 2004; International Community Foundation (ICF), 2010; Migration Policy Institute (MPI), 2006; Sunil, Rojas, & Bradley, 2007;

Truly, 2002). This study addressed the gap in available literature on the subject of the transnationalism and acculturation challenges that U.S. expatriate artists in Mexico face.

Mexico and U.S. citizens. Through the years, the exact number of U.S. citizens residing in Mexico as expatriates has been hard to determine and has been an approximation at best. The U.S. Department of State (USDS) (2012) established that a million U.S. citizens were living in Mexico as of May 2010. The USDS (2012) estimate was based on self-identified individuals who reported their residency in Mexico with either the U.S. Embassy or one of the U.S. Consulates in the country.

The ICF (2010) addressed the fact that accurate numbers of the U.S. expatriate community have been hard to determine. They referred to the difficulty of arriving at an accurate number because of the various variables involved. The ICF (2010) asserted that this is due, in large part, to the fact that U.S. retirees often do not formally declare their permanent residency in Mexico resulting from tourist visa overstays.

Many U.S. retirees also maintain their U.S. address while living in Mexico for purposes of Medicare or U.S. private insurance eligibility, or have U.S.-Mexico dual nationality. The ICF (2010) based the current population estimates of either part-time or full-time Americans residing in coastal cities of Mexico at 200,000 to 300,000. Many of the Americans in Mexico neglect to renew or notify officials, both United States and Mexican, of their exact status, which makes it hard to arrive at an exact number.

San Miguel de Allende and the arts. Mexico, because of its climate, culture, social, political, and natural resources has attracted a migration of expatriates from around the world through the years and to this day includes many from the United States. After the Mexican Revolution of 1910, Hennessy (1971) claimed U.S. artists chose Mexico as an alternative to

Paris in the 1920s. It was more economical and practical because of the proximity of Mexico to the United States in comparison to Europe. The years following after the Mexican Revolution were an exciting period for U.S. artists who set the tone of artistic cultural exchange between the United States and Mexico.

Of particular interest in this research study were the contemporary U.S. expatriate artists in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, a city with a population of approximately 100,000 Mexicans with about 10% foreigners (Bloom, 2006). For many years, this city has been a traditional stop for expatriate artists, many of whom have made it their home. The USDS (2012) placed the number of U.S. citizens in San Miguel de Allende at 4,000, and there is also an American Consular office in San Miguel de Allende.

Established in 1542 by Spanish settlers, San Miguel de Allende played an important role in the silver trade for centuries and was renowned for its remarkable artisanship in weaving and leather working (Bloom, 2006). In 1937, Stirling Dickinson, an artist who had attended the Chicago Art Institute, arrived in San Miguel de Allende and fell in love with the sleepy little colonial town. Over the next 50 years, Dickinson played an important part in leading in the creation of the town's two art schools, *Escuela de Bellas Artes* [School of Fine Arts] and the renowned art and language school, the *Instituto Allende* (Croucher, 2010). This was the beginning of an ongoing attraction of Americans to San Miguel de Allende.

After World War II, Long (2006) reported that many demobilized U.S. military veteran artists used their education grants or GI bills at the local U.S. accredited art school, *Instituto Allende*. Bloom (2006) attributed the "exoticism of Mexico" and the low cost of travel in the post-war years as being two important reasons behind the influx of U.S. veterans (p. 194). Croucher (2010) asserted that with these institutions drawing many influential writers, painters,

and sculptors to San Miguel during the following 50-year period, led to this as being known as the city's "Golden Age" (p. 39). In addition, Croucher (2010) wrote that what began with Dickinson devoting his life to philanthropy for the town's natives and to the promotion of the arts, culture, and language led to the town achieving recognition as an artist colony. Bloom (2006) believed that these early artists set the tone for San Miguel de Allende as a "progressive and anti-establishment" art colony (p. 195).

The richness of the history of San Miguel de Allende as an artist colony is considered one of the biggest pull factors for artists of all statures. Today, there are an estimated 4,000 Americans living in San Miguel de Allende for extended periods of time every year (USDS, 2012). San Miguel de Allende has the richest institutional matrix of any American colony in Mexico (Croucher, 2010). As a result of this, Croucher (2010) reported that environmental organizations, social service charities, language instruction classes, performance series, and theater groups, many attributed to U.S. expatriates, have prospered in San Miguel de Allende.

Background of the Researcher

The researcher has experienced a transnational lifestyle between Mexico and the United States, for many years traveling extensively throughout Mexico. This study was supported by his experience as a professional multimedia artist and activist, having worked for many years in the music industry as a musician and recording studio engineer, the jewelry industry as a goldsmith/jewelry designer/gemstone faceter, and the digital arts as an exhibited photographer and digital documentary director. The past experiences and familiarity with the artistic culture allowed the researcher a unique perspective in communicating and building a rapport with the U.S. expatriate artist participants. The firsthand knowledge of experiences, values, beliefs, and challenges as an artist strengthened the researcher's credibility in the interpretation of the data. On the other hand,

the researcher was also aware that his experiences could quite easily lead to the injection of his own personal bias into the research. These biases, values, and judgments were included as part of his perspective in the final interpretation of the study's data.

Statement of the Problem

Thousands of Americans are moving to Mexico in a flow that has been increasing in the past decades and is expected to grow more in the next 20 years when about 78 million baby boomers are going to retire (Banks, 2004; ICF, 2010; MPI, 2006; Sunil et al. 2007; Truly, 2002). There is an emergent body of literature focusing on the U.S. retiree migrants who settle in Mexico because of the weather, culture, and economical lifestyle (Banks, 2004; MPI, 2006; Sunil et al, 2007; Truly, 2002). These studies are located in the realm of sociological migration, international migration, and lifestyle migration.

In general, we know very little about the lives and experiences of an estimated six million Americans living abroad (USDS, 2012). The studies on retirement migration in Mexico focus on just a small portion of this population. Other studies have focused on expatriates in general, mainly on corporate workers or refugees abroad (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Gustafson, 2001, 2008; Scott, 2004, 2006).

Similarly, we do not know much about the U.S. expatriate artists who cross borders and go to Mexico or other nations to develop their art and interact with the local population. Furthermore, this study presents the perspective of these expatriate artists on the effect that the transnationalism and the acculturation process has on the creation of their art.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the transnational lives of contemporary U.S. expatriate artists living in San Miguel de Allende, a colonial town in the state of Guanajuato,

Mexico, and the effect that location and the acculturation process have in their artistic production. The focus of this study was on U.S. expatriate artists living in San Miguel de Allende on a permanent or temporary basis and how their transnational lifestyle influenced their artistic production, their integration into the local community, and their relationship with other Mexican and international artists living in San Miguel de Allende. This study promotes an understanding of issues of transnationalism and acculturation and the roles they play in the integration and adaptation process.

Research Questions

This dissertation described and analyzed the transnational lifestyle and experiences of U.S. artists moving back and forth between the United States and Mexico. This work focused on their perspective of how they craft their art, how they adapt to the local community, their peer U.S. artists, Mexican artists, and other foreign artists living in Mexico. Two questions structure this dissertation:

1. How do the U.S. expatriate artists in Mexico make sense of their transnational lives and experiences?
2. How does the intercultural contact influence their artistic expressions and body of work?

Overview of Research Methodology

This research study was conducted using basic interpretive qualitative research that Merriam (1998, 2009) explained as understanding “(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (p. 38). In this study, the researcher incorporated the interpretive lens by using narrative inquiry as the method to gather and analyze the data. The setting for this study of U.S. expatriate artists

took place in the city of San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico, a city renowned for its reputation as an art colony (Croucher, 2010).

The researcher utilized the basic interpretive methodology to allow U.S. expatriate artists to provide their perspective of transnationalism and acculturation issues as they pertain to their transnational lifestyle within the artist community of San Miguel de Allende. Strauss and Corbin (1998) maintained that qualitative research works at seeking out and interpreting the meanings that people bring to their own actions by focusing on data comprising language, sounds, signs, images, and the meaning that people give them. The researcher conducted the study with the realization that qualitative research is context sensitive or context specific. Additionally, the researcher incorporated an inductive process of reasoning, whereby data collected through techniques such as interviews, observations, recordings, and case studies allowed the researcher to examine and interpret issues and problems through the perspective of the participants (Merriam, 1998).

To ensure trustworthiness and credibility of the study, several strategies were utilized by the researcher as instruments to strengthen the internal validity. Triangulation, reflexivity, audit trail, member checks, and rich and thick description are some of the strategies that were planned to ensure the issues of reliability, internal validity, and external validity (Merriam & Associates, 2002). These procedures were implemented by the researcher to ensure the transferability of the study in a scholarly context.

Marshall and Rossman (2006) explained that the principles of ethical management of role, access, data collection, storage, and reporting serve as essential reminders of the responsibility of the researcher to protect the participants. An Institutional Review Board (IRB) form was submitted by the researcher to gain permission for the study. By signing an Informed

Consent form, each participant agreed to be interviewed and have their experiences documented within this research study and informed the participant of their right to withdraw from this study at any time. The researcher ensured that the participation in this study would be strictly anonymous and voluntary with each participant being provided a letter explaining the purpose of the study. IRB protocols for the protection of the identity and confidentiality of the participants were explained and adhered to at all times and stages of the study by the researcher.

Participants were selected utilizing the snowball sampling technique. Snowball sampling, as defined by Atkinson and Flint (2001), is a technique used for gathering research subjects through the identification of an initial subject who is used to provide the names of other potential participants. These other participants may open possibilities for an expanding web of contact and inquiry. Marshall and Rossman (2006) posited that the snowball technique's purpose is in identifying cases of interest from participants who know other potential participants who will contribute to the study. Snowball sampling can be placed within a wider set of methodologies that take advantage of the social networks of the identified respondents, which can be used to provide a researcher with an escalating set of potential contacts (Atkinson & Flint, 2001).

Theoretical Framework

Transnationalism and acculturation theories were central to the literature discussion. Transnationalism was important because it helped the researcher understand how people can live in two locations simultaneously and keep links to both cultures. Acculturation helped the researcher understand how people negotiate their adaptation or integration to a new cultural setting.

Theoretically, the researcher used a transnationalism approach to understand the transmigrant and translocal experiences of U.S. expatriate artists who move back and forth

between the United States and Mexico (Gustafson, 2001, 2008; Scott, 2004). The researcher also used acculturation theory as described by Berry (1997) and Sam (2006) to understand their engagement with both cultures and Phinney (2003) to understand the negotiation of cultural values and attitudes toward the local community.

Transnationalism. This study utilized the transnationalism concept derived from European transnational migration lifestyle studies and the lifestyle migration studies of affluent retirees in Mexico that likely parallel the experiences of U.S. expatriate artists in Mexico. Lifestyle migration is the term that has been used to refer to an increasing number of people who take the decision to migrate based on their belief that there is a more fulfilling way of life available to them elsewhere. Lifestyle migration is a growing, disparate phenomenon, with important but little understood implications for both societies and individuals (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009, Sunil et al. 2007; Truly, 2002).

Previous lifestyle migration studies had centered on affluent retirees and had therefore left a gap in the literature on migration of expatriates who are not retired. So far, however, there seemed to be a lack of information on the transnational lifestyle and experience of U.S. expatriate artists in Mexico. This study has attempted to fill that gap. Gustafson (2001, 2008) and Scott (2004) presented concepts and perspectives that help to understand the transnational phenomenon of the expatriates. The concept of transnationalism as explained by Scott (2004), involved the global-local argument that immigrant minorities continually cross national frontiers through physical and non-physical back-and-forth movements. This included various forms of back-and-forth travel back to the country of origin through transnational communication via the Internet, telephone and satellite, or immersion in translocalities within the host country.

In another study of Swedish retirees in Spain, Gustafson (2008) identified transnationalism characteristics that include mobility, identities, social networks, and cultural practices. The identification of many of the same characteristics in affluent retirees as those from the expatriate workers and refugees bolstered his argument that these transnational elements exist in most, if not all, other transnational movements. Even if the content and scope of his analytical dimensions differed in appearances for different migration groups, it did bring to question the migrants' sense of home, belonging, and identity.

Acculturation. Berry (1997), Phinney (2003) and Sam's (2006) concepts of the acculturation process helped to explain the experiences of other expatriate retirees. The two conceptual frameworks that have dominated the complex acculturation phenomenon are the unidimensional and bidimensional perspectives (Cabassa, 2003). For the purpose of this research, the bidimensional perspective was used to explain the complex acculturation phenomenon.

The bidimensional process of acculturation theories and models by Berry (1997) and Phinney (2003) have been largely used in studies of immigrants and refugees and how these groups adapt. This bidimensional acculturation model states that individuals are able to maintain and link aspects of their culture of origin as they settle into mainstream society. These models, consisting of two distinct independent dimensions: adherence to the dominant culture and maintenance of the culture of origin, laid the groundwork for the study of the acculturation process faced by U.S. expatriate artists in Mexico.

Significance of the Study

This study addressed the significance of the limited available scholarly research and literature on the perspectives of contemporary U.S. expatriate artists living a transnational

lifestyle in San Miguel de Allende. Of importance in the study were the transnationalism and acculturation challenges these contemporary expatriate artists have encountered and how their transnational lifestyle influenced their artistic production, their integration into the local community, and their relationship with other Mexican and international artists living in San Miguel de Allende. This study helped to fill in a void regarding knowledge and available scholarly research and literature on the perspective of contemporary U.S. expatriate artists in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico. Most of the available literature regarding U.S. expatriate artists in Mexico focused on the time of the Mexican Revolution or during conflicting moments in U.S. history, such as post-World War I, the Communist Red scare of the 1940s and 1950s, and the turbulent 1960s.

The term expatriate, although having a long and complex history in the United States, has largely been ignored by recent studies of citizenship and has also been largely absent from migration studies (Green, 2009). Much of the recent migration studies have focused on corporate employees and refugees, and until recently, on the lifestyle migration of mostly affluent retirees (Banks, 2004; Gustafson, 2001, 2008; ICF, 2010; MPI, 2006; Scott, 2004; Sunil et al. 2007; Truly, 2002).

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited by reliance on the participants answering fully and honestly. The study was limited by the small sample size of participants and the time constraints. The researcher realized that the study was bound and contained within a specific context. It is, therefore, not conducive to generalizability or conclusiveness, and the research findings may be transferable to other studies (Schram, 2006).

Delimitations of the Study

The study was limited only to U.S. expatriate artists or naturalized U.S. expatriate citizens living in San Miguel de Allende for at least six months. Six months of residency is an acceptable timeframe among studies involving expatriates (Gustafson, 2001; O'Reilly, 2000; Sunil et al., 2007). Eligibility for participation was limited to anyone practicing a craft recognized by peers in the artistic community; these included painting, music, designing, photography, writing, glass, and plastic arts. The study was limited by the number of participants interviewed. The interviews were conducted in the working environment of the artists. The duration of the interviews was 35 to 75 minutes in length. The study was also limited to the perspective of U.S. expatriate artists in the city of San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico.

This study was also limited by the focus of the study to U.S. expatriate artists living in San Miguel de Allende on a permanent or temporary basis and how their transnational lifestyle influenced their artistic production, their integration into the local community, and their relationship with other Mexican and international artists living in San Miguel de Allende. This study did not focus on economic policies, visa studies, local politics, or the violence in Mexico.

Definition of Terms

Acculturation. Acculturation comprehends those phenomena that result when groups of individuals have different cultures and come into continuous firsthand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936).

Bidimensional acculturation model. Individuals may have distinct identities with reference to their cultures of origin and mainstream society (Phinney, 2003).

Lifestyle migration. Individuals may establish a way of living that they feel is preferable to their life before the migration process (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009).

Multilocal adaptation. Multilocal adaptation is the opposite of translocal normality in that it contains a desire for difference and new experiences; for example, exposure to cultural differences and learning how to manage them.

Translocal normality. Translocal normality combines the ideals of mobility with multiple place attachment and focuses on the area of residence resulting in a very low degree of cultural adaptation on the part of the expatriates.

Transmigrants. Transmigrants is used to describe the new type of transnationalism migrants (Glick Schiller et al., 1992).

Transnationalism. Transnationalism is the term used to emphasize the emergence of the social process where the immigrants establish social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders. Transmigrants is the term used to describe the new type of transnationalism migrants (Glick Schiller et al., 1992).

Unidimensional model. A unidimensional model is known as the assimilation or melting pot model and makes the case that acculturation occurs in a linear fashion.

Chapter II: Literature Review

In this literature review, the researcher discussed different transnational and acculturation concepts that apply to the transnational lifestyle that the expatriate artists experience in their relocation to Mexico. Prior research by multi-disciplinary researchers has focused on the U.S. and European transnational migration of expatriates who are workers, refugees, and recently, expatriate retirees. As such, this literature review sought to provide an adequate background to the study to help the researcher strive to identify and synthesize relevant information such as previous work and research in the transnational and acculturation fields.

Theoretical Framework

Transnationalism. Transnationalism, according to Scott (2004), encompassed the basic global-local premise that the lives of immigrant minorities continually cross national frontiers through embodied and disembodied back-and-forth movements. These forms of transnationalism vary through physical travel back to the country of origin, transnational communication via the Internet, telephone and satellite, or immersion in translocalities within the host country. Croucher (2010) reported that many U.S. migrants during the last decade, acknowledged that they would not live in Mexico without the wide choice of modern communication and information technologies available to them. U.S. migrants regularly have high-speed Internet, email, cell phones, and satellite television that allow them to maintain transnational ties to their homeland.

