

Immigrant Entrepreneurship, Ethnic Enclaves and Systems

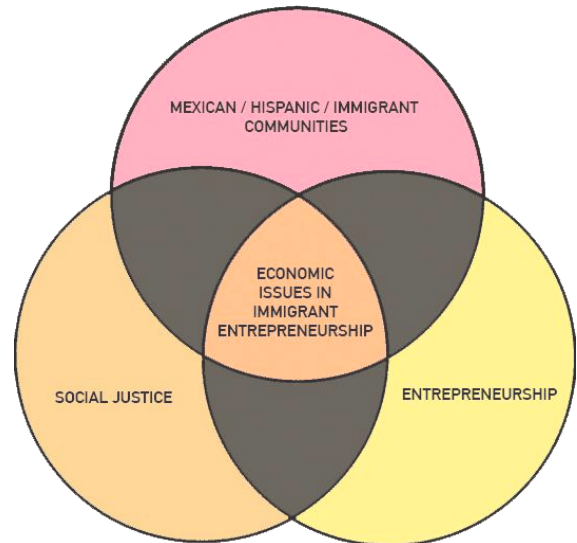
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Research Agenda
Research in Entrepreneurship
UIW Spring 2019
Dr. Alfredo Ortiz

Introduction and Overview

Throughout my development as a PhD student, my research goals have been anchored into three areas: social justice, Mexican/Hispanic/immigrant communities, and entrepreneurship. Each of these areas can provide a plurality of research projects but what I realized was that my focus would be fixed to the crux of these three areas, which helped to settle my initial focus as researching economic issues within immigrant communities.

As with any research project, the journey within research is not linear. I explored different avenues, I toggled my scope to zoom in and or zoom out and considered pivots along the way. This research agenda shows the development and evolution of my research path. The project has been divided into phases, five (5) to be exact. The following will show quick overviews of each phase with a deeper dive into the first phase on the next page.



Phase 1: Initial Topics

My initial topic was grounded in economic issues within immigrant entrepreneurship. I focused on the individual traits of entrepreneurs and the causes or influences of such traits.

Phase 2: Compartmentalization of Work Process

The second phase involved the toggling of my scope. I began considering shifting from traits of individuals to traits of groups. I began to look into public policies and systems. Terms and themes like 'ethnic enclaves' began to emerge.

Phase 3: Pivoting and Exploring Tangents

As research began moving forward, I explored other issues and avenues along the way, which prompted my first structural pivot exploration. I dove into national policies that affect migration and entrepreneurship which led to a look into NAFTA and its effects on Mexican immigrants.

Phase 4: The Mariachi Community as a Sub-enclave

This phase helped to realize that I wanted to focus on communities rather than policy. I also realized that I should tap into my own background, which helped to narrow in on the mariachi community, which I saw as a sub-enclave within a larger ethnic enclave.

Phase 5: Looking Forward: Systems Mimicry

After considering the mariachi community as a self-sustaining sub-enclave, I started to wonder about the traits and dynamics within enclaves themselves. This phase helped to set an agenda for continuing the research with a focus on systems, relationships and the behaviors and dynamics between the levels.

Phase 1. Initial Topics

To begin my project I used a processing table from *Egbert & Sanden's (2014) Foundations of Education Research* (pg. 64; Fig 5.1). This process helped me to plan and design a theoretical framework for this project. What follows are the processed notes from the exercise:

My initial topic was a generalized insight into immigrant persons and how they interact with the world of entrepreneurship. My first (of many) aim is to study the entrepreneurial spirit of Mexican immigrants and Mexican American citizens (MiMAc) in the United States, specifically in the city of San Antonio. I wonder where the entrepreneurial traits stem from. I wonder if the causes for this entrepreneurial spirit of sorts is caused from influences from outside the United States or if they are developed as they experience a new environment. I also wonder if there is dissemination of entrepreneurial knowledge within the enclave. We understand that MiMAc's are a big part of the labor workforce and that some have even developed their own business enterprises within the fields of construction and labor, restaurants and food trucks, lawn care and landscaping amongst other avenues. Three questions emerged from this initial research:

- **Where do these traits come from / what influences these traits?**
- **How is entrepreneurial knowledge / business knowledge disseminated?**
- **What are the impacts general impacts of these business on the economy at large?**

Many of these ethnic businesses are essential to development of American cities and there is minimal advocacy and knowledge bases to help develop and legitimize these businesses, either because of fear of political retribution and the lack of immigration status and fear of deportation amongst the community. I then proceed to make a list of important components for this project:

- **Trait development**
- **Knowledge acquisition and or dissemination**
- **Advocacy groups and knowledge bases / support**
- **Size, quantities of businesses and Economic impact on the city**
- **Political policies and laws affecting this topic**
- **The future of MiMAc businesses**

Looking ahead at the project I began to point out certain expectations and hypothesis.

- I expect to find cultural traits infused with entrepreneurial traits. I expect the culture to have an impact on the entrepreneurial spirit of MiMAc's.
- I expect that women will be marginalized in certain sectors of this economy due to paternalistic influences of the culture through traditionalist and machista expectations.
- I expect that knowledge will be disseminated through word of mouth, through recruiting efforts and through family experience taught through generational avenues. I do not expect much educational efforts from institutions like the city of San Antonio and or the Chamber of Commerce.
- I expect that this cross-section of the population will have an undeniable impact on the economy and development of the city. I do expect some pushback from traditional companies and businesses.

There are many reasons to continue this project, from political, economic, social to personal. There is much social polarization surrounding the topic of immigration and nationalism, with some negative theatre on both sides of the aisle. If we realize the interconnectivity of our populations then we can realize that Mexican immigrants and our fellow Mexican American citizens are an asset to this city and country and should be considered for the benefits rather than the vitriol and intolerance.

Visual 1: Visualizing and Expanding on immigrants and entrepreneurship

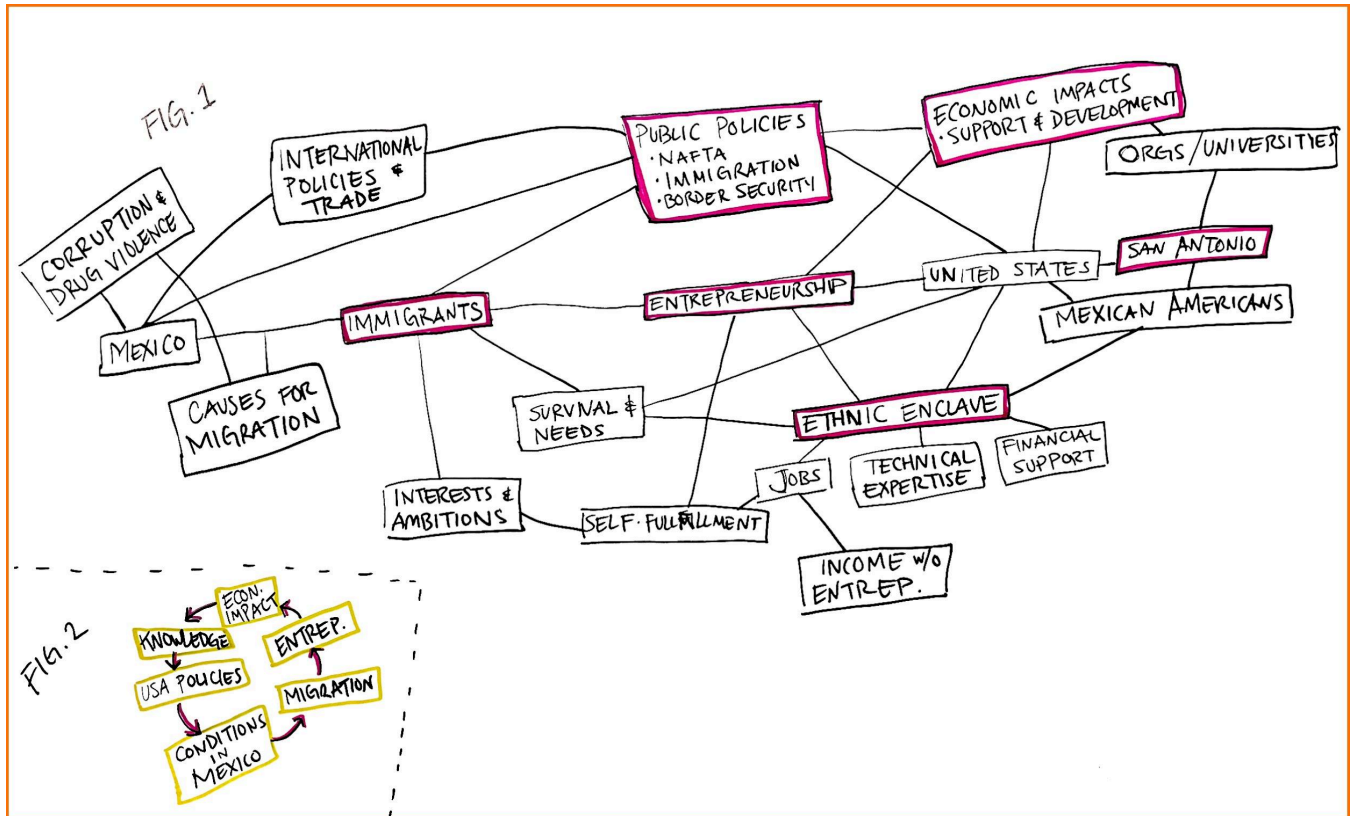


Figure 1: This graphic is a mindmap/word web hybrid that emerged from the first three weeks of research. The highlighted boxes are the initial themes that encompass my focus. These themes are 'immigrants,' 'entrepreneurship,' 'ethnic enclave,' 'San Antonio,' 'economic impact and development,' and 'US public policies' in Mexico.

Figure 2: A cyclical representation of the word web from above, synthesized to a critical, causal relationship between major themes.

Phase 2. Compartmentalization of Work Process

Reflections on work done outside and inside of class and takeaways

Outside of class

There are three key takeaways for this week's reflection. First, I realized that the scope of my work is slowly narrowing, yet I am not satisfied with it just yet. I started off with immigrant entrepreneurship in relation to traits and personality, which was informed by culture and experience, but then it moved to the environment in the United States that allows for entrepreneurial action to take place. I discovered the ideas of ethnic economies and enclaves and realized that these zones and areas are vital to growth and development on this field. Immigrants depend on the support of their employers for technical and financial support. The second takeaway I discovered was that San Antonio itself may have its similarities to other established locations of research like Chicago and Los Angeles. These cities have experienced shifts in ethnic urbanization, whereas hispanic and immigrant populations move into neighborhoods where white people once were the dominant majority. In these areas, white businesses also leave and thus enable a vacuum for real estate properties that immigrant and hispanic persons can use for their own businesses. This point reminded me of the neighborhood where I grew up in, which was the Harlandale district in the city's southside. The third takeaway was that I may be interested in including or pivoting to the affects of US policy on immigrant entrepreneurs. Specifically, I want to research the policies of NAFTA and its effects on Mexican migration to the United States, which can be seen as a factor for the increase. I want to research its economic effects on Mexico and if it has any entrepreneurial effects on migrants.