Furthermore, Scott (2004) ascertained the need to also consider the issue of context and the level of proximity and overlap (geographical, social, cultural, political, and economic) between home and host countries as well. Ideally, by adopting the transnational lifestyle, immigrants developed and maintained familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political relations that span borders. Because of these traits, transnationalism is not only about

the movement of people, but of the cultural backgrounds that move with them, cross-pollinating with culture there, and then the same process taking place in reverse (Johnson, 2010).

Glick Schiller et al. (1992) argued that the nation-state is no longer a container of socio-cultural, economic or political processes but rather that transmigrants can be defined more by their transcendental qualities than by absolute process of home-to-host transitions. Hannerz (1996) believed the growth in the transnationalism process implied a weakening of traditional geographical boundaries. Moreover, as Hannerz (1996) explained, this signals to some the decline of the nation-state in a world whose networks now link ever closer through international travel, the telephone, and the Internet.

In view of a lack of studies of skilled immigrants and the everyday transnational communities and networks that they form, Scott's (2004) study of British transmigrants in France drew attention to a number of transnational lifestyles. His six-pronged typology model encompassed the diverseness of transnational lifestyles with three prominent themes that underpin transnational social and cultural exchange: (a) concern, (b) contact, and (c) comfort. These three common themes supported the global-local behavior of the transnational migrants in the study and may be helpful in the measurement of other transnational expatriate groups.

Scott's (2004) cross-border concerns, contacts, and comforts emphasized the social (gender, generation, life-stage, professional status), temporal (period overseas, level of integration, extent of assimilation) and spatial (individual versus communal, urban versus suburban) distinctions that resulted from the transnational exchange. These variables impacted the scale, scope, nature, and importance of the transnational exchanges. Scott's (2004) study found that there existed a concern among expatriates of key events in the home country, a strong

impulse to keep in contact with friends and relatives, and lastly, to have a need for an occasional home comfort or treat.

The concern factor, identified by Scott (2004), encompassed the cross-border information channels that include newspapers, satellite television, radio, and the Internet, was key in keeping the expatriates current in events and addressed their linguistic and cultural needs and desires. Secondly, cross-border contact maintained by the transnational migrants with home relations exhibited the transnational migrant's desire to keep in contact with personal relations that have been physically, yet not emotionally, left behind. Thirdly, Scott (2004) maintained that the relationship with home could be supported with a sense of cultural comfort by something as simple as a purchased treat, or contact with a home country social or cultural space, which signifies an emotional or symbolic importance.

Transnationalism characteristics that were present in a retirement migration study of affluent Northern European retirees to Spain by Gustafson (2008) were identified to include mobility, identities, social networks, and cultural practices. Gustafson (2008) used the same transnational perspective of previous research in transnational retirement studies in identifying many of the same characteristics as those from the expatriate workers and refugees. He further argued that these transnational elements are evident in most, if not all, other transnational movements, although there are variations to each.

The dimensions of transnationalism that Gustafson (2008) advanced are to be used methodically as analytical tools for the examination, mapping, and comparison of transnational aspects of this movement. Gustafson's (2008) theoretical position in using these dimensions is that most, if not all, forms of migration give rise to some transnational connections and activities. He further claimed that the content and scope of these dimensions may look different for

different migration movements and raise questions about migrants' sense of home, belonging, and identity as well.

Mobility entails the repeated practices and patterns of movement between sending and receiving countries that make the migration an ongoing process rather than a one-time event and that enable migrants to uphold cross-border practices and relations. Transnational migrants maintain and develop individual and collective identities that refer to both sending and receiving countries that often results in migrants who do not identify completely with the receiving society, resulting in the mixed identities being an important part of transnationalism (Gustafson, 2008).

Closely related to the questions of identity, belonging, and social networks of the transmigrants are cultural practices, institutions, and transnationalism. Culture summons questions concerning immigrant integration and to what extent transnational cultural ties and practices stand in opposition to assimilation (Kivisto, 2001; Portes, Guarnizo, & Landolt, 1999). These would result, in essence, in the cultural expressions that are the byproduct of merging elements from different cultures (Herrera Lima, 2001; Jurgens, 2001).

Arguing that the transnational perspective is applicable to other forms of human mobility, Gustafson (2008) suggested that the scientific understanding of transnationalism may benefit other studies of different transnational forms of migration. Furthermore, comparative work on other transnational studies can benefit even without certain transnational characteristics from Gustafson's analytical dimensions to illuminate the preconditions of transnationalism. In a different study of affluent transnational retiree lifestyles between Sweden and Spain, Gustafson (2001) posited that various expressions of place attachment and mobility are closely related with diverse ways of managing cultural differences. This study sought to examine the participants' views and experiences of dual residence, more specifically, in relation to their perspective on

place attachment and mobility factors between two countries. Three different ideal-typical transnational retiree lifestyles were identified by Gustafson in his study as translocal normality, multilocal adaptation, and routinized sojourning.

Gustafson (2001) stated that translocal normality combines the ideals of mobility with multiple place attachment and focuses on the area of residence resulting in a very low degree of cultural adaptation on the part of the expatriates. Multilocal adaptation could be seen as the opposite of translocal normality in that it contains a desire for difference and new experiences, for example, exposure to cultural differences and learning how to manage them. Routinized sojourning implied little or no multiple place attachment by making a clear distinction between being at home and being temporary visitors and was apt to downplay issues of cultural differences.

The findings of Gustafson's (2001) study illustrated that the affluent retiree community does develop new transnational ways of life. Their experiences and the social and cultural implications of their lifestyle choices differ in important respects from those of other groups based on specific group in a specific context setting. The findings suggest that through careful examination of place attachment, mobility, and orientations of cultural difference, they can be applied in researching transnational life in other contexts as well.

This lifestyle migration is thus explained by Benson and O'Reilly (2009) as enabling individuals to establish a way of living that they feel is preferable to their life before the migration process. Accordingly, the use of these analytical dimensions inferred that Gustafson's (2001) theoretical stance is that most, if not all, forms of migration gave rise to some transnational connections and activities. Furthermore, in as much as content and scope may look

different for different migration movements, the transnational mobility and transnational connections also raised questions about migrants' sense of home, belonging, and identity.

Acculturation. Historically, according to Martin and Nakayama (2012), three great waves of global migration have been documented. Motivated by the search for resources and military conquests, the first migration wave lasted until the first half of the 16th century. Dominated by European migration into the poorer uninhabited territories of the new world, the second migration wave spanned into the middle of the 20th century. Interestingly, in the postwar period, the third and most recent migration wave is reversing the European colonization from the poorer countries of Asia, Africa, and South America to the richer ones.

In the 1930s, the Social Science Research Council in the United States appointed three anthropologists, Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits, to the Subcommittee on Acculturation to define the parameters for an inquiry in cultural anthropology (Kim, 2001). This was in accord with the view of acculturation as a group phenomenon when studying the immigrant adaptation into U.S. society. Up until then, anthropologists had traditionally observed the dynamics of change in primitive cultures. The subcommittee ultimately rendered and adopted the now classic definition of acculturation as the concept representing the new study that specifies that “acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals have different cultures and come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield et al., 1936, p. 149).

Acculturation, that is, to become a part of culture, occurs when different cultural groups come together, and as a result, their cultural characteristics blend together forming new cultural characteristics. Jackson (2010) believed acculturation also occurs when an individual becomes immersed in a different culture and, as an eventuality of this encounter, starts to take on the

cultural characteristics of that group. Furthermore, Jackson pointed out that because identity refers to how a person defines oneself within the social context of culture, acculturation is inextricably tied to identity.

Berry (2006) surmised that the basic question that is asked by cross-cultural researchers in acculturation studies is, “How do people raised in one society manage to live in another society that is culturally different from the one they are used to?” (p. 5). The concept of acculturation, as defined in its simplest sense by Sam (2006), is said to cover all the changes that arise following contact between individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds. The driving mechanism of acculturation is basically a search to understand what happens to individuals who have developed in one cultural context when they try to adapt and live in a new cultural environment (Berry, 1997).

Culture is the stuff that human paradigms are made of. It provides their content: identity, beliefs, values, and behavior. It is learned as part of the natural process of growing up in a family and community, and from participating in schools and other societal institutions. (Diller & Moule, 2005, p. 67)

There are many explanations and definitions of culture. It is composed of traditional ideas and related values and is the product of actions (Kluckhohn & Kroeber, 1952); it is learned, shared, and transmitted from one generation to the next (Linton, 1945), and it organizes and helps interpret life (Gordon, 1964). Moreover, Diller and Moule (2005) stated that a person’s culture becomes one’s paradigm that defines what is real and right for that person, and furthermore, different cultures develop their own paradigms of reality. Agar (1996) defined culture as the knowledge that ethnographers construct “to show how acts in the context of one world can be understood as coherent from the point of view of another world” (p. 33).

Contextual factors can also affect the phenomenon of acculturation by having a direct influence on how individuals adapt to a new culture. Berry (1997) presented three contextual

factors (voluntariness, mobility, and permanence) that affect the phenomenon of acculturation by having a direct effect on how individuals adapt to a new culture. Individuals in the acculturation process may enter either on a voluntary basis such as immigrants and sojourners or be forced to acculturate such as refugees.

Sam (2006) believed that cultural context relates to acculturation occurring at a specific time and place of the cultural contact. Even so, acculturation has primarily focused on the physical contact between individuals and groups, thereby limiting the contact to that within the same time and space. Interestingly, ICT cyberspace has brought a new dimension to the way people make contact that is different from the way we think of the cultural context of time and space, making it ripe for acculturation researchers (Sam, 2006).

Acculturation has a dualistic effect; it affects the culture of a group as well as changes the psychology of an individual (Berry & Sam, 1996). Although acculturation may have a profound effect on any given group, individuals within that group vary greatly in the extent to which they experience and adapt to these changes (Berry, 1997; Berry & Sam, 1996). Simply stated, acculturation has been defined as the psychological and social changes that groups and individuals experience when they enter a new and different cultural context (Cabassa, 2003).

In 2004, the International Organization for Migration defined acculturation as the progressive adoption of elements of a foreign culture (ideas, words, values, norms, behavior, institutions) by persons, groups or classes of a given culture (Sam, 2006). Although the changes implied in this definition can affect either or both of the groups involved, most theories and measures that use this definition intend to capture the changes that occur in the group and individuals who are being acculturated to a dominant culture (Berry & Sam, 1996). In other words, as Hernandez (2010) suggested, acculturation tends to be defined as those psychological

and social changes that groups and individuals experience when they enter a new and different cultural context.

The two theoretical frameworks that have dominated the complex acculturation phenomenon are the unidimensional and bidimensional perspectives (Cabassa, 2003). For the purposes of this research, the bidimensional perspective was used. In acculturation research and theory, Sam (2006) maintained that the two fundamental issues are directionality and dimensionality. Directionality addresses the issue of the direction in which that change takes place. Dimensionality addresses the issue of change taking place along a single dimension or two independent dimensions.

The assimilation perspective is change that takes place in one direction meaning that one group moves unidirectionally toward another so that the first group changes to become like the other (Sam, 2006). On the other hand, the bi-directional perspective, according to Sam, is one of mutual or reciprocal influence between the two individuals or groups in contact. This is seen as both individuals and groups being able to change, but not necessarily toward a neutral point or a mid-point (Sam, 2006).

The unidimensional model. The unidimensional model, or what became known as the assimilation or melting pot model, makes the case that acculturation occurs in a linear fashion. This process ranges from the immersion in the person's culture of origin to the immersion in the dominant or host culture. In this model, the immigrants would lose their ethnic identities as they become immersed in adopting the values, behaviors, and attitudes of the host society (Hernandez, 2010). In the unidimensional model it is assumed that individuals will lose their original cultural identity as they acquire a new cultural identity in line with the second culture.

Assimilation, asserted Kim (1988, 2001), has been used to emphasize acceptance and internalization of the host culture by the individual, whereas acculturation has been defined as the process by which individuals acquire some, but not all, aspects of the host culture. In the assimilation mode, the individual does not want to maintain an isolated cultural identity but wants to maintain relationships with other groups in the new culture. The central focus in assimilation is not on retaining one's cultural heritage (Martin & Nakayama, 2012).

The bidimensional model. The concept that is better suited in understanding the process that the U.S. expatriate artists in Mexico experience is the bidimensional model. The bidimensional process of acculturation theories and models by Berry (1997) and later Phinney (2003) have been largely used in studies of immigrants and refugees and how these groups adapt. The bidimensional process of acculturation model stated that individuals are able to maintain and link aspects of their culture of origin as they settle into mainstream society. This model consists of two distinct independent dimensions: (a) adherence to the dominant culture and (b) maintenance of the culture of origin.

The bidimensional model captures the realities and challenges associated with the acculturation process. The two independent dimensions facilitate the measurement of the processes that take place when individuals come into direct and continuous contact with a different culture. In addition, the changes occur when individuals attempt to balance both their own cultural identity and the acquisition of novel values, attitudes, and behaviors (Hernandez, 2010).

Phinney (2003) introduced a bidimensional model of two independent dimensions at the core of people's cultural identity. Through this framework, individuals may have distinct identities with reference to their cultures of origin and mainstream society. Two issues have been

noted in this model: (a) the nature and maintenance of a person's cultural heritage and identity and (b) the degree to which the individuals seek to enmesh themselves within mainstream society. The process can be broken down in four sectors as the aspects of the acculturation process intersect with each other:

1. Assimilation, where individuals adhere to cultural aspects of the dominant new society, while maintaining little aspects of their own cultural legacy;
 2. Separation, where individuals maintain aspects of their culture of origin, while rejecting any and all adherence to the dominant society's cultural values;
 3. Marginalization, where individuals reject both cultural aspects of the dominant society and their culture of origin;
 4. Integration, the last sector of this acculturation quadrant, where individuals maintain and adhere to cultural aspects of both the dominant society and their culture of origin.
- (Phinney, 2003)

In making a distinction between group level and individual level changes, Berry (1990) indicated that the changes are often different. At the group level, the changes might be in either the social structure of the group, the economic base, or their political position. The individual level might have changes in the identity, values, attitudes, and behavior factors. The rates at which these changes take place within the individual might also be different.

Group level effect is important for gaining a deeper understanding of acculturation experiences and may serve as a link to social forces, such as attitudes toward immigrants, immigration policies, and institutional racism. Individuals within a community may differ significantly in their level of acculturation and vary in the ways they have adapted to the host

culture (Cabassa, 2003; Crisp & Turner, 2011; Gudykunst, 2004; Kim & Gudykunst, 2005).

Value dimensions such as individualism and collectivism may be linked to culture.

Mexico

The USDS (2012) reported that the United States and Mexico share a 2000-mile border that until 2010 was possible for U.S. citizens to cross without a passport. It further reported that Mexico, population 116,000,000, is a country whose economy is considered to be rapidly rising and is ranked by the International Monetary Fund as the fourteenth largest in the world.

Mexico is a country that can be addressed as having five regions (Gannon, 2004). The first region is the northern border region where the people are more aggressive and independent. Secondly, the central region is characterized as more traditional, conservative, and autocratic, with family-owned businesses. The third region, located in the southeast, has the largest indigenous population where, because of the plantations and less industry, people are more relaxed, and business is more autocratic and paternalistic. The fourth region is represented by Mexico City. Although it is overcrowded, it is very modern and cosmopolitan. The fifth region is made up of the oil-rich areas along the Gulf of Mexico.

At the same time, Gannon (2004) surmised that because Mexico is very regional, it leads to not having a uniform culture. Huntington (1996) explained that Mexico represented a classic disrupted national culture that has been torn from its roots, at least once by invaders and external factors, the result of which gave it the richness of three distinct cultures. The first is the indigenous culture, second, the Spanish culture, and third, the mestizo of mixed indigenous and Spanish ancestry.

Since transnationalism and acculturation challenges of the expatriates were the focus of this study, an understanding of Hofstede's (1984) dimensions of culture ratings of Mexico helped

to understand the context of the country in which the study and the expatriates resided. The lower distance index for Mexico was high and indicated that there exists a large distance in equality between the classes in society that is accepted by the lower class of economically disadvantaged society. Authority positions are held in high respect. The individuality index was low for Mexico because it is a collectivist society and being a part of a family or group is more important, whereas in the United States, the individuality trait was more ingrained in our character. The masculinity index was high for Mexico meaning that there existed more of a machismo attitude and women have struggled more for equality.

Frequently, occupational similarities neutralize the importance of culture as well as similarities of social class (Gannon, 2004). Triandis' (1989) conceptualization of individualism gave priority to individual goals over group goals and tightness-looseness of rules (Gannon, 2004; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Hofstede (1991) categorized Mexico as a vertical-collectivist culture; a good amount of social distance exists between superiors and subordinates, and the persons in position of authority are expected to look after their members in exchange for their loyalty.

It is important to note that Hofstede (1984) compared the U.S. individualism to Mexican vertical collectivism and power distance, uncertainty avoidance, time horizon, femininity, and/or assertiveness differences that expatriates from the United States have to recognize. In contrast to Mexico, Hofstede argued that the United States has long been considered the most individualistic nation in the world because it has been able to pursue its goals regardless of birth and origin. U.S. citizens have been able to pursue economic self-interest because of unique social and physical conditions such as abundant natural resources, sparse population, and egalitarian class structure.

According to Hofstede's (1984) dimensions, the time index for the Mexican concept of time was low, and therefore, the time factor was more casual than in the United States. The *mañana* [tomorrow] attitude is prevalent in Mexico, where there is a greater tendency to procrastinate or put off duties or obligations until later. The uncertainty avoidance factor registered high, which indicated the society's low level of tolerance for uncertainty. An effort to minimize or reduce this level of the uncertainty avoidance factor strict rules, laws, policies, and regulations has been adopted and implemented. Another result of this high uncertainty avoidance characteristic is Hofstede's conclusion that Mexican society does not readily accept change and is very risk-averse.