Inside of class

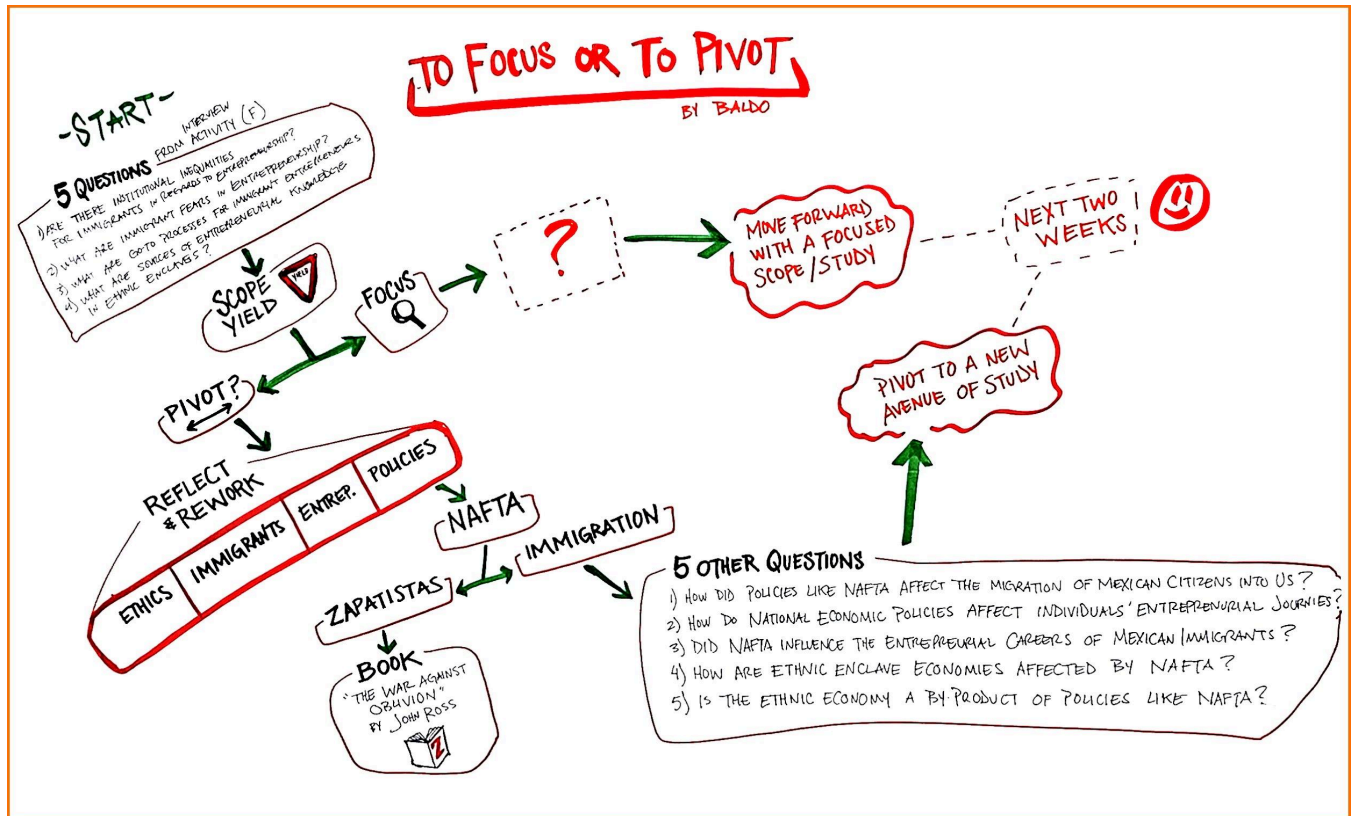
I thought that week's class was specifically beneficial to helping me narrow my focus. The action of speaking to other researchers and also the activities that we participated in, like interviewing and even writing a story, helped to get my ideas and nuances on paper. I enjoyed the process because it helped to clarify some areas of research. I think that the question that asked us to imagine talking to omniscient being who had all the answers to our project helped me to formulate newer questions that alerted me to angles that I had not considered. If I had access to all the answers, I realized that I would ask more fundamental questions, to really get to the deeper reasoning behind immigrants not just migrating to the States but also as to why they start businesses. The second aspect of class that helped me was the visualization of my data and research. I consider myself a visual learner so having the ability to work in a visual medium helped to shed some light into my own thought process. I came up with a word web that morphed into a circular model that provided more questions. I plan on using more graphics and visuals in my upcoming research and data collection and I plan to read through the bootcamp pdf to get ideas on how to do it.

Research Questions That Emerged from Phase 2:

- How does the Mexican Culture influence the entrepreneurial traits of MIMAC's in the city of San Antonio?
- How is entrepreneurial knowledge disseminated amongst MIMAC business ventures?
- How does San Antonio compare to other 'Ethnic enclaves' or 'ethnic economies'?
- What are the economic, social or other impacts that this enclave have on the city of San Antonio?

Phase 3. Pivoting and Exploring Tangents

Visual 2: To Focus or To Pivot



Visual 2 Explanation:

Begins in the upper left-hand side with questions from prior interview (f; 5 questions to ask knowledge holders):

1. Are there institutional inequities for immigrants when it comes to entrepreneurship?
2. What are some fears in immigrants when it comes to entrepreneurship? (deportation etc...)
3. What are the 'go-to' processes that immigrant entrepreneurs abide by?
4. What are the sources of entrepreneurial knowledge in ethnic enclaves?
5. How can we increase the number of entrepreneurs in the San Antonio immigrant community from 12%?

Scope Exploration Table: Scope seems too big or not as focused thus the decision to pivot.

To Focus (top)	To Pivot (bottom)
<p>Choose a specific focus from the current 5 questions, take into consideration new focuses that emerged through gallery walk, or combine New/Old sets of questions to synthesize, as an example:</p> <p><i>To what extent did NAFTA influence the entrepreneurial journeys of Mexican Immigrants in San Antonio, TX.</i></p>	<p>Reflected and reworked themes and selected four categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ethics 2. Immigrants (Mexico) 3. Entrepreneurship 4. Public Policies <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Led to looking at NAFTA <p>Considering NAFTA, two angles emerged:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Zapatistas 2. Immigration caused by NAFTA <p>Immigration and Nafta caused 5 more questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do policies like NAFTA affect the migration of Mexican citizens into the US? 2. How do national economic policies affect individual's entrepreneurial journeys? 3. (How) Did NAFTA influence the entrepreneurial careers of Mexican immigrants? 4. How are ethnic enclave economies affected by NAFTA? 5. Is the ethnic economy a byproduct of NAFTA?