According to Hall's (1977) high-context or low-context communication theory, Mexico is categorized as a high-context country. This is interpreted as meaning that Mexico uses a lot of face, hand, and body movements, is more emotional, and is more family-oriented. As a collectivist society, Mexico is more loyal to individuals than to corporations, is less likely to use contracts, and considers time to be less important. Hall ascertained that Mexico spends more time in socializing and getting to know the person, gives importance to titles and position of authority, and tends to embrace the *mañana* attitude, less eye-to-eye contact, and a more macho attitude.

San Miguel de Allende. The contextual setting in this research study is San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, a small provincial town in the mountains northwest of Mexico City with a population of approximately 100,000 Mexicans (Bloom, 2006). Located in the heartland of Mexico, this city has been a traditional stop for expatriate artists for many years, many of whom have made it their home. The USDS (2012) placed the number of U.S. citizens in San Miguel de

Allende, Guanajuato, at 4,000. Additionally, there is an American Consular office in San Miguel de Allende.

San Miguel de Allende was established by Spanish settlers in 1542, played an important role in the silver trade for centuries, and consequently became renowned for its remarkable artisanship in weaving and leather working (Bloom, 2006). Stirling Dickinson, an artist who had attended the Chicago Art Institute, arrived in San Miguel de Allende in 1937 and fell in love with the sleepy little colonial town. Over the next 50 years, he played an important part in leading in the creation of the town's two art schools, *Escuela de Bellas Artes* and the renowned art and language school, the *Instituto Allende* (Croucher, 2010). This was the beginning of an ongoing attraction of Americans coming to San Miguel de Allende.

Long (2006) reported that after World War II, many demobilized U.S. military veteran artists used their education grants or GI bills at the local U.S. accredited art school, *Instituto Allende*. Bloom (2006) attributed the "exoticism of Mexico" and the low cost of travel in the post-war years as being two important reasons behind the influx of U.S. veterans (p. 194). Croucher (2010) asserted that with these institutions, drawing many influential writers, painters, and sculptors to San Miguel during the following 50-year period, led to this as being known as the city's "Golden Age" (p. 39).

In addition, Croucher (2010) wrote that what began with Dickinson devoting his life to philanthropy for the town's natives and to the promotion of the arts, culture, and language led to the town achieving recognition as an artist colony. Bloom (2006) believed that these early artists set the tone for San Miguel de Allende as a "progressive and anti-establishment" art colony (p. 195). The richness of the history of San Miguel de Allende as an artist colony is considered one of the biggest pull factors for artists of all statures.

Today, San Miguel de Allende has the richest institutional matrix of any American colony in Mexico (Croucher, 2010). As a result of this, Croucher reported that environmental organizations, social service charities, language instruction classes, performance series, and theater groups, many attributed to U.S. expatriates, have prospered in San Miguel de Allende. The English-language newspaper, *La Atención*, was first published in 1975 as an eight-page paper and has expanded into 80 pages featuring some Spanish articles as well.

Expatriates. In today's world, the definition of expatriates with ever-increasing geographic mobility has become ever more complex being affected by the uneasy relationship between birthplace and domicile and the multiple identities that they may engender (Green, 2009). Expatriates are defined by Truly (2002) as migrants who leave their homeland because of personal, cultural, or political events that forced them to leave. Truly considered expatriates as members of the negatively selected migrant group, a group of individuals who feel obliged to leave their homeland. The International Organization for Migration (2011) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (2010) defined an immigrant as a person who has lived in a foreign country for one year. The Mexican Department of State, Secretaría de Gobernación (2013) defined the tourist as having a permit to be in the country up to six months.

For many the term expatriation, or the loss of citizenship, is sometimes used interchangeably with emigration, the physical change of domicile. Green (2009) argued that it is possible to move without losing one's citizenship of origin just as it has been possible to lose one's citizenship without ever leaving home. Historians, Green (2009) added, should integrate emigration and expatriation in immigration studies. Furthermore, according to Green (2009), immigration history, written primarily in the countries of arrival, has most often focused on the

problematic policies and experiences of entry, acceptance, rejection, and/or settlement of newcomers.

Fahlman (2001) noted that expatriation has long been a distinctive aspect of American cultural thought for many American leading artists and writers. Green (2009) emphatically stated that the determination of the fundamental nature of the expatriate is noted as being a central problem by first exploring the positioning of the artists' professional maturity at the time they spent abroad. How much time is spent away from America, motives, length of time, the effect of their adopted culture, and how they regard themselves were also key in her determination of the artists' stature. Fahlman (2001) addressed the uneasy negotiation between personal and national identity, arguing that an artist born in America will always be an American by fact of birth, if not by inclination.

Accordingly, Green (2009) further stated that writers and artists have eclipsed a broader understanding of expatriation, both as a legal act and with regard to its meaning for changing notions of citizenship. Similarly, Rose (2005) agreed that creativity and artistic development are impacted by changes in the artist's contextual reality over time and is interesting to consider the individual vision of the adult artist as shaped by inner tensions of a self-identity in continual flux. She further posited that as artists, individuals do not exist independently of socially assigned identities.

U.S. expatriate artists in Mexico. Mexico's close proximity to the United States and its climate, culture, social, political, and natural resources have attracted a migration of expatriate artists from around the world through the years and to this day includes many from the United States. The U.S. expatriate migration of artists in the early 20th century after World War I was filled with disillusion and despair toward the U.S. government and society. McMahon (1964)

struggled with the emotions that the expatriates in 1920s Paris confronted in regard to their feelings toward their own country. For Hemingway and the other writers of the Lost Generation, Paris allowed them to see their own country better and to write its emotional history with greater perception, as well as developing their literary sensibilities.

American artists, claimed Hennessy (1971), chose Mexico as an alternative to Paris in the 1920s. It was more economical and practical because of the proximity of Mexico to the United States in comparison to Europe. The years following after the Mexican Revolution were an exciting period for artists supported by North American sympathizers and expatriates. Anita Brenner, Alma Reed, Frances Toor, Bertram Wolfe, William Spratling, and Ernest Gruening were among some of the writers whose books were supportive of and illuminating about post-revolutionary Mexico.

Trillo (1997) presented the Mexico that was once the destination for a generation of world intellectuals, activists, and artists. Radicals who used their art as their method of dissent included John Reed, Carleton Beals, Frank Tannenbaum, Frances Toor, Nelson Rockefeller, Anita Brenner, Langston Hughes, Waldo Frank, Edward Weston, D. H. Lawrence, Ernest Gruening, and Tina Modotti, among others. The debates held in Mexico City by the disenchanted American expatriates paralleled those held in New York and Paris throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Coyoacan, Chapala, and Mexico City, as well as small villages throughout Northern Mexico extending to the Yucatan peninsula, were a few of the stops for the American expatriate community (Trillo, 1997).

The cultural and political influence and exchange between countries, noted Trillo (1997), were never more evident than with the Mexican muralist movement's influence in the U.S. New Deal's muralist school. The effect and influence of their exposure to the muralists depicting

indigenous Mexico was also instrumental in the thought and policies of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs in the New Deal (Trillo, 1997). This was to leave an everlasting effect on U.S. artists in the method of relaying a social message to the masses through their art.

Herzog (2000) delivered an examination of Elizabeth Catlett, a Black expatriate artist, exploring an important period of time in Catlett's life between the 1950s and the 1970s, of which little is known about in the United States. She was a member of the *Taller de Gráfica Popular* [Popular Graphic Arts Workshop] and was the first woman professor of sculpture at the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* [National Autonomous University of Mexico]. Schreiber (2008) noted that the context of artistic production resulting from the collaborative working environment of the graphic arts collective between the artists of Mexico and the United States impacted the themes and aesthetics of their work. Catlett's work and political philosophy is discussed from her years as a student at Howard University during the 1930s through various political and social movements up to the 1960s and 1970s, the Mexican Public Art Movement, and feminism.

The political context of Catlett's work and her diverse sympathies and allegiances is analyzed by Herzog (2000), as well as the artistic influences that transformed her stylistic vocabulary into a socially charged statement. Starting from her first trip to Mexico in 1946 through the 1990s, her belief was that her art could affect social change through cross-cultural aesthetics of her African-American identity and her adopted Mexican identity. She became a major influence in the Black art movement in the United States as she successfully transcended borders from Mexico with her art and social message. The art of Catlett and John Wilson, another Black expatriate artist, articulated a transnational aesthetic through its fusion of representational techniques, multiple audiences, and thematic transpositions (Schreiber, 2008).

U.S. expatriate artists migrating to Mexico during the 1950s were largely White and associated with the blacklisting brought about by the communist Red scare perpetuated by the political circumstances of the Cold War (Anhalt, 2001; Schreiber, 2008). Many of the artists were arriving ahead of subpoenas for them to appear before the House Un-American Activities Committee in Washington, DC. In contrast, Schreiber (2008) emphatically declared that the experiences of the African American artists in Mexico contributed to a transnational perspective that was in opposition to the dominant Cold War culture.

U.S. expatriate retirees and tourists in Mexico. Many good qualities as well as bad qualities differentiate the expatriate U.S. citizen in Mexico. Truly (2002) delved into the recent migration of North American retirees to the “Riviera” shores of Lake Chapala, in the state of Jalisco, Mexico. The largest concentration of American retirees is said to be located in this area. This area has long been known to attract writers, musicians, and other intellectuals through the years. Truly (2002) examined the recent development of this area, focusing on the behavior and attitude of the foreign migrants and the subsequent impact on the community.

In their study of U.S. retirees migrating across international boundaries, Sunil et al. (2007) identified four major reasons for migration identified: (a) financial circumstances, (b) the natural environment, (c) a sense of community and friendship, and (d) a better quality of life. The study was important for two reasons: (a) it pointed out the lack of available literature and research at this time on the phenomenon and (b) it showed important implications on the way of life, social relationships, and welfare of this group of older people. Lifestyle migration refers to an increasing population who make the choice to migrate based on their belief that there is a better way of way of life elsewhere. Their decision to migrate results in their becoming part of a

growing phenomenon that has important, but little understood, implications for both societies and individuals (Sunil et al., 2007; Truly, 2002).

In a recent study, Banks (2004) gave us a better understanding of how expatriate retirees living in the Lake Chapala Riviera region of Jalisco, Mexico, maintain their personal identities. Expatriates' stories and descriptions of Mexicans and the Mexican ways of life are reflective in nature, while providing an argument for the intercultural relationships. Meanings that are associated with retirement and how the retirement experience might be related to communicative behavior are explored by Banks (2004). The study linked some recent studies on aging and identity with special emphasis to research within the ethnography of communication tradition. This study also linked with studies from other disciplines on the subjective meanings of retirement among international migrant retirees (Banks, 2004).

Lee's (1966) theory of migration push/pull factors, which occur when potential migrants add up the pluses and minuses for both their origin and destination before deciding whether to move, is applied in the lifestyle migration studies. Examples of push/pull factors, in the case of U.S. retirees, were their consideration of the Mexican winter climate and the relatively low cost-of-living as pluses (MPI, 2006; Sunil et al, 2007; Truly, 2002). Technology, surmised Croucher (2010), is an important pull factor for U.S. migrants in their decision to make the transnational migration move into Mexico. Modern information communication technology allows them to follow news reports and cultural events in the United States, manage their financial affairs, and communicate regularly with loved ones.

Marotta (2011) suggested that contemporary migration scholars have drawn on Stuart Hall's ideas on hybridity and his conceptual framework with conducting empirical work on online ethnicities or communal identities that are formed through the use of social media. Parker

and Song (2009) have explored the potential of Hall's work in illuminating the online world of cultural groups on British-Chinese websites. Their assessment of these new online ethnicities can be distinguished by several characteristics: they are (a) future oriented, (b) multi-faceted, (c) culturally rather than biologically determined, and (d) positional and contingent.

In asserting the principles of hybridization, Canclini (1997) elected to include the use of alternative media or modern communication technologies as a social concept to cultural processes, which takes into account multiculturalism. He believed that this media could revitalize communities and rekindle community spirit. Canclini (2005) further claimed that the hybridization model is open and inclusive rather than unidirectional and exclusive, therefore, making it a more genuine communication for communities of all kinds.

Canclini (2005) suggested that the technology of modern media is a two-way process by being interactive because it shares meaning and establishes and maintains social relationships. The more widespread and powerful the role of the media becomes, the greater the need for people to engage in their own local or inter-group communication activities. In this way, they would also rediscover and develop traditional forms of communication.

An investigation into the factors involved in the migration of more and more American citizens traveling to and becoming retirees in Mexico was conducted by Corchado and Iliff (2005). Among the pull factors cited by the Corchado and Iliff report, were lower cost of living, more affordable housing, warm weather, a more relaxed pace of life, and a different political atmosphere. Not surprisingly, they also reported that Mexico is also attracting younger Americans looking for a better way of life well as Americans who also consider Mexico as part of their heritage.

Croucher (2010) postulated that the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) helped encourage U.S. migration to Mexico. MPI (2006) reported that NAFTA also paved the way for U.S. chain stores that included Wal-Mart, Costco, and Home Depot to provide familiar products to the immigrants at lower prices. This agreement allowed U.S. immigrants more of the everyday home amenities to be within reach.

On the other hand, a scathing report was written by Torres and Momsen (2005), who derided the results of the migration of transnational corporations and expatriates in Cancun, or as it is referred to by the local population, Gringolandia. The effects of the transnational migrant and large U.S. expatriate communities play a critical role in the American influence in Cancun and the surrounding area. The researchers pointed out that the increasing number of American retirees who chose Cancun as their destination point reflects the permanent bonds that are being forged. These communities are often closed to the local indigenous population, while, nevertheless, influencing through their patterns of consumption, expenditures, and behavior the local economy and cultural exchange (Torres & Momsen, 2005).

As was evident in the findings of the literature review, Mexico remains a place that is high on the list for people to migrate to in this hemisphere. Hartman (2008) explored the do's and don'ts of things to ponder when considering a move to Mexico. First on the list is a plea to learn about the culture, which can be a continual learning process. She offered many reasons that people consider when contemplating the move to Mexico.

Chapter III: Methodology

Rationale for Qualitative Research

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine the transnational and acculturation issues of U.S. expatriate artists living San Miguel de Allende, a colonial town in the state of Guanajuato, Mexico, and the effect, if any, that location has in their artistic production. This research study was conducted using basic interpretive qualitative research that Merriam (1998, 2009) explained as understanding “(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (p. 38). In this study, the researcher has incorporated the interpretive lens by using narrative inquiry as methodology to gather and analyze the data. Narrative inquiry is a type of research that “views stories – whether gathered through field notes, interviews, oral tales, blogs, letters, or autobiographies – as fundamental to human experience” (Tracy, 2013, p. 36). Utilizing narrative inquiry techniques has allowed the researcher to explore the U.S. expatriate artists’ understanding of their transnational lives and acculturation in a new cultural setting. This approach allowed the researcher to use in-depth live interviews with the participants in their natural setting or context.

According to Schram (2006), an important feature of qualitative research is that the researcher is the main instrument of data collection by being in the natural setting and building a rapport with the participants. It is imperative that the researcher be with the participants in order to observe, interview, and take good field notes to include in the research. The researcher incorporated this approach into the research study by observing, interviewing, and taking good field notes of the time spent with the participants in their natural setting.

In the Rossman and Rallis' (2003) description of qualitative research, the researcher is the means through which the study is conducted and involves a process of conceptualizing, designing, conducting, and writing what is learned. The qualitative researcher can write in such a way as to give an expressive voice to the report. Strauss and Corbin (1998) maintained that qualitative research works at seeking out and interpreting the meanings that people bring to their own actions by focusing on data comprising language, sounds, signs, images, and the meaning that people give them.

Qualitative research is context sensitive or context specific and is based on an inductive process of reasoning where data collected through techniques such as interviews, observations, recordings, and case studies allow for the researcher to examine issues and problems through the perspective of the participants. This aspect of the research is derived from the assumption that ideas, people, and events cannot be fully understood if isolated from the circumstances in which and through which they naturally occur. Rossman and Rallis (2003) asserted that qualitative research focused on description, analysis, and interpretation and that the qualitative researcher assumed that understanding and representing what has been learned was filtered through his/her own personal biography that is situated in a sociopolitical, historical moment.

Research setting. Marshall and Rossman (2006) described a site selection and population as being fundamental to the design of the study. This research study was conducted in the artist colony community of San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico. For many years, this artist community has been a traditional stop for U.S. expatriate artists, many of whom have made it their home and provided an appropriate and accessible setting for the study. The interviews were conducted at the location of the participants' choosing, preferably in the working environment of the artists.

Participant selection. U.S. expatriate artists or naturalized U.S. expatriate citizens living in San Miguel de Allende for at least six months were considered in the study. Six months of residency is an acceptable timeframe among studies involving expatriates (Gustafson, 2001; Sunil et al., 2007). Artists practicing a craft recognized by peers in the artistic community, such as painting, music, designing, photography, writing, glass, and plastic arts were eligible to participate in this study.

The snowball sampling technique allowed the initial participants to recommend other artists, thus generating a network of expatriate artists for this study. Snowball sampling, as defined by Atkinson and Flint (2001), is a technique used for gathering research subjects through the identification of an initial subject who is used to provide the names of other potential participants. These other participants may themselves open possibilities for an expanding web of contact and inquiry. Snowball sampling can be placed within a wider set of methodologies that take advantage of the social networks of the identified respondents, which can be used to provide a researcher with an escalating set of potential contacts (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Marshall and Rossman (2006) agreed that the snowball technique's purpose was in identifying cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information rich.