Phase 3 Considerations

Phase 3 began with more review of literature. I did about 15-20 articles and began to fill out a matrix and other table. There was a lot of information. A big lead was that the employer was a crucial cause for developing their own businesses, not just for income and survival needs. Based on support, employers teach skills and financial, technical knowledge. They are essential in building ethnic economies. I also looked into San Antonio's demographics and numbers through a website called the New American Economy. On the site they quoted about 12% of immigrants as having a business or being considered as an entrepreneur.

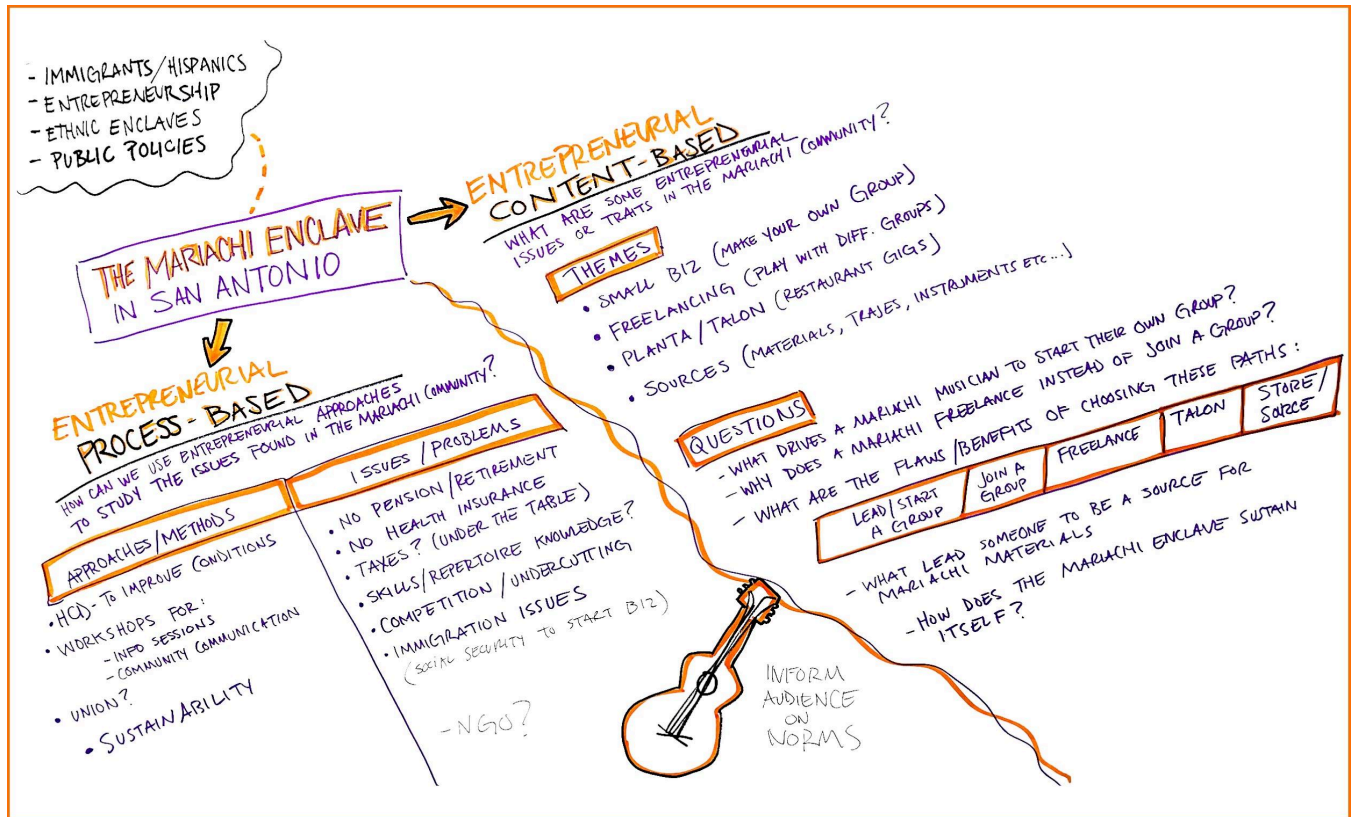
The main research needs that I'm trying to address are critical, infused with social justice and strive for equity in sections of our economy. There is an economic impact of about 300 billion dollars from immigrant and hispanic buying power. Immigrants may not want to go to legitimate avenues of support and or knowledge and development due to fear of retribution or deportation. I want to consider legitimizing this population in business and the entrepreneurship field to figure out if there is an economic impact. They are not going anywhere so we must develop new avenues with their impact included.