Participant selection goal of the study was 10 to 12. Smith and Osborn (2003) argued that there is no right answer to the question of number of participants in a study. Several factors that determine the number are the commitment to the level of analysis and reporting, the richness of the individual cases, and the constraints the researcher is operating under. Smith and Osborn (2003) further explained that there has been a recent trend in interpretive studies conducted with a relatively small number of participants of five or six. They proposed that a larger number of

samples can overwhelm the researcher with the vast amount of data generated and, are therefore, not able to produce a sufficiently penetrating analysis.

Charmaz (2006) noted that a small number of subjects, between 6 and 12, might be extremely valuable and represent adequate numbers for a research project. Atran, Medina, and Ross (2005) suggested that in some of their studies “as few as ten informants were needed to establish a consensus” (p. 753). Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) found that saturation was attained after 12 participant interviews; therefore for most research studies in which the aim is to understand common perceptions and experiences among a group of relatively homogeneous individuals, 12 interviews should suffice.

Mason (2010) argued that the level of saturation should be the guiding principle in determining the number of participants in a qualitative study. Glaser and Strauss (1967) defined the concept of saturation as the point at which the collection of new data did not shed any further light on the issues. Ritchie, Lewis, and Elam (2003) determined that there existed a point of diminishing return to a qualitative sample of participants, mainly that more data does not necessarily lead to more information as the study goes on. One occurrence of data is potentially as useful as many in understanding the process behind a topic, thereby making the frequency of data not as important. Crouch and McKenzie (2006) and Mason (2010) concluded that qualitative research was concerned with finding meaning and not making generalized hypothesis statements. Consequently, since qualitative research is labor intensive, the analysis of a large sample size could be very time consuming and impractical.

Protection of Human Subjects: Ethical Considerations

Ethics. The ethical considerations refer to standards for conduct based on moral principles and issues of posturing and role presentation, exchange and disclosure, making the

public the private, and building relationships amid expectations of eventual departure (Schram, 2006). In this study, the researcher applied ethical standards for the protection of the identity, privacy and confidentiality of the individual participants of the study. An Informed Consent Form was provided for the participants that stated the purpose of the study, their right to review the results and to a copy of the completed study.

Qualitative research requires standards to ensure that the ethical and moral concerns of the participants are safeguarded. All responsibility for the protection of the participant were assumed by the researcher and strived to adhere to all aspects of the guidelines set by the IRB. In relation to ethical concerns, it can be argued that ethical issues and risks were greater in qualitative research because of the shared involvement and responsibility felt by researchers and participants (Deyhle, Hess, & LeCompte, 1992; Reisetter, Yexley, Bonds, Nikels, & McHenry, 2003).

IRB. An IRB form was submitted by the researcher to gain permission for the study to ensure that the research proceeded with appropriate protections against risk to humans and animals (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Participation in this study was strictly anonymous and voluntary with each participant being provided with a letter explaining the purpose of the study. Each participant signed an Informed Consent form that stated their agreement to be interviewed and to have their experiences documented within this research study. The Informed Consent form described the research study and informed the participant of their right to withdraw from this study at any time. IRB protocols for the protection of the identity and confidentiality of the participants were explained and adhered to by the researcher.

Interview Protocol – Interview Questions

Demographic Questions

1. What is your nationality?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your ethnicity?
4. What is your level of education?
5. What is your specialty field in the arts?
6. What is your age? 20 to 30 ____ 30 to 50 ____ 50 to 60 ____
60 to 70 ____ 70+ ____

Interview Questions

1. Where did you live prior to coming to Mexico?
2. Do you still have family in the United States? How do you communicate with your family and friends from the United States?
3. What motivated you to move to Mexico? Why and how did you choose San Miguel de Allende to migrate to?
4. How do you feel about being an expatriate in Mexico?
 - a. How do you feel about being an expatriate artist in Mexico?
 - b. How would you describe one day in San Miguel de Allende?
 - c. Describe your life in Mexico in terms of your art and culture?
5. In what way(s) has Mexico influenced your art?
6. How do you feel about being an expatriate artist in Mexico?
7. Can you describe your relationship with other artists in the community?

8. Would you recommend to other artists to come to Mexico? Would you have any specific recommendations?

Data Collection

The researcher incorporated an inductive process of reasoning whereby data collected through techniques such as interviews, observations, and digital audio recordings allowed the researcher to examine and interpret issues and problems through the perspective of the participants (Merriam, 1998). Research data were collected through both primary and secondary sources. Primary data consisted of in-depth interviews and observation. Secondary sources of data consisted of entailed ICT media content and published information material.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews between the researcher and the participant. For the protection of the participant, the participant was identified and referred to through a pseudonym system so as to remain anonymous. The research questions were open-ended questions conducted through narrative interviews with the subjects using a digital recorder. Each interview was between 35 and 75 minutes in duration. The interviews were conducted in a setting choice of the participant so that their perspective and role could be in a natural setting or context. After obtaining permission from the participant to record, each session in-depth interviews were recorded. The participants were provided with open-ended questions.

Observation of the interview participant's behavior and attitude, context setting, and surroundings were noted by the researcher. Schram (2006) described the observation component as key to noting the interviewees' body language and effect in addition to their words. Schram (2006) asserted that it required engagement at some level in the lives of those around whom your inquiry is focused. He further stated that it is through direct interaction with their perspectives and behaviors that the researcher can focus and refine their interpretations.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher was to conduct a basic, interpretive qualitative study. The goal of the researcher throughout the study was to produce an unbiased qualitative study while collecting the data. The researcher at all times adhered to ethical standards for the protection of the identity, privacy, and confidentiality of the individual participants of the study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began with the digitally recorded in-depth interviews being transcribed to text. Observations of the interview participant's behavior and attitude, context setting, and surroundings were useful for the researcher when analytically reflecting on the interviews and organizing the data. Reflexivity or self-awareness on the part of the researcher is an important aspect that is subjective and allows the researcher to step back and reflect on what is happening and to understand oneself and his/her biases, interests, opinions, and prejudices. Qualitative researchers do not believe that bias can be eliminated and focus on understanding and explaining the effects of reflexivity that is present in social interactions, making their inquiry systematic and rigorous (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Creswell's (1994) six-step process of data analysis was used in this basic interpretive qualitative study. According to Creswell, the six interrelated steps are regularly employed by qualitative researchers in the preparation, analysis, and interpretation of the collected qualitative data, especially from interviews:

1. Preparing, transcribing, and organizing the collected data for analysis;
2. Immersing into the data by reading it several times and coding the data;
3. Using coding to describe and develop themes;
4. Representing and reporting the findings through visual displays and narrative discussion;

5. Give meaning to the findings through interpretive narrative of the meaning of the research;
6. Validating the accuracy and credibility through member checking, triangulation, audit trail, reflexivity, and rich and thick descriptions. (pp. 261-262)

Application of Creswell's (1994) and Tesch's (1990) coding process to the transcribed interviews, in conjunction with the researcher's impressions of the participants, led to the development of the five themes that occurred throughout all of the interviews: The Attraction of San Miguel de Allende; Being Here and Being There; Adaptation into the Local Community; San Miguel's Cultural Influences in their Art; and Self-Identity of the U.S. Expatriate Artist. Creswell's (1994) and Tesch's (1990) coding processes involved the reading of the text and asking, "What is this about?" The following steps involved identifying text segments and assigning a code word to describing the meaning of the segment, grouping these codes, and seeking similar or redundant codes, then reducing the list of codes to themes that form the major ideas of the data.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

To ensure trustworthiness and credibility, several strategies were utilized by the researcher as instruments to strengthen the internal validity of the study. Triangulation, reflexivity, audit trail, member checks, and rich, thick description are some of the strategies planned to ensure the issues of reliability, internal validity, and external validity (Merriam & Associates, 2002). These procedures were implemented by the researcher to ensure the transferability and replicability of the study in a scholarly context.

Triangulation. The researcher used the triangulation strategy by checking data collected in the recorded interview with observations of the participant and the surrounding environment during the interview process. According to Creswell (2011), the triangulation process in

qualitative research consists of corroborating evidence from different individuals and types of data into descriptions and themes. Bringing the different sources of data together to be compared and contrasted can allow the researcher to ensure that the quality of the research data is strengthened.

Reflexivity. Merriam and Associates (2002) stated that reflexivity is the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the “human instrument” (p. 26). Reflexivity on the part of the researcher will allow him the opportunity to step back and reflect on what is happening and to understand his biases, interests, opinions, and prejudices. The researcher used his reflexivity in explaining how the conclusions to the study were reached.

Member checks. Member checks were used by the researcher as a way to “determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings through taking the final report or specific descriptions or themes back to the participants and determining whether these participants feel they are accurate” (Creswell, 2009, p. 191). Creswell (2009) stated that member checks are a process in which the researcher asks one or more of the participants in the study to check on the accuracy of the account. The researcher had one or more of the participants check on the accuracy of the researcher’s interpretation of the data.

Audit trail. The researcher kept a journal of detailed notes of the interview process after each interview was concluded. An audit trail, according to Merriam and Associates (2002), in a qualitative study is dependent on the researcher “describing in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry” (p. 27).

Rich and thick descriptions. The researcher used rich and thick descriptions to report the interview findings in such a way as that the reader can understand the context of the study. According to Creswell (2009), providing detailed descriptions of the setting can make the

findings or narrative more realistic and useful to the reader so that “this description may transport readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences” (pp. 191-192).

Chapter IV: Findings

The purpose of this interpretive qualitative study was to explore the transnational lives of contemporary U.S. expatriate artists living in San Miguel de Allende, a colonial town in the state of Guanajuato, Mexico, and the effect, if any, that location and the acculturation process have on their artistic production. This study promoted an understanding of issues of transnationalism and acculturation and the roles that they play in the integration and adaptation process.

Two research questions structured this qualitative study:

1. How do the contemporary U.S. expatriate artists living in Mexico make sense of their transnational lives and experiences?
2. How does the intercultural contact influence their artistic expressions and body of work?

The participants in this study were interviewed to gain a perspective on their transnational lifestyle experiences through open-ended questions. The following findings are a result of their experiences offered through the lenses of their own perspective. The researcher reiterates that the results cannot be generalized to all expatriates.

This chapter begins with an introduction of the participants through a brief participant profile of each by the researcher. The second part of Chapter IV presents the themes that emerged from the interviews. These themes were a result of a line-by-line analysis of the audio and transcribed interview data that kept the focus on the interview data rather than on the theoretical framework related to the study. Five themes emerged out of the interviews and occurred throughout all of the interviews. These themes will be discussed later in the chapter: The Attraction of San Miguel de Allende; Being Here and Being There; Adaptation into the

Local Community; San Miguel's Cultural Influences in their Art; and Self-Identity of the U.S. Expatriate Artist.

Participant Profiles

Demographic information in the biographies of the nine participants revealed that all were born in the United States and their ages ranged from 30 to 80+ years of age (Table 1). There were six males and three females with different levels of academic achievement and different specialties in their field of art.

Table 1

Demographic Data of Participants

Participants	Nationality	Gender	Ethnicity	Education	Specialty	Age
1	USA	Male	Mexican	Some College	Music	70+
2	USA	Female	English-Apache	Some College	Music	50+
3	USA	Male	Jew-Mexican-English	BS	Music	30 to 50
4	USA	Male	Latin-American	BA	Sculptor-painter	70+
5	USA	Male	Scot-Welsh-Irish	Some College	Music	70+
6	USA	Female	Anglo	Some College	Art-Architecture	50 to 60
7	USA	Male	Scot-French-Norse	Some college	Stained Glass	50 to 60
8	USA	Male	Jew	Some college	Music	60 to 70
9	USA	Female	Russian-German	RN	Paper	70+

Johnny. Johnny is a Mexican-American male born in the United States and had lived in Texas, New York, and California before moving to San Miguel de Allende 12 years ago. He has completed college hours but no degree. He is an international trumpet artist and also a disabled veteran of the U.S. military. He is married to a U.S. citizen and has (or holds) dual U.S. and

Mexican citizenship. As a professional musician, he has traveled throughout the world. The interview took place at his studio apartment.

Johnny's family still lives in Texas and California, is most notably concerned for his elderly father who resides in Texas. He shuttles between San Miguel and the United States two to three times a year. The close proximity of both locations, coupled with inexpensive transportation access, either through the airport in neighboring Leon or buses to the United States were important factors in his decision to move to San Miguel.

Johnny thoroughly enjoys the small village quality of San Miguel and living within the Mexican community with other artists as opposed to a gated community. He loves to be able to walk from his home to the neighborhood stores, *tortillerias*, and fresh juice stands in the mornings.

He enjoys teaching trumpet lessons to young mariachi students who are the children of Mexican mariachi members. Johnny expressed a comfort in knowing that there is a large community of other U.S. expatriates as well as an American bilingual newspaper and several meeting places where other expatriates congregate.

Lennie. Lennie is a U.S. born female and lists her ethnicity as English and Apache. She has a freshman level of college. Her specialty in the arts is as a singer, songwriter, and lyricist. She is married and has lived in San Miguel for 10 years. The interview took place at her studio apartment.

Lennie was raised in southern California and still has family there. She communicates with them by telephone. On television, she watches CNN and Fox News to keep current with U.S. news. The *Biblioteca* [American library] allows her to read the current U.S. magazines.

Lennie loves and has embraced the expatriate lifestyle that she considers simpler and easier. She has not driven in the 10 years that she has lived in San Miguel, therefore has no vehicle or insurance costs. Cheaper rent prices as well as the transportation system of buses and taxicabs make her life easier.

As an expatriate artist, Lennie appreciates the family-oriented values of the Mexican community and the international community where expat artists share, support, and respect one another. She volunteers through the library in giving tours to beautiful San Miguel homes in her spare time. Lennie also feels that the Mexican community appreciates her more as a woman than in the United States resulting in a feeling of higher esteem.

Felix. Felix is a male born in the United States. He lists his ethnicity as Mexican/Sephardic Jew/German/English/Mic-Mic Native-American. He is not married. He has a BA degree and is a vocalist/musician artist. His specialty in the music field is as a singer, songwriter, and performer. The interview took place on the rooftop of one of Felix's favorite neighborhood cafes.

He first became aware of San Miguel through a fellow musician in Texas and originally came to visit for six days, stayed 10 months, and has lived here approximately eight years. The main reason he first wanted to come to San Miguel was to have some time to be in a place alone for a little while.

Felix supports his lifestyle by performing in the old-time-honored tradition of a troubadour. Time to write, rehearse, perform, and promote is what living in San Miguel has afforded him. Felix lists the financial advantage in San Miguel, "where you can live cheaply enough and pursue your art with all the devotion and time" as a strong contributing factor for him to remain there.

Felix's family lives in the United States and he arranges to visit once or twice a year. Communication with his family is primarily through Internet access to email. Facebook and Skype also allow him to have easy and frequent communication with family and friends in the United States. Felix also uses the Internet as a tool for researching and downloading music through YouTube and other programs.

Robert. Robert is a male born in the United States of Latin-American ethnicity. He attended three years of art school. His specialties in the arts include painter, printmaker, sculpture, and sculptor. The interview took place at his home, which he and his wife own and where they also have a studio.

Robert moved to San Miguel from Georgia after retiring and has lived there with his wife for over 10 years. He has family in California and communicates through email and the telephone. Robert visits the family in the United States once a year for three weeks.

Robert is considered one of the most respected elder statesmen in the San Miguel art community. He had previously lived in Oaxaca and had been aware of San Miguel as an artist community. The artistic community was the main factor for him moving to San Miguel. Robert commented that his love for the Mexican people and the "freedom to work in any manner I choose" has allowed his work to evolve.

Robert expressed a strong sense of community, which is why he chose to live in an area in San Miguel where his neighbors would be primarily Mexican. He prefers to shop every day in the little stores in the neighborhood. He speaks Spanish and insists that Spanish be spoken when speaking with the Mexican nationals. Robert believes that a lot of the artists, such as he, assimilate the cultural traditions and relate to the community family values.

Don. Don is a male born in the United States of Scots-Irish-Welsh ethnicity. He attained a BS degree, retired, and is single. His specialty in the arts is in the field of jazz music with a concentration on woodwinds and keyboards. The interview took place at his studio apartment.

Don was raised in Texas and has traveled extensively throughout the world. He has one son who lives in the United States. He attributes being fluent in Spanish from having been raised around it in Texas. He also studied the Spanish language in school.

Don has been traveling to Mexico since he was a young man and first came to San Miguel in the late 1960s. He found that as he matured and his values changed, so did his interest in San Miguel. He lists the close proximity to the United States, the climate, and financial considerations as major reasons for choosing to live here. He also considers the values and culture of the Mexican people as a great part of his appreciation for San Miguel and the Mexican people.

Don enjoys having the time and freedom to live his lifestyle and considers U.S. expatriates as having “a little bit of misfit” in them. His recommendation to other U.S. expatriates is that they should live within Mexican communities and take the time to explore and shop in the neighborhoods, becoming part of their economic family. A part of his daily mornings includes shopping and getting to know his neighborhood stores and vendors. The park and the library are also important parts of his time in San Miguel and suggested that it should be part of any expatriate’s experience.

Sheryl. Sheryl is a female born in the United States. She has a BA degree. Her specialties in the arts are architecture and design. She produces shows that feature her singing talents with her band as well. The interview took place at her home where she also has a studio.

Sheryl moved to San Miguel from Philadelphia and New York 24 years ago as a stressed-out successful designing business owner. She mentioned about jokingly telling people, “I came for the weather, I stayed for the food, and I never left for the people.” Sheryl pointed out that she finally learned how to pace herself a little better by taking a more Mexican attitude to her life.

Sheryl is divorced and is a single mother. Her daughter is a dual-citizen of the United States and Mexico. She volunteers her services in various projects for the community. Sheryl communicates with friends and family by telephone, Facebook, Vonage, cellphones, smart phones, emails, and Skype.

Tony. Tony is a male born in the United States. He notes his nationality as “world citizen” and ethnicity as Scots-French-Norse-Milkman. He also lists his education as “continuing” with his specialty in the arts in stained glass [*vitrales*]. He volunteers and teaches classes of young people in the stained glass tradition. He has lived in San Miguel 34 years. The interview took place at his home where he also has a studio.

Tony still has family in the United States and communicates with them by emails and telephone and occasionally through visits. He grew up on the U.S.-Mexico border, so he was familiar with the Mexican culture before moving to San Miguel in the late 1970s. Upon first arriving, Tony described San Miguel as a beautiful, tranquil, “little cultural oasis in the central mountains of Mexico” with a small number of foreign artists and writers.

Tony has been married to a Mexican national for 34 years and considers it an added benefit because of the financial and property protection under Mexican marriage laws. He appreciates being a homeowner in a *colonia* [neighborhood], considering it a comfort that makes life easier. He has become an accomplished cook and loves to invite people to their home. He counts half of his friends as fellow artists in the community.

Buddy. Buddy is a male born in the United States of Jewish ethnicity. He attended two years at a music college. His specialties in the arts include being a premier free-style jazz drummer and as an international jazz vocalist. He is a working musician and also teaches Tai Chi classes. He volunteers for AA and NA meetings. The interview took place at his home where he also has a studio.

Buddy still has family in the United States and communicates mainly by email. He is bilingual and has been married to a Mexican woman for over 30 years. Buddy considers himself a cultural hybrid since he has been influenced by what he refers to as “Gringo, Black, and Mexican cultures.” Buddy feels that the cultural influences changed him as a person, and although he can draw on his Mexican influence, it does not necessarily make him a Mexican, but “kind of like an honorary Mexican.”

Buddy believes that there is a lack of artistic unity in the San Miguel jazz community. He does not feel disenfranchised from the United States and feels he can be patriotic to both the United States and Mexico and not have to be an “expatriate.” “I’ve never stopped loving the United States. It’s the home of jazz....But, by the same token, I love Mexico too.” Buddy expressed financial consideration as a major factor in his decision to stay in Mexico.

Barbara. Barbara is a female born in the United States of German and Russian ethnicity. Her level of education is a Registered Nurse (RN), and she retired as an RN. Her specialty in the arts is handmade paper. The interview took place at her home, which she owns and where she also has a studio. Barbara and her husband love living in a *colonia* that is made up of many different nationalities.

Barbara moved from Georgia and had traveled extensively to other countries prior to moving to San Miguel 12 years ago. She is married to an American citizen. They have family in

California that she communicates with through a Vonage landline telephone, Skype, and email. They visit family once a year for three weeks. Barbara had also lived in Mexico 50 years before. She and her husband had decided on eventually moving to San Miguel even then because of the art community.

Barbara has devoted a lot of time to doing volunteer work with other expatriate artists for the local community. She and other women artists donate their art to various organizations that have fundraisers for these projects where American and Canadian expats volunteer. On arriving in San Miguel, Barbara had a private tutor for several years to learn to speak Spanish and is very proficient in managing her daily tasks in the Spanish language.

The profiles of the participants have presented their demographic information as well as a snapshot description of their activities on any given day. Topics cover a wide range of subjects that include volunteering, shopping, teaching, to performances. The next section describes the themes that emerged from the interviews.

Themes

As indicated in Chapter III, the themes were constructed by applying Creswell's (1994) and Tesch's (1990) recommended coding process to the transcribed interview data. The researcher analyzed and organized the data through line-by-line analysis of both the audio and transcription data. Multiple readings of the transcripts led the researcher to find the five emerging themes that occurred throughout all of the interviews: Being Here and Being There; The Attraction of San Miguel de Allende; Adaptation into the Local Community; San Miguel's Cultural Influences in their Art; and Self-Identity of the U.S. Expatriate Artist.

The researcher presented a general interpretation of the findings of the U.S. expatriate artists who have made the decision to embark on their transnational migration into foreign

country. The transcripts of the interviews revealed five marked patterns that help us to understand: What reasons have drawn them to come and make their home in the artist community of San Miguel de Allende? How did they negotiate their sense of belonging to envelop different dimensions that define the transnational lifestyle? What factors have come into play to smooth their acculturation adaptation into the local community? How did their transnational migration experience to San Miguel affect the creativity process of their artistic development? What is their sense of identity?

Theme 1: The attraction of San Miguel de Allende. The majority of the respondents in this study agreed that the sense of community, artistically and culturally, was a major attraction point to settle in San Miguel de Allende. This is a well-known destination within certain artistic circles in the United States as well as internationally. Artists who travel to this place always highlight it as a place to find kindred spirits and a place to create.

Don referred to his choice of an expatriate artist lifestyle in San Miguel as a freeing action from the constraints of the attitudes of what he considers a more closed conservative society in Texas. He further explained what best describes the expatriate artist attitude as, “I would say that most of the people down here ... there’s a little bit of not fitting well in their integrated community. I believe that we’re a little bit misfit and I’m very happy, happy to be a little bit misfit.”

Felix was drawn to make San Miguel his home because it provided him the setting to perform and create in the old-time-honored tradition of the troubadour lifestyle. Felix commented on the connection with other U.S. expatriate artists who had “all taken the risk to be here and were out of their element in the United States, so they’re slightly more adventurous than

the average Joe and they're birds of a feather." Felix recalled that he originally came to San Miguel with the intention of staying for six days and ended up staying for 10 months:

I really just wanted to have some time to be in a place where I could be alone for a little while. What had motivated me to come down was just to escape for a little while and figure out what my next step was, but once I got here, I fell in love with the town and just kept staying and playing more and more music It really changed everything for me, because I saw lots of artists living here, lots of musicians from different countries, painters, lots of Bohemian-types.

Felix offered his observation of other new arrivals' behavior after they had been in town for a while. He believed that most were coming for "a sense of liberation because they know that 90% of the time the *Mexicanos* are not going to force their cultural values upon them while they are here. So, they can have fun." Felix felt that after they have been here for a while, most artists would ordinarily see deeper into the culture and start to see the differences between themselves and the Mexican community and "try to bridge those things and focus on their art." He considered this the point at which most would decide to either fit in or move on.

Felix strongly recommended San Miguel as a good place to come to quickly get acculturated and used to the way things are and how they work. He remarked that San Miguel served as a great springboard to go and visit other scenic and historic places as part of the tours and trips organized by expatriate groups like *The Vagabundos* in San Miguel. He felt that this provided a feeling of safety for those who were concerned about having to visit other places by themselves, "So, you're not travelling by yourself, and you've seen people do it over and over again, so you know that there's ways to do it to keep yourself safe and not be afraid."

Among the reasons that Johnny listed as having attracted him to San Miguel were the friendly attitude of the local people and the leisurely approach toward time that he considers prevalent in the Mexican lifestyle. He commented, "People have time to be friendly in México, you don't have it in the States, you are in it too much. You don't see your brother for half a year

and he lives in the same town.” He also recommended San Miguel as a good place to move to for those who have never been to México because of the large presence of Americans and the wide use of the English language, “San Miguel de Allende would definitely be the place to go, because first of all, you feel at home. You can speak English, people speak English over here.”

Sheryl recounted her experience of getting adjusted to the Mexican concept of time upon opening her architectural design when first arriving in San Miguel. Having just come from the rigid time constraint practices of the business world in the United States, this was clearly something to which she was not accustomed. She mentioned adjusting to the idea that the lawyers would say, “he’ll meet you at two o’clock and he might not actually show up until four.” She further added:

But, being that I’m usually running behind time anyway, it wasn’t too hard of an adjustment Whereas, if I was still back in *Gringolandia*, I would always be stressed out about getting to some place on time. There’s a very lax attitude towards a lot of business things in México.

Sheryl thinks that for expatriates, San Miguel is different from other places because of the accepted environment of cooperation throughout the art community and the local community. She asserted that her decision to move here was determined after finding that the expatriate community was more integrated into the Mexican community. Sheryl found that the “participation of the expats was much more geared towards their love for Mexico.”

Sheryl addressed the circumstances that she feels drew her to relocate to San Miguel during her first visit 25 years before. While visiting her artist parents in San Miguel, she decided “to take a break from the United States, the pressures and stress ... I was very stressed out of my mind, I thought it would be fun to have a little Mexican project and take a break for a year.” That year turned into 25 years for Sheryl. She commented on how she answered the people who asked what had brought her to stay in San Miguel:

Well, I came for the weather, I stayed for the food, and I never left for the people. My first trip was strictly escaping the north, the freezing cold north of New York and Philadelphia in general; coming to México for a week or two and get a little sun and relax a little, and then, San Miguel. When I decided on San Miguel, part of the reason was that we had a cheese-maker, an Italian cheese-maker, Ramos, and being that I used to live in South Philly, the idea of being able to buy fresh homemade mozzarella and ricotta cheese right here in this tiny little town.

Sheryl shared her thought that another attraction for artists to move to San Miguel was that here people have the unique chance to reinvent themselves. Sheryl expressed her opinion of how she changed after being in Sam Miguel for a while by first learning how to pace herself differently. Additionally, she also learned, “how to do a little bit more Mexican and not panic quite so much about money and work and kind of realize that racetrack is there, whenever you want to get on it, it’s there.”

Robert, one of the most respected elder statesmen in the San Miguel art community, enthusiastically provided some insight on his decision to leave the United States for a life in San Miguel in search of a slower pace of life. He had first visited San Miguel during the time that he and his family lived in Oaxaca 50 years before and remembered that even then they had decided that they would like to retire in San Miguel, “We love the pace in which life is lived here San Miguel specifically, because when we lived in Oaxaca, I was very aware this was an artist community back then.” He remembered first moving here to see if they would like it and quickly making the decision to permanently live here after only two days.

Tony commented that he had made an abrupt decision and had moved to San Miguel 30 years before and found upon his arrival in San Miguel that the town was inhabited with a small amount of foreigners who were mostly retired military, artists, and writers:

It was a very interesting town; it was beautiful, tranquil. I fell in love with the town immediately and the people. They had great beer, [laughs] good food, good attitude, nice climate, colonial, and were on the side of the mountain. What happens normally in this

town is all the artists support each other; we all have each other's art on our walls everywhere.

He relayed his recommendation to others considering moving to another country by offering his story as motivation for them to participate in the expatriate experience:

Having lived here myself and opened up to other cultures and other nationalities, it makes one realize that in my own country, every individual needs to break out of their shell and go to a foreign county, just to get it. Live ... they have to live somewhere, whether it's a month or a year, or the rest of their lives, just to understand where they were, where they are, and where they can be.

Johnny credited the availability of an efficient transportation system as one of the contributing factors for his choosing of San Miguel as his destination, both in convenience and financially. Johnny referred to the San Miguel bus system as one with the latest makes and models comparable to any large cosmopolitan city that are, "the heartbeat of Mexico." He continued praising the transportation system for being easily accessible and very timely in their scheduling.

The low cost and easy accessibility of the transportation system also meant that Johnny did not have the expense of a car, registration fees, or insurance. This was an important point for him because it saved him money that he could then apply to other living expenses. In regard to other living expenses, he remarked that his decision was also decided in part because of the affordable cost of rents in San Miguel. The inexpensive food costs in the fertile "heartland of Mexico" also allowed him to live a healthy lifestyle.

Johnny acknowledged the favorable money exchange rate between the U.S. dollar and the Mexican peso as another major incentive in his consideration of living in San Miguel. The exchange rate at this time was 13 Mexican pesos per U.S. dollar. This means that for every \$100 U.S. dollars, you would receive \$1300 Mexican pesos:

The dollar is worth more in Mexico Right now the peso is \$13 Pesos per dollar. So, with \$100 dollars I have \$1300 pesos, which amounts to about \$27 dollars more. So if you go to the [grocery] store with \$100 dollars, you actually have \$127 dollars.

The money exchange rate provided Johnny a financial advantage in keeping the costs of living down, “So, the money thing, I think for a lot of people it makes sense Your money goes a much longer way than if you’re in the United States.”

Lennie also cited the money exchange rate, called the *compra*, between the United States dollar and the Mexican peso as an important factor that made living in San Miguel more attractive financially:

Life here is cheaper They have the money exchange, which is called *compra* money that you get a certain amount of money. It’s like at 13, which is like if you have one thousand dollars American money on that 13 *compra* you get like an extra \$200 to \$300 dollars more to be able to live off So, it makes it where it’s like rent-free, food-free, depending on what your situation is moneywise.

Felix commented that once a new arrival has lived in San Miguel for a while, they can search through the Internet or go into the neighborhoods and ask around in the little *tiendas* [neighborhood stores] about inexpensive apartments and lodging: “I think there are very few places left in the world where you can live cheaply enough and pursue your art with all the devotion and time you really want to put into it.”

I think when they get here, San Miguel is a breath of fresh air, so it’s just like they understand almost immediately, and I’ve met people that have been here a week, and they go home and sell their house and buy a house here, several times, in the last 11 years.

Felix also mentioned with concern how San Miguel used to be considered a town that had hostels and was more bohemian. This meant that there were a lot of backpackers traveling through. “You don’t see that nearly as much. Now you see people that take a plane, take the shuttle from the airport and stay at a bed-and-breakfast, or a hotel, or at a friend’s house.” Felix jokingly offered a caveat concerning renting from other expatriate landlords: “The funny thing

about here, it is that all the Gringos and Canadians charge the most for rent [laughing]. They are outrageous! So, if you are an artist and you're definitely ... on a budget, you don't want to rent from them" [laughs].

Theme 2: Being here and being there. One of the concerns articulated by the participants was the accessibility to means of transporting themselves to and from San Miguel to the United States. Another concern for the participants was the channel of communication for keeping in touch with friends and relatives as well as with current events. A third matter of concern for the participants was having the availability of U.S. products in San Miguel.

One of Johnny's concerns of living outside of the United States is the health of his elderly father who still lives in Texas. Johnny explained that he was able to keep in constant communication with his family members in Texas and California through email, cellphone, and a Vonage landline. He commented on communicating on an international level with his friends and professional contacts through FaceBook, email, and telephone.

Johnny listed the two means of transportation that help lessen the distance between San Miguel and the United States at any given point of the day. There are buses that run regularly to the United States and the airport in nearby Leon, Guanajuato. Again, because of the concern for his father's well-being, he shuttles between San Miguel and the United States two to three times a year. The close proximity of both locations, coupled with inexpensive transportation access, either through the airport in neighboring Leon or buses to the United States were important factors in his decision to move to San Miguel. He added, "Living in the San Miguel area enables me to do that because it is pretty close, I can fly there; I can catch a bus there in the evening and be in Texas the next morning It's inexpensive."

Johnny also praised the American-run newspaper in San Miguel, *La Atención*, which is an English language paper that provides the local expatriate population with current events, articles, and editorials on issues that are interest to them. The Mexican television network stations and the three U.S. television networks also provide a constant flow of programming through which he receives the U.S. news, sports, and popular U.S. shows. Johnny and his wife get to keep up with their favorite NFL football teams: “We watch the sports, watch football, Monday Night Football, so you’re home.”

Felix commented on the role that technology has played on his ability to communicate both artistically and for personal use within San Miguel and on a transnational level. Felix communicates with his family and friends in the United States via email, Facebook, and free audio/visual software programs on the Internet, such as Skype. The fact that these formats were free allowed him to communicate easily without incurring a large bill at any time, “Most people have time to check their Facebook and their mail every day, several times a day, because they’re on it, keeping in touch with their family and friends in the United States, too.”

Felix stated that he promoted all of his performances and researched his musical material through Internet search engines and social media formats that included Facebook and YouTube. Audio files in the MP3 format were also utilized by Felix to send and receive his music through the Internet. He found that the expatriate community used Facebook more than anything else to keep up with what was going on daily and weekly in San Miguel. He relied on Facebook more than *La Atención* and probably more than any other Web site as his main source of communication and promotion and did not even consider television as a viable option for his news information.

Tony spoke of the connectedness that he experienced through the Internet with family, friends, and other politically minded individuals and organizations. He commented on reasons for keeping up with current events in the United States: “I’ve got my family and friends up there, it’s the country I grew up half my life in, so I care about what happens up there and here.” He explained that he uses the telephone, email, and the Internet as the primary means of communicating and remaining politically active in social causes. Tony shared his passion and concern for the geopolitical situation in the world. The Internet allowed him to stay connected and active in different causes throughout the world:

I sure appreciate being able to touch my iPad and get an answer and communicate with anybody, anywhere, anytime, that’s a nice addition. It doesn’t change anything else about how we interact with each other in town I am communicating with family and friends all over the world on the Internet and I also stay politically connected, signing petitions all the time. “Save the Whales,” “Save Chelsea Manning,” [laughs] and all of the above.

Buddy spoke of the evolution of the communication technology through which he has kept in contact with family and friends over the past 30 years that he has lived in San Miguel. He acknowledged: “The Internet has changed the world. My day was the teletype, the mimeograph, and *la caseta*.” Buddy explained that *la caseta* was like a telephone booth where you paid to be able to make a long distance call. Buddy commented that before the advent of modern ICT devices, the working musician used conventional mail for sending or receiving scarce and sometimes costly items such as jazz CDs or records from the United States. Buddy pointed out that the Internet has even allowed him to collaborate simultaneously on recording projects with other artists from around the world. Buddy had also incorporated the use of the Internet to market his musical products through a site known as CD Baby and uses a small storage device known as MP3 audio player to carry his MP3 formatted audio files.