Questions that emerged from Phase 3:

1. Are there institutional inequities for immigrants when it comes to entrepreneurship?
2. What are some fears in immigrants when it comes to entrepreneurship? (deportation etc...)
3. What are the 'go-to' processes that immigrant entrepreneurs abide by?
4. What are the sources of entrepreneurial knowledge in ethnic enclaves?
5. How can we increase the number of entrepreneurs in the San Antonio immigrant community?

Phase 4. The Mariachi Community as a sub-enclave

Visual 3: Process-Based or Content-Based



A literal 'pivotal' moment was when I realized that I should tap into my own personal background of participating in the Mariachi community in San Antonio for more than 20 years. I realized that to study ethnic enclaves as a subgroup of the national economy at large, I could study 'sub-subgroups' within ethnic enclaves, thus arriving at the mariachi community as a focus. From that point on, the activity that produced visual #3 helped to illuminate how to tackle researching this community, which ultimately led to the fork of studying it through entrepreneurial approaches (process-based) or through the entrepreneurship issues within the community (content-based).

A) Entrepreneurial Process-Based Path

Q. How can we use entrepreneurial approaches to study the issues found in the Mariachi community?

Approaches / Methods	Issues / Problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Centered Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To help improve conditions • Community Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workshops ○ Information sessions ○ Community Communication • Unionization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Buying power ○ Insurance groups • Sustainability Theories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Pension / Retirement • No Health Insurance • Taxes? (Under the table pay) • Skills building / knowledge banks? • Competition and Undercutting • Immigration issues / Social Security

B) Entrepreneurial Content-Based Path

Q. What are some entrepreneurial traits or issues within the Mariachi community?

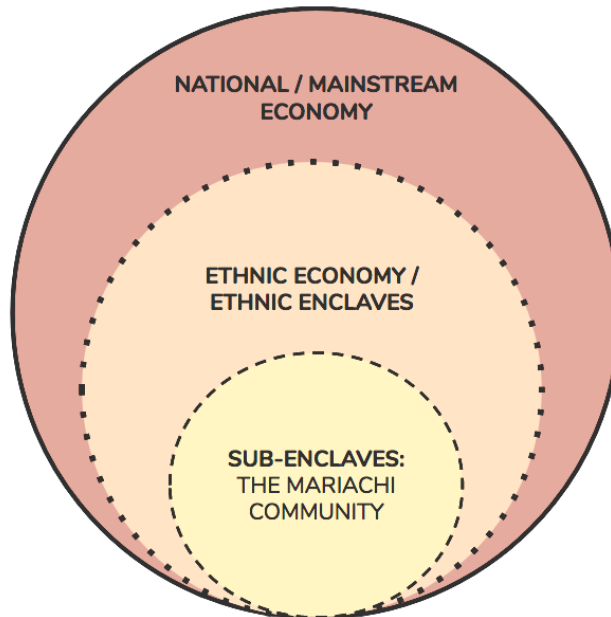
Themes	Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business ownership • Freelancing • Planta / Talon (restaurant / residencies) • Sources and Materials (trajes, instruments) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What drives a mariachi musician to start their own group? • Why does a mariachi musician rather freelance than join a group? • What are the different paths and their pros/cons available to a Mariachi musician? (See path table below...) • What lead someone to be a source for mariachi materials? • How does the Mariachi sub-enclave sustain itself?