Sheryl also recalled the use of *la caseta* telephone days to stay in touch with her friends and family before the modern day advances of today's communication technology. She recounted the difficulty in getting a telephone line at her home:

I lived here for almost two years before I almost had a phone line at all. The mail service was totally useless, the telephone service almost just as useless, but now, now we've got telephones, and Vonage, and Skype, and cellphones, and smart phones, and Facebook, and emails, sure not any lack of communications anymore.

Sheryl had recently made a decision to incorporate digital imaging, digital design programs, and the Internet into one her computer-designed projects from start to finish. She conducted her research for her *Las Divas* musical act by navigating the Internet search engines and using the popular video-sharing program, YouTube, to research the stars she impersonates, "I did the *Diva* Show that I talked about I was on YouTube every night investigating, How does Nancy Sinatra walk? And what does she wear? And how does she act during her song?" She admitted that she was so impressed with the capabilities of the Internet search engines that, "Now, I 'Google.doc' all of my things."

Don explained that the advances in ICT, Internet, cell phones, email, and video conferencing had also played a role in his ability to maintain a transnational multilocal lifestyle. He could now keep abreast of his financial, business, and family affairs through the Internet. Don further elaborated on the role that modern day ICT had played artistically for himself and others in San Miguel. He commented that the Internet had allowed the artist, even from a standpoint of being somewhere else in the world, to be able to produce anywhere in the world now.

Robert made note of the influences that other international artists and modern day ICT are having on the young artists. The fact that there is access to more modern information technology and equipment contributes to San Miguel artists not being as informationally isolated from outside sources as before:

I think there's a tradition of evolving young artists that are seeing so much work now with the work on television and being able to get on your computer and going to all these galleries. They have access to a lot of work that way and I figure that's going to be a big influence as time goes on, as there's more computers in the population.

Several American television networks are available in San Miguel. At any given time, Lennie can enjoy being able to keep up with the current news events in the United States and her favorite American TV shows. "I can turn on my TV and I can watch and keep up with the Kardashians, [laughing] I can watch the news, I get CNN, I get everything as if I were in the States, even though I am not."

Johnny also points out that San Miguel provides many of the incoming expatriates the availability of U.S. amenities offered through American stores such as Costco and Sam's that have opened in Mexico. Johnny remarked, "Many, many people live here because it's like living in the States with the Mexican culture around you. It's like having the things that you need in the States, so you don't miss the States that much."

On a different note, Felix commented that, as a result of the high Mexican import taxes, musical instruments and amplifiers are more expensive in San Miguel than they are in the United States. In order to circumvent these high tariffs, some artists and friends resort to scheduling the purchase of their instruments and supplies at a time when someone takes a trip to the United States and then returning with the items:

So you have to make sure that you get to the States every now and then, to buy strings, to buy guitar strings, if you need an amp, it's much better to go to the States and pick one up. Microphones stands, microphones are way more expensive here than they are there. There's huge import tariff on that stuff. And I know people that are painters and stuff, and they'll order a ton of painting supplies, of art supplies from Cheap Joe's and have it delivered to a friend's house and then pick it up when they go to Texas and bring it down, if they're really prolific and they can't afford to buy the stuff down here.

Theme 3: Adaptation into the local community. San Miguel is famous for its colorful town square or *jardin* where there is always a crowd of people. The *jardin* is bordered by the

Cathedral, restaurants, and businesses and is known as the place to meet and greet people among the park benches and vendors selling items from popcorn, balloons to newspapers. Buddy explained that the *jardin* was an easy way to interact and get a sense of the community:

So at any given moment, you don't drive to the mall, you just walk to the *jardin* and you sit down. If you want to talk to somebody, somebody will come by, so you interact with the community right there. And then, when you want to be alone, you just leave, you know what I mean? It's just a cool thing to be able to do. Sooner or later everybody in this town will wind up in the *jardin* five minutes a day or something like that.

The U.S. expatriate artists described several cultural factors that contributed to or were a result of their adaptation of the local culture and community. The participants were mainly of the opinion that the authenticity of the Mexican neighborhood experience could not have been accomplished had they chosen an affluent gated community that included mainly U.S. expatriate retirees.

Robert emphatically stated that he and his wife had moved to Mexico because of their love for the Mexican people. In addition, they had chosen to live within the local Mexican community to fully experience and absorb the Mexican culture at the neighborhood level. "We chose an area of San Miguel that we knew our neighbors would be primarily Mexican, and there are little stores around us, which I shop in We came here not to be with Gringos, but to absorb the culture."

Robert expressed his appreciation of the local neighborhood stores and enjoying his walks when doing his shopping:

We love the pace in which life is lived here So, if I take a walk, like I did today, I stopped and I talked to the salesclerk in the store, which I don't do in the supermarkets when I go the United States because they don't have time!

Felix expressed that the people lived by a different sense of time in San Miguel as compared to living in the United States. Felix asserted that the sense of community became more evident to people as they spent more time in San Miguel:

There is time for community here ... I've had people from Los Angeles and New York tell me that they get more better conversations in one day in San Miguel than they do in six months at home, because they don't have time. So, what they've done is, the international community has created like an international neighborhood ... so they really connect in a way because they have the time to do it.

Barbara also stated that she and her husband had decided 50 years before to eventually move to San Miguel because of the art community. Barbara expressed that she had found that one of the most important things an expatriate has to do to live comfortably in San Miguel is to be flexible:

If you want to have a United States life, don't come here, because this is not the United States. You have to be a person who can go with the flow There's a different culture, there's a different language, there are different ethics, there are different judicial laws. These are all things that the expatriate has to get accustomed to.

Johnny remarked that the expatriate artist's choice of living within the Mexican community provided a source of revenue for the local community. He also pointed out that buying from the neighborhood stores and renting in their neighborhoods helped to support their economic situation:

The expatriates provide a lot of revenue for Mexico You are not visiting here, you are living here. You support the community by going to the store on a daily basis You can live in the neighborhood like I do. It's four blocks from the *Instituto Allende* for art, eight blocks to walk downtown I choose to live with the people. I mean, I walk half a block and I got hot tortillas; I go around the block and we got fresh squeezed orange juice. I walk have a block and there is a bus stop, and it is full of Americans, full of expatriates. The people that I rent from are expatriates, Americans. Across the street is an American lady. They want to live next to the *Mexicanos* and assimilate their culture and add to the community.

Don enthusiastically described his neighborhood community where he had gotten to know several of the shop owners and vendors. He noted that some of the fresh food and produce

vendors in San Miguel will often give you a little extra portion (*pilon*) of what you are buying as a show of their appreciation for choosing to shop with them:

You get to know your neighborhood green grocer, the *queso* [cheese] lady, the *panaderia* [bakery], the *tortilleria* [tortilla factory], and so on After a while, they give you a little *pilon* You become part of their economic family, and that is part, being part of their family.

Buddy remarked that living in San Miguel had changed his concept of space and of how much he needed to be comfortable “Mexicans need less space than Gringos do. Down here 20 people get in a car and it does not even faze them They do not care if they are rubbing up against one another. The culture is more compact.” Buddy commented that as a jazz improvisational artist, he could relate to the Mexican culture more closely because it is one of improvisation:

If something breaks here, you fix it If your fan belt breaks, you can tie a knot in a piece of rope, I mean you will learn to improvise You’re not going to go to Pep Boys and buy a new whatever it is, in this place.

Sheryl referred to the quality of people who relocated to San Miguel in comparison to other cities in Mexico. She pointed out that in other locations, such as Puerto Vallarta and Cancun, the expatriates there did not seem to care as much about the Mexican community and culture as did those who were drawn to San Miguel. She mentioned becoming aware of the diversity of nationalities that make up the international community, “My last four or five Thanksgiving dinners, I was the only Gringo at the table and they haven’t all been Mexican either. I mean I’ve had, French ones, and Germans, and Ecuadorians, Colombians.”

Buddy was also concerned about the changing landscape of San Miguel as an artist colony because of the recent growth of affluent retirees, rising real estate prices, and gated communities:

People before were a little bit more interested in México. I think somebody decided to sell San Miguel to the Gringos so they could have one place where they could go, where they could kick their money, and get them to buy houses. It's the only place in México that I know of, maybe besides the beach, where everything is kind of tailored to make the expatriate community comfortable. I can understand that because they're spending hundreds of thousands of dollars for houses and stuff. That doesn't mean I don't love San Miguel, but I would say San Miguel is, you know, looking at it from a private point of view. This is "México Light." You know, it's like "Diet México" [laughs].

Felix also mentioned with concern how San Miguel used to be considered a town that had many hostels and was more Bohemian. This meant that there were a lot of backpackers traveling through. "You don't see that nearly as much. Now you see people that take a plane, take the shuttle from the airport, and stay at a bed-and-breakfast, or a hotel, or at a friend's house."

Robert shared an observation of the family values and signs of endearments that are shared within the Mexican families. The Mexican family unit reminded him and some of his friends of their own families when growing up as children in the United States:

Yeah, family values, yeah ... When we go, we're the only Gringos maybe, or three of us, among 50, 60, families, people in families, so we're with kids, adults, and it just feels good. It feels the way, closer to what I experienced in the United States when I was growing up. And a friend of mine says, "It doesn't exist in the United States!"

Don commented on how he strongly identified with the familial attitude that he found within the Mexican people. He considered the Mexican family values and culture a great part of his appreciation for living in San Miguel:

The culture is the people! They have great attitudes, man! They're with their family a lot. There's much more laughter I really got interested in it in terms of how I felt when I was here ... I started seeing, not coming from a family, I started seeing that this society had such a nice family thing that I kept coming back more and more.

Lennie referred to her views of identifying with the Mexican cultural values, specifically about *la familia* [the family] that she had not experienced in the United States. "They're family-oriented people and they really are appreciative of the Americans that do live here or that come to visit."

Language. The widespread use of the English language spoken in San Miguel presented the U.S. expatriate artists the opportunity to arrive without having to speak the Spanish language. Most, if not all, of the U.S. expatriate artists appreciated the advantages of being able to communicate on a daily basis in Spanish.

Robert insisted that Spanish should be the primary language spoken to him in San Miguel: “I talk to all my neighbors in Spanish. I’ve had friends, jewelers who spoke in English and artists and I said, [laughs] ‘I don’t want you to speak in English, please.’” He explained that as children growing up, his father wanted them to be assimilated into the American culture and decided that only English be spoken and taught to them. He continued that before moving to Mexico, he “took a night course in Spanish, so that I wouldn’t come cold turkey.” He and his wife had also studied with a private tutor upon arriving in San Miguel.

Barbara considers the value of speaking Spanish while living in San Miguel as an important component in running her household and in conversing with her neighbors and other members of her community. She had also studied with a tutor to improve her fluency in Spanish for several years upon first arriving in San Miguel:

The idea that I can go somewhere and I can talk to somebody in Spanish makes a huge difference. I should not expect the people who are here to learn my language; though, I think ... in terms of just living in the community, running my household ... not being able to speak the language is definitely a hardship Every day on my iPad comes the Spanish word of the day and every day I look at a new word, and I feel really sad for people who have been here 20 and 30 years who don’t speak the language.

Sheryl mentioned studying Spanish the first years of her arrival in San Miguel. She considered her capability in Spanish to be quite fluent and made note that, “a lot of people do live here and never really learn hardly any Spanish.” She credited her Mexican born daughter as an influence in her decision to continue with her original tutor for lessons in Spanish:

Okay, well, language, 24 years later I'm still working on it [laughs]. Most people would say my Spanish is excellent except for my 16-year-old daughter, who gives me a hard time and says, "I cannot believe you still mess up your Spanish after so long." I said, "Well, I cannot believe you had the privilege of being born with two languages and you still mix up your English, you still sound like a Mexican!" I have recently gone back to studying Spanish ... and I am now refining my Spanish. I have decided to yeah, really kind of conquer some of those little nuances of the language.

Buddy, who is bilingual, considered himself as being very fluent in the Spanish language.

He gave an interesting explanation of the philosophical differences between the English and Spanish languages as he understood them:

Well, in first place, I'm bilingual so as soon as you learn another language you get whole other set of feelings. Latin feelings are not Latin/Gringo feelings at all. They're more ... Salvador Dali ... it's more like surrealistic feelings. The truth behind the mask kind of thing, and the fact that Spanish is more of an active language, English is more of an intellectual language, unless it's rap or some hipster talk or something [laughs] other than that, English language is mostly "thinking language." Spanish language is mostly active, in the present. There's a big difference right there, you think it or you feel it, I mean what do you do? You dig? You know what I mean?

Felix commented that he was not raised speaking Spanish. He only started speaking it on a regular daily basis after arriving in San Miguel. He also felt that people should make an effort to learn the language of any country where they move: "There are people from the United States and Canada that have been here for 25 years and still don't speak more than 15 words of Spanish." He mentioned that some of his friends had expected him to naturally speak Spanish:

Because I looked Mexican, my friends were like telling me I should speak it [laughing] that it was in my blood, and I was like, "I was raised in Maryland!" I never heard it on a regular basis until I came here.

Felix continued by saying that, "The good thing is there's so many *Mexicanos* here that speak English because they've been dealing with Americans for a long time."

Lennie admitted that she had never really attempted to fully learn the Spanish language. She considered her limited Spanish combined with the use of her hands and expressions adequate enough for her to get by:

I don't speak the language that well, I do know some things, like foods I like to eat and things If you're living in a hotel, you need to know *toallas* [towels], *papel de baño* [toilet paper], things like that, so I do know a little bit of Spanish. I like being spontaneous with the language. I communicate without even having to know the language. I do a lot of sign language I know enough to where I can do what I need to do and I've been doing it for 10 years now and I really prefer the way I have been doing it.

Volunteerism. Sheryl noted that people like Stirling Dickinson really “seemed to embrace the Mexican culture” by establishing the library and the *Instituto Allende*. She acknowledged the first U.S. artist pioneers as having instituted a tradition for the expatriate community to get involved in the local community. This community involvement by artists and other U.S. expatriates had resulted in the establishment of scholarship programs, health programs, educational programs, a midwifery school, a nursery, a retirement home, and several pet programs.

Barbara remarked that she had devoted a lot of time to doing volunteer work with other expatriate artists for the local community, “For some unknown reason to me, we, Americans and Canadians, and expats from around the world, have decided that it's our responsibility to try and make a better life for some of the Mexican people, especially the children.” She and other women artists donated their art to various organizations where American and Canadian expatriates not only raise money but also donate their time and labor as well.

Tony discussed how he had become very involved in volunteering to various organizations that helped the Mexican community. He felt an obligation to help those in need in gratitude for the opportunities that Mexico had presented him. Besides volunteering for the fundraising benefits to help the needy, Tony also volunteered as a teacher of stained glass classes for children at the *Ojala* school. The *Ojala* school itself was built and funded as a result of the expatriate community:

I work at a school *Ojala*, teaching children stained glass, eight, young children. I got them a commission to do a chapel they're working on now. This is it, you know, México gives, provides me with such a great lifestyle that I have to, you know, just automatically, want to give back.

Theme 4: San Miguel's cultural influences in the arts. San Miguel provided a unique setting for the exchange of ideas and cultural experiences that influenced the creativity of the body of work and lifestyle patterns of the U.S. expatriate artists. The following excerpts from the interviews provided a window into the personal journey of each of the artists' development within the San Miguel community. The individual artists' perspective of their San Miguel experience exhibits the qualities that helped shape their personal and professional growth as artists and human beings.

Felix believed that the U.S. expatriate artists had an easier time developing their craft in San Miguel because of the ambience created by the larger presence of other like-minded artists. He credited the passion and patience exhibited in the artistic process of other artists in Mexico as important influence in his development, "People here are way more patient than we are in the United States. They do not need to make it right away. They just want to make good art and get better at their craft over time."

Felix recognized that in San Miguel many artists found other established artists to study under: "There's a lot people that mentor under older Mexican artists here, and I can't imagine that they're not influencing each other's work on a continual basis." He also noted that expatriate musicians and painters knew that there was a tradition of a great exchange of ideas that has been ongoing here for a long time. As an example of a typical international exchange of ideas of art and culture in San Miguel, Felix described an event he had recently attended:

You go to parties and people just whip out their guitars and they want to hear your American music, and you want to hear the songs that they play in whatever language that they play. There's a lot of cultural exchange. I was at a party recently, and there was a

French accordion player, there was a woman singing in French, there was a woman singing in Spanish, I was singing in English, and there was a little girl that is an original singer-song writer that was my student.

Sheryl spoke of the creative process that was indicative of the collaborative environment that existed among all of different types of artists in San Miguel. She described the expatriate art community as being, “very intense people that really work together very well and collaborate in so many projects in this town.” Furthermore, Sheryl acknowledged the influence that the large number of artists’ galleries had on the interchange of ideas:

They say in San Miguel we have the highest per capita galleries, art galleries in the world. I think our inhabitation of about 150,000 people right now and we probably have about 150 galleries. So, that is like one gallery for every thousand people.

Sheryl described San Miguel as a place where she felt very little friction being an expatriate and a designer. She especially acknowledged the great environment of collaboration with the local *artesanía* [traditional arts and crafts] as the local indigenous artists were called. Sheryl further added that the creative process in an artistic setting such as San Miguel provided an environment suited for anyone wanting to pursue their creative aspirations, “It is a very creative vortex. All you have to do is kind of think about it and things happen. Everybody that you need gets put right in front of you.”