Path Table for Mariachi Musicians

Member	Leader	Freelancer	Talonero	Tienda	Educator
A person that joins an established group as a member or employee	A person that owns and leads a group and is in charge of booking and oversight	An independent person that is hired by leaders for single performances	A person that mainly plays in a set restaurant or residency gig	A person that sells mariachi materials to the community: instruments, trajes, sheet music etc.	A person that mainly teaches mariachi in a school system

Phase 5. Looking Forward: Systems and Interactions

Visual 4: Systems and Enclaves



Levels of the Economy

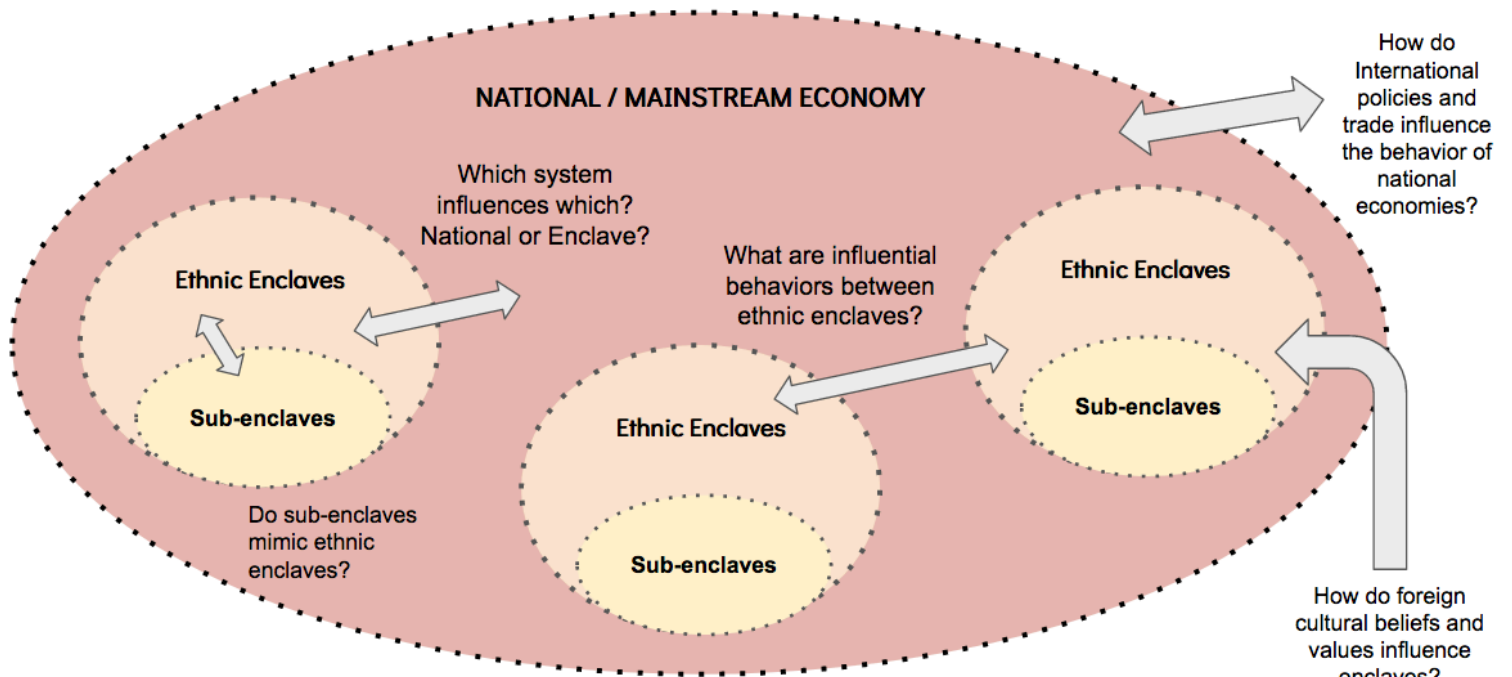
Though the *ethnic enclave* as an area of study itself has its gaps and limitations, I realized that categorizing the levels and systems, and sub-systems can be a framework for future study. I decided to focus on what emerged as a sort of 'sub-enclave' which is a community within an ethnic enclave. There can be several of these sub-enclaves in an ethnic enclave: food truck vendors, restaurant owners, construction and labor groups, service industry groups, and others. In my case, I decided to focus on the Mariachi community of San Antonio, considering I have 20 plus years of experience. What follows will be a dive into this world as a sub-enclave, which will serve as the focus of the research question "What are entrepreneurial behaviors within the Mariachi community of San Antonio."

The Mariachi community as a 'sub-enclave'

As with ethnic enclaves as areas that are encompassed by a bigger economic area, like national economic or cultural area, sub-enclaves can exist within ethnic enclaves themselves. One of the issues