Robert made note of the influences that other international artists and modern day ICT were having on the young artists. The fact that there was access to more modern information technology and equipment contributed to San Miguel artists not being as informationally isolated from outside sources as before:

I think there’s a tradition of evolving young artists that are seeing so much work now with the work on television and being able to get on your computer and going to all these galleries. They have access to a lot of work that way and I figure that’s going to be a big influence as time goes on, as there’s more computers in the population.

Robert emphasized the cross-cultural exchange from the large number of expatriate artists who constantly travelled through or settled in San Miguel as a major influence in the creative process of the U.S. expatriate artists:

I think the evolution here for artists, both Americans and Mexicans, is probably influenced by the fact that there are so many artists who work here. There's influx of art here in San Miguel de Allende that comes from all over. I know artists from Canada, England, and they bring their own perspective and I think that is a good teaching aid for young artists here in San Miguel.

He also believed the schools, studios, and art shows created an environment with a high standard of creativity for the younger artists in San Miguel:

You can walk down the streets and see galleries and people working in those galleries. We have a big art center; it's called *La Fabrica*. They have some strong artists showing there, very strong I think the influence of the schools here have directed a lot of the creative activity of young people If you want to be around art come to San Miguel ... No, erase that! ... don't come ... [laughs].

Tony pointed out that he was creatively influenced on a daily basis through his friends and fellow artists, many of whom he has known for over 30 years and came from different countries, "This town is so rich with artists either painting, weaving, ceramics, glass, writers We are constantly turning each other on to what we are doing, and being turned on by each other and that is a nice influence, an inspiration." Tony points out that being from the United States in an historical setting also gave him a distinct perspective that was quite different from the local inhabitants: "It's amazing being a town that's 450 years old. That is another thing you relate to that has an influence on you, walking up and down cobblestone streets, and being an outsider."

Lennie described the change in her artistic career and her personal perspective had come as the result of the influence of the different styles and genres of Mexican music that she had been introduced to after moving to San Miguel. She believed that it had profoundly changed her

outlook of life, musically and as a human being: “I have come to find that México for me has been the best thing I’ve ever done in my life and the best thing I have ever experienced in my life as a human being.”

Johnny commented that San Miguel provided an environment of people who are not in a hurry, which is great for artists because having time allows the artists to think about their art and not about the pressures of everyday life:

They almost have to come to México to become artists because it’s so ... hard to make a living as an artist because there is so much competition, especially now that you have the Internet and all that stuff People help each other, guys in the bands help each other, either trading ideas and everything. I would recommend anybody to go to México to be an artist. Again, you have time over here; you have the time to think about your art, because you’re not in the rat race.

Johnny also credited many of the street artists, both expatriate and local, as a constant source of inspiration. Johnny expressed his opinion about why there was so much creativity on the part of many of the local community artists:

A lot of people create art because of survival. They find little ways to invent things, doors-stops or whatever, so they can make a buck to feed their families, send them to school and everything everyone else does, so art becomes the way of survival for them, so it makes them extremely creative, because they have to find out what someone would buy. They take bottle caps and make purses, they make fans, doorstops, they make everything you can think of!

Theme 5: Self-identity of the U.S. expatriate artist. The U.S. expatriate artists had different and similar views of how they saw themselves in the context of their identities as artists, U.S. citizens, and as foreigners living in a country other than the one they were born. Their transnational journeys had introduced them to another culture that they embraced as a creative opportunity for growth as artists and as human beings. San Miguel had become home for them as they balanced their professional, creative, political, family, and autonomous identities.

Johnny described the expatriate artists in San Miguel as ready to adapt to the artist lifestyle upon arriving from the United States:

The expatriates here are fast to assimilate the culture of México. They wear the clothes, they wear the sandals, they wear the shorts, they wear the *rebozos* [traditional women's shawls]. It's a wonderful place to live in, and I think all the expatriates here ... once you live here over a year, it is very difficult to go back to the United States.

Sheryl identified herself as more Mexican in her everyday life. She commented she had a handful of American friends and participated in all of the American cultural customs. But, she added, in her immediate life, she had always chosen to live and be involved within the Mexican community:

My life is predominantly Mexican. Most of the people involved in my life are predominantly Mexican. I married a Mexican, I had a Mexican daughter, and the men that have followed in my life have all been Mexican, so my life is pretty much surrounded by Mexicans. But I think, maybe it's a little more unusual than for most of the expats Yeah, my life is definitely very involved in the Mexican community.

Felix was very comfortable with being identified as an expatriate and discussed the story of acquiring his dual citizenship after having live in San Miguel a couple of years:

Well, I was an expatriate the first few years, and then I found out I could get my citizenship through my dad, who's Mexican. So, I'm a dual citizen. Because of the NAFTA act, you can have dual citizenship with Canada or México as a U.S. citizen.

Felix, who had lived most of his life in the northeastern United States and Texas, discussed experiencing a form of culture shock and identity crisis upon moving to San Miguel and living among Mexican people, their culture, and community:

I think culturally, I've discovered a lot of reasons why my family did things in Texas. I don't even think they knew why they did it because they were all born in Texas, and I say, "Why do we do this?" or "Why do we do that?" and they didn't know, but I came here and I learned a lot more about my heritage by being here.

Tony recognized that his self-identity was in part formed by his feelings of being estranged from the United States: "Just as looking at my home country from afar, not being in it,

seeing it from an international perspective, both of those add to how I see the world and how it inevitably affects how I live, how I feel, how I think, who I am.” Even so, Tony was adamantly apprehensive about being identified as an “expatriate.” He considered it to have a negative connotation. He felt the term did not accurately convey how he felt about his love, patriotism, or loyalty for his native or adopted countries:

There’s no expatriate, I don’t understand, just not living there doesn’t make one an expatriate in my mind. You’re just physically here ... but you’re still there in your heart and mind, so you’re not really ... you’re an ex-resident, that’s really what it is. I’m always constant and forever a patriot of México and the United States and the world now. When you open up to one country, you realize that, well it’s just one world. So, you’re open to the whole world I have loyalty to both México and the United States because I live here, this is my country, tis of thee, and I support the causes.

Tony had remained actively involved in the political elections of the United States throughout his 34 years in San Miguel: “I’m always a patriot of the United States, it’s my country. I have my passport. I have voted every election since I’ve been here.” He was an active member of “Democrats Abroad,” a group politically engaged in the U.S. expatriate community. They collected the voting ballots and sent them to the U.S. Consulate; which in turn put them in a diplomatic pouch and delivered them to the United States.

Tony also remarked that, “I would have to say probably two thirds of my friends are foreigners that I spend my time with.” Tony felt that he had not fully embraced the local culture although married to a Mexican national:

I work with *Mexicanos*, my associate is a *Mexicano*. But, I know, I realize that I’m not a *Mexicano* 100%. I know that if I read in Spanish daily, I would be ... my whole mind and whole being and my friends would mostly be *Mexicanos*. I don’t know how that would make me, how much different it would be, but I know that I haven’t made that complete jump into the fabric.

Buddy was also very vocal in his opinion of being identified with the term expatriate. He considered it as an incorrect term for describing the balancing of his patriotism to both his native United States and to his adopted Mexico:

Don't mean nothing, because it means that you would stop loving where you were born or something like that. I've never stopped loving the United States. It's the home of jazz, home of the blues, home of even TexMex, it's the home of New Orleans, and New York, and Chicago But by the same token, I love México, I've spent a lot of years here, very happy to be patriotic in México too [laughs].

Buddy proclaimed that part of the shaping of his identity since moving to San Miguel was his marriage to a Mexican woman for over 30 years. He jokingly commented on his personal and creative transformation through this cultural adaptation process and establishing roots in San Miguel:

I mean, if that won't change you, nothing will [laughs]. I'm not a Gringo, I am Black, I am a Gringo, I am a Mexican, I am some kind of a hybrid. México influenced me so deeply that I can draw on my Mexican influence but that doesn't necessarily make me a Mexican, it's kind of like an honorary Mexican maybe, honorary ... [laughs].

Don stated that by being identified as an expatriate *gabacho*, or American, by the Mexican people he could not feel fully integrated or accepted into the Mexican society:

I feel like ... the old saying is a *gabacho* can never be part completely of the community. You can be almost there, you really have to work at it even to be more than ... I can't quantify it, but it's just difficult.

Lennie believed that her experiences in San Miguel had helped shape her creative, professional and autonomous identity as an artist and as a woman. Lennie further explained that in Mexico, she felt she was treated respectfully for her creativity both as a musician and as a woman. This new found realization had affected her self-esteem in a positive way.

Lennie attributed the nurturing of her creative identity in part to her introduction to the many multicultural artists' positive attitude and Mexican culture. Interestingly, she also suggested that the adaptation of the Mexican colors into her creative and personal growth had

helped changed her personal perspective and self-realization, “Mexico is so colorful; it is strikingly so different compared to the United States. They are more drabby, the colors are more like whites, beige ... where in Mexico, the colors are bright, fluorescent green, purple, red, orange, yellow.”

Tony also agreed that the bright colors of Mexico had played a big part in influencing his creative, personal, and professional identity. He found them to progressively influence his life, artistic creations, as well as his cultural perspective of the Mexican people:

The colors, you know the people, culturally in Latin America wear colorful coloring, flowers, everything is more colorful and happy. So, that definitely has an influence on my daily life and total lifestyle The colors, they just ... it is not the grays and the blacks, it's the colors, of the countryside, the nature, the people.

Barbara also commented on the influence that the colors used in the Mexican culture in framing her identity as an artist and everyday resident. She felt that these colorful dimensions played a significant role in her everyday self-realization, both artistically and personally in San Miguel:

Oh, the colors! The colors here are incredible. Colors you would never put together in the United States to walk down the street, here you would wear any color, it doesn't matter, put them together, stripes and plaids, polka dots, it doesn't make any difference because color is a major part of this country. The walls are colored, the floors are colored, the clothes are colored, brightly colored, beautiful, yes, I love it! And I find my own self dressing differently over the years. Things I would never put together, like this red shirt with these pants, I would have never worn that before, but now it all looks perfect to me [laughs]. And people can paint their walls whatever color they want [laughs].

Summary of Findings

Chapter IV presented a participant profile and a general interpretation of the findings of the U.S. expatriate artists' decision to embark on their transnational migration into a foreign country. This chapter began with a brief participant profile of each of the nine contemporary U.S. expatriate artists. The second part of the chapter presented the five themes that emerged from the

interviews. These emergent themes resulted from a line-by-line analysis of the transcribed interview data and occurred throughout all of the interviews: Being Here and Being There; The Attraction of San Miguel de Allende; Adaptation into the Local Community; San Miguel's Cultural Influences in their Art; and Self-Identity of the U.S. Expatriate Artist.

The transcripts of the interviews have revealed five patterns that helped us to understand the five themes:

1. How they had negotiated their sense of belonging to envelop dimensions that define the transnational lifestyle;
2. What reasons had drawn them to come and make their home in the artist community of San Miguel de Allende;
3. What factors had come into play to smooth their acculturation adaptation into the local community;
4. How their transnational migration experience to San Miguel had affected the creativity process of their artistic development; and,
5. What their sense of identity was after their introduction to the Mexican and transnational lifestyle.

The participants in this study were interviewed with the purpose of gaining a perspective of their transnational lifestyle experiences through open-ended questions. The findings were a result of their experiences offered through the lens of their own perspective. The researcher reiterates that the results cannot be generalized to all expatriates.

The findings' five themes set the foundation on which Chapter V's discussion, conclusion, and recommendations of the study are based. Chapter V will connect the themes to the literature review.

Chapter V: Discussion and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the transnational lives of contemporary U.S. expatriate artists living in San Miguel de Allende, GTO, Mexico, and how their transnational lifestyle influenced their artistic production, their integration into the local community, and their relationship with other Mexican and international artists. This study focused on U.S. expatriate artists living in San Miguel de Allende on a permanent or temporary basis and was intended to promote an understanding of the role that a fluid lifestyle plays in the acculturation and integration processes.

Discussion

The theoretical framework showing the relationship and flow between components of transnationalism and acculturation concepts in the creative process of the U.S. expatriate artists is discussed in this section (Figure 2). This study drew from transnationalism concepts derived from European transnational migration lifestyles studies and the lifestyle migration studies of affluent retirees in Mexico that likely parallel the experiences of U.S. expatriate artists in Mexico. The researcher examined the lifestyle migration of this selected group of U.S. expatriate artists in San Miguel de Allende. Sunil et al. (2007) and Truly (2002) asserted that lifestyle migration refers to an increasing population who make the choice to migrate based on their belief that there is a better way of life elsewhere. Their decision to migrate results in their becoming part of a growing phenomenon that has important but little understood implications for societies and individuals. Benson and O'Reilly (2009) described this lifestyle migration as an avenue that allowed individuals to establish a way of living that they felt was more desirable than their life before the migration process.

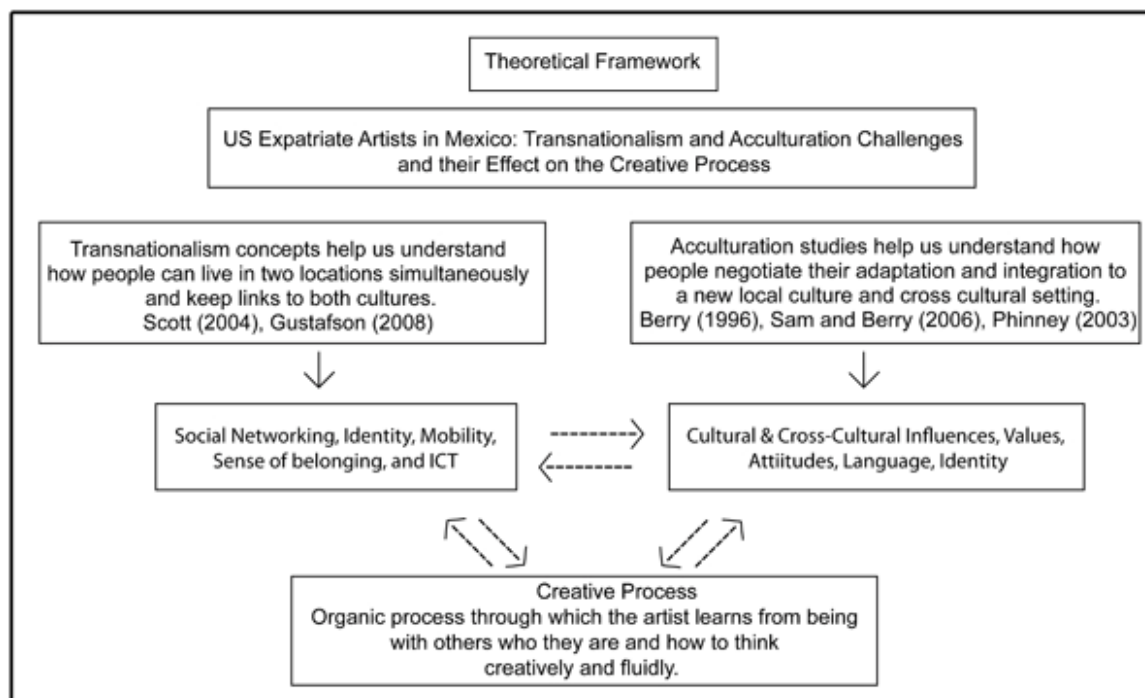


Figure 2. Theoretical framework showing relationship between components of transnationalism and acculturation concepts in the creative process of the U.S. expatriate artists.

The researcher used a transnationalism approach to understand the transmigrant and translocal experiences of U.S. expatriate artists who move back and forth between the United States and Mexico (Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Scott, 2004). Transnationalism was important because it helped the researcher understand how people can live in two locations simultaneously and keep links to both cultures. Some of the components of transnationalism included social networking, identity, mobility, sense of belonging, and ICT. Many of the recent transnational migration studies had focused on corporate employees and refugees, and until recently, on the lifestyle migration of mostly affluent retirees (Banks, 2004; Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Gustafson, 2001, 2008; ICF, 2010; MPI, 2006; Rojas, Le Blanc, & Sunil, 2014; Scott, 2004; Sunil et al. 2007; Truly, 2002).

Social networking and identity was a theme that overlapped throughout all of themes derived from the findings. The social network and identity characteristics typical of Gustafson

(2008) and Scott's (2004) concepts on transnationalism were evident in the expatriate artists identifying with other expatriates through informal and formal social networks run by expatriates. Informal social network examples would include gathering of artists in art schools and shows where information of available art studio spaces and apartments might be informally passed along. An example of a formal social network would be the U.S. expatriate tour groups like *The Vagabundos*. By grouping together, *The Vagabundos* provided a feeling of safety for those who were concerned about having to visit other places by themselves, or as Felix explained, "So, you're not travelling by yourself, and you've seen people do it over and over again, so you know that there's ways to do it to keep yourself safe and not be afraid." Felix's association with the network also overlapped with Scott's (2004) position that the relationship with home could be supported with a sense of cultural comfort through contact with a home country social or cultural space, which signifies an emotional or symbolic importance.

Acculturation concepts helped the researcher to understand how the U.S. expatriate artists negotiated their adaptation or integration to the new cultural setting of San Miguel de Allende. Having this framework helped the researcher to understand artist engagement with both cultures and also their negotiations of cross-cultural influences, values, language, volunteerism, and attitudes toward the local community. The main acculturation concepts in this study were taken from Berry (1990, 1997), Berry and Sam (1996), Cabassa, (2003), Gudykunst, 2004), Hernandez (2010), Kim (1988, 2001), and Phinney (2003).

The U.S. expatriate artists described several factors in Theme 3 that contributed to or were a result of their adaptation of the local culture and community that were in direct relation to the views held by acculturation theorists and researchers (Sam, 2006). They concurred that acculturation covers all the changes that arise following contact between individuals and groups

of different cultural backgrounds. The expatriate artists in the study felt integrated into the local community by learning to be more relaxed in San Miguel's slower pace of life, speaking the language, participating in charities or family events, or by supporting the local neighborhood merchants and vendors. The pace at which life is lived in the San Miguel art culture allowed the U.S. expatriate artists a different cultural perspective of their sense of time. This cultural sense of time, both in their lifestyle patterns and with their art, was acknowledged as being in stark contrast with their previous hurried lifestyle in the United States. As Felix remarked, "People here are way more patient than we are in the United States. They do not need to make it right away. They just want to make good art and get better at their craft over time."

The creative process was affected by both transnationalism and acculturation factors discussed in Theme 4 concerning the creative influences of San Miguel. San Miguel provided a unique setting for the Mexican and international exchange of ideas and cultural experiences that influenced the creativity of the body of work and lifestyle patterns of the U.S. expatriate artists. Theme 2 revealed the individual artists' perspective of their San Miguel experience exhibiting the qualities of the Mexican cultural and contextual surroundings and the world of ICT. The use of modern ICT heavily influenced the creative growth of the artists. A good example of the creative advantages afforded by modern advances in ICT to the U.S. expatriate artists is through the power of software programs on the Internet as in the case of Buddy acknowledging being able to simultaneously record with other artists from around the world through the Internet.

Creative growth, as discussed by the artists in Theme 5, related to the creative-identity and artistic intellectual development of the U.S. expatriate artists that as Rose (2005) suggested does not end but is progressive. Rose (2005) believed that artists nurtured their relationships with communities of artists, writers, and intellectuals, which contributed to their personal satisfaction

and framed their identities within their art world. The U.S. expatriate artists saw themselves in the context of their identities as artists, U.S. citizens, and as foreigners living in a country other than the one where they were born. They embraced in their transnational journey a creative opportunity for growth as artists and as human beings as they balanced their creative, familial, and autonomous identities in their home of San Miguel.

In the section that follows, the researcher interpreted the findings presented in the previous chapter in answering the research questions that structured the study in light of the theories and concepts discussed in the literature review.

Research Questions

Research Question 1. How do the contemporary U.S. expatriate artists living in San Miguel de Allende make sense of their transnational lives and experiences? The study found that the U.S. expatriate artists were able to live comfortably in both cultures and to successfully merge into the San Miguel culture and setting. The study presented the social network factor as the most common connecting thread that wove through all of the participants' comments. It was through social networking that U.S. expatriate artists connected with other like-minded U.S. expatriate artists with the same goals in San Miguel de Allende.

The social network system among the U.S. expatriates in San Miguel helped the artists to integrate into the artists' community as well as into the local and neighborhood communities. Many of them were able to find affordable housing and art space through the help of other U.S. expatriate artists. The U.S. expatriate tour groups like *The Vagabundos* helped provide a feeling of compatriot companionship and safety for the U.S. expatriate artists, while allowing them to explore some of the historic and artistic sites. The researcher found that Felix's association with the expatriate tour network *The Vagabundos* was consistent with Scott's (2004) and Gustafson's

(2008) transnational positions on social networks and identity characteristics among transnational migrants. U.S. expatriate social groups like *The Vagabundos* served as an example of Scott's (2004) assertion that the relationship with home could be supported with a sense of cultural comfort through contact with a home country social or cultural space. They also confirmed Gustafson's (2008) position that most, if not all, forms of migration give rise to some transnational connections and activities and might raise questions about migrants' sense of home, belonging, identity, and signified an emotional or symbolic importance.

The U.S. expatriate artists also used the artist network system to bring equipment and supplies from the United States. They did this to avoid paying the huge import tariff imposed by the Mexican government on U.S. equipment. The social network system was also key in coordinating volunteer and fundraising charities by the U.S. expatriates. This was useful for the new arrivals as a way to introduce and promote their identities as artists to the artist community and the local community.

The researcher found that most influential component utilized in the social networking of the U.S. expatriate artists was the World Wide Web or the Internet. The Internet with its powerful digital media capabilities allowed the expatriate artists to instantaneously connect with family, friends, and artists throughout the world through Internet services that provide email, social media programs such as Facebook and YouTube, and search engines that include Google and Yahoo among others. The U.S. expatriates also maintained contact through cell phones and landline telephones.

The advances in ICT provided the expatriate artists the ability to maintain a constant flow of information and communication possibilities and affirmed Scott's (2004) transnationalism global-local premise that the lives of immigrant minorities continually cross national frontiers

through embodied and dis-embodied back-and-forth movements. These forms of transnationalism vary through physical travel back to the country of origin, transnational communication via the Internet, telephone and satellite, or immersion in translocalities within the host country.

The study also found that modern advances in digital media ICT were incorporated by the U.S. expatriate artists and successfully used to research, produce, promote and distribute their material locally, nationally, and internationally. Digital media ICT network provided the artists a medium in a transnational global context by which the artists produced and distributed their work unlike the traditional productions that occur in context of the same time and space. The fact that there was access to more technology and information through modern digital ICT also contributed to San Miguel artists not being as isolated from outside sources as before.

Research Question 2. How does the intercultural contact influence their artistic expressions and body of work? The constant influx of international artists in San Miguel mixed with the local art community provided the unique setting for the intercultural exchange of ideas and experiences that influenced the artistic perspectives of the U.S. expatriate artists. All of the artists recognized the influence of Stirling Dickinson in the spirit of collaboration that exists between the international, local, and U.S. expatriate artists. This tradition of collaboration was acknowledged by the participants, in the context of their artistic identities, as the foundation for their ability to network, inspire, and create in the rich cross-cultural environment of the San Miguel artist community.

The researcher observed that a strong sense of community was shared among the artists in San Miguel and was in keeping with Rose (2005) who believed that artists nurtured their relationships with communities of artists, writers, and intellectuals, which contributed to their

personal satisfaction and framed their identities within their art world. In addition, the researcher found that as expatriate artists in San Miguel are exposed to other artists and techniques, they are in all probability blending in some of the elements from their new country into their art.

Furthermore, the study found that the U.S. expatriate artists' eagerness to assimilate the Mexican culture was one of the reasons that enabled them to successfully merge into the new culture and eventually create their own artistic and autonomous identity. This affirmed Berry's (1997) assertion that acculturation, that is, to become a part of culture, occurs when different cultural groups come together, and as a result, their cultural characteristics blend together, forming new cultural characteristics.

The cross-cultural exchange from the large number of national and international expatriate artists from different backgrounds that have constantly traveled through or settled in San Miguel have constantly contributed to the proliferation of their influence in the creative process of the U.S. expatriate artists. This fits the International Organization for Migration's (2004) definition of acculturation as the progressive adoption of elements of a foreign culture (ideas, words, values, norms, behavior, institutions) by persons, groups, or classes of a given culture (Sam, 2006). This artistic confluence of ideas in San Miguel provided an artistic environment suited for anyone wanting to pursue their creative aspirations.

San Miguel's large number of art schools, studios, and art shows afforded the U.S. expatriate artists an environment filled with a high level of creativity. The researcher found that this afforded the U.S. expatriate artists an easier time in developing their craft in the presence of other like-minded artists in the rich cultural setting of San Miguel. The expatriate artists also recognized the value of mentorship under older Mexican artists as an important component of the San Miguel experience. The local *artesanía's* [traditional arts and crafts] expertise further added

to the creative collaborative environment and helped facilitate the growth of the expatriate artists' creative development. The local street artists provided an endless lesson of function and practicality in their art for the expatriate artists. The U.S. expatriate artists who traveled to the cultural crossroads of San Miguel truly found themselves surrounded by kindred spirits where they could pursue their creative aspirations in what has been described as a creative vortex.

Implications of the Research

This study contributes to the limited available scholarly research and literature on the perspectives of contemporary U.S. expatriate artists living a transnational lifestyle in San Miguel de Allende. Of importance in the study were the transnationalism and acculturation challenges these contemporary expatriate artists have encountered and how their transnational lifestyle influenced their artistic production, their integration into the local community, and their relationship with other Mexican and international artists living in San Miguel de Allende. This study specifically helps to fill in a void regarding knowledge and available scholarly research and literature on the perspective of contemporary U.S. expatriate artists in San Miguel de Allende.

The findings of this study not only confirm earlier studies but also contribute to the expanding field of transnationalism and acculturation. Previous transmigrant lifestyle studies had concentrated on refugees, corporate, and affluent expatriates. This research study focused on U.S. expatriate artists, a very specific niche that had not been studied in the context in which the artists flourished qualitatively. Furthermore, this study provides multidisciplinary researchers with different perspectives of the cross-cultural network relationships between the expatriate artists and the local community, and with the other Mexican and international artists living in San Miguel de Allende.

In addition, the study also provides multilayered perspectives of the artists in keeping their familial and cultural links to their homeland in an ever-changing world of global connectedness through social networking and digital media ICT technology. The study also found that digital media ICT network provides the artists a medium in a transnational global context by which the artists produce and distribute their work unlike the traditional productions that occur in the context of the same time and space.

Recommendations

Since this is a small study, undoubtedly additional research is recommended to confirm or refute the study's conclusions on this group of U.S. expatriate artists. Other areas recommended to consider in a larger context that might affect the expatriate artists could include economic policies, visa studies, local politics, or the violence in Mexico. It would be interesting to know how this group of artists might overlap with other foreign groups in Mexico.

In view of the fact that San Miguel is constantly evolving, the researcher would also recommend a qualitative study on the reduction of backpackers and hostels in comparison with the increase of affluent retirees and closed gated communities in San Miguel. The researcher feels that this could merit further qualitative research on the effect that it might have on the lifestyle of the artist community in comparison to the effect that the rising number of affluent retirees and their gated communities might also have on the lifestyle of the artist community. The researcher questions whether this could have an adverse effect on San Miguel's continuing legacy as an artist colony and becoming more known as an affluent expatriate retirement community.

Another recommendation would be for educators to teach of the importance of networking within the context of transnational global art communities for aspiring artists

contemplating a transnational move to another country. Educators can help prepare students to seek out art mentorship programs within the art communities of their prospective choice of country. These types of programs can help nurture relationships within the art community that could help the students in their transition from one culture to another as well as serving to establish them with fieldwork within the working art world. Rose (2005) believed that, quite possibly, the best way for educators to prepare art students for a career in the art world with a global perspective is to “bring the global into the curriculum and provide world-knowledgeable advisors” (p. 322).

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Appendix A

Interview Guide Questions

1. Where did you live prior to coming to Mexico?
2. Do you still have family in the United States?
How do you communicate with your family and friends from the United States?
3. What motivated you to move to Mexico?
Why and how did you choose San Miguel de Allende to migrate to?
4. How do you feel about being an expatriate in Mexico?
 - a. How do you feel about being an expatriate artist in Mexico?
 - a. How would you describe one day in San Miguel de Allende?
 - b. Describe your life in Mexico in terms of your art and culture?
5. In what way(s) has Mexico influenced your art?
6. How do you feel about being an expatriate artist in Mexico?
7. Can you describe your relationship with other artists in the community?
9. Would you recommend to other artists to come to Mexico?
Would you have any specific recommendations?

Appendix B

Demographic Questions

1. What is your nationality?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your ethnicity?
4. What is your level of education?
5. What is your specialty field in the arts?
6. What is your age? 20 to 30 _____ 30 to 50 _____ 50 to 60 _____
60 to 70 _____ 70+ _____

Appendix C

PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS SECTION IN PROPOSAL

Contemporary U.S. Expatriate Artists in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico: The Challenges of
Transnationalism and Acculturation

On-site Survey and/or Interview

Prior to the research study being implemented, approval will be obtained from the UIW Institutional Review Board. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and each participant will be asked to sign a consent form prior to completion of the questionnaire. The form includes an explanation of the purpose and benefits of the study and the role and time commitment of the participants. Individuals will have the opportunity to ask questions to assure their understanding of the information. Participants will be assured that their decision to participate in this study will not affect their course grade, or standing in the University, or employment status, etc. Complete anonymity will be maintained.). Names will not appear in any data collected, and participants cannot be identified from what demographic data are collected. (If an interview is taped: Only the researcher will analyze all taped information from the interviews. The researcher is the only one who will have access to the tapes, and after the completion of the study, all tapes will be destroyed.) If this study is published, only group data will be used.

There will be no physical risks or expense related to participating in this study. (If sensitive questions are asked: Completing the survey or interview should not be stressful to the participant. But, the participant is free to stop taking part in the study at any time.)

If you have questions now, feel free to ask us. If you have additional questions later or you wish to report a problem that may be related to this study, please contact Dr. Osman Ozturgut, Chair of the Dissertation Committee and Faculty Supervisor of the Dissertation at any time at

210-805-5885, ozturgut@uiwtx.edu, University of the Incarnate Word 4301 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78209.

Appendix D

SUBJECT CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN A STUDY OF

Contemporary U.S. Expatriate Artists in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico: The Challenges of

Transnationalism and Acculturation

University of the Incarnate Word

I am Andrés Gamón, a graduate student at UIW, working toward a doctorate degree in education with a concentration in international entrepreneurship.

1. You are being asked to take part in a research study of contemporary U.S. expatriate artists in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico.
2. The purpose of this study is to explore the transnational lives of contemporary U.S. expatriate artists living in San Miguel de Allende, a colonial town in the state of Guanajuato, Mexico, and the effect that location and the acculturation process have in their artistic production. This study is to promote an understanding of issues of acculturation – language, values, attitudes, position, reception, engagement with the local community, Information Communication Technologies (ICT), and infrastructure that are central to the analysis of their transnational lifestyles.
3. You are being asked to take part in this study because you have been identified as an expatriate U.S. artist.
4. If you decide to take part, you will be asked to sit for an oral interview lasting approximately 1 to 1½ hours. The interviews will be digitally audio recorded. Additional interviews may be required. You might be asked to provide photographs of your artwork and/or other material to support the study. Any photographs, prints or other documents will be returned to you. Interviews will be scheduled to take place at locations that are convenient for you. If you are

unable to meet with the researcher, you may respond to a list of questions by phone, on paper, or on digital recorder.

5. There will be no discomforts, inconveniences, and other risks to be reasonably expected.
6. We do not guarantee that you will benefit from taking part in this study and of the benefits to human or scientific knowledge. The findings from this study will be used exclusively for educational purposes and within academic settings. Information may be presented at conferences or published in educational journals.
7. No incentives will be offered for the study.
8. Everything we learn from you in the study will be confidential and cannot be identified with you. If we publish the results of the study, you will not be identified in any way.
9. Your decision to take part in the study is voluntary. You are free to choose not to take part in the study or to stop taking part at any time.
10. If you have questions now, feel free to ask us. If you have additional questions later or you wish to report a problem that may be related to this study, please contact Dr. Osman Özturgut, Chair of the Dissertation Committee and Faculty Supervisor of the Dissertation at any time at 210-805-5885, ozturgut@uiwtx.edu, University of the Incarnate Word 4301 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78209.
11. The University of the Incarnate Word committee that reviews research on human subjects, the Institutional Review Board, will answer any questions about your rights as a research subject (829-2759-Dean of Graduate Studies and Research).

12. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.
13. Your signature indicates that you (1) consent to take part in this research study, (2) that you have read and understand the information given above, and (3) that the information above was explained to you.

Signature of Subject

Appendix E

LETTER TO POTENTIAL SUBJECTS FOR A STUDY OF

Contemporary U.S. Expatriate Artists in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico: The Challenges of

Transnationalism and Acculturation

University of the Incarnate Word

Dear Prospective Participant:

I am Andrés Gamón, a graduate student at the University of the Incarnate Word working toward a doctorate degree in education with a concentration in International Entrepreneurship and Education.

(#'s correspond with Required Elements of Informed Consent [pp. 13-14]. Do not use numbers in actual form.)

1. You are being asked to take part in a research study of contemporary U.S. expatriate artists in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico.
2. The purpose of this study is to explore the transnational lives of contemporary U.S. expatriate artists living in San Miguel de Allende, a colonial town in the state of Guanajuato, Mexico, and the effect that location and the acculturation process have in their artistic production. This study is to promote an understanding of issues of acculturation – language, values, attitudes, position, reception, engagement with the local community, Information Communication Technologies (ICT), and infrastructure that are central to the analysis of their transnational lifestyles.
3. You are being asked to take part in this study because you have been identified as an expatriate U.S. artist.

4. If you decide to take part, you will be asked to sit for an oral interview lasting approximately 1 to 1½ hours. The interviews will be digitally audio recorded. Additional interviews may be required. You might be asked to provide photographs of your artwork and/or other material to support the study. Any photographs, prints or other documents will be returned to you. Interviews will be scheduled to take place at locations that are convenient for you. If you are unable to meet with the researcher, you may respond to a list of questions by phone, on paper, or on digital recorder.
5. There will be no discomforts, inconveniences, and other risks to be reasonably expected.
6. We do not guarantee that you will benefit from taking part in this study and of the benefits to human or scientific knowledge. The findings from this study will be used exclusively for educational purposes and within academic settings. Information may be presented at conferences or published in educational journals.
7. No incentives will be offered for the study
8. Everything we learn from you in the study will be confidential and cannot be identified with you. If we publish the results of the study, you will not be identified in any way.
9. Your decision to take part in the study is voluntary. You are free to choose not to take part in the study or to stop taking part at any time.
10. If you have questions now, feel free to ask us. If you have additional questions later or you wish to report a problem that may be related to this study, please contact Dr. Osman Özturgut, Chair of the dissertation Committee and Faculty Supervisor of the Dissertation at any time at 210-805-5885, ozturgut@uiwtx.edu, University of the Incarnate Word 4301 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78209.

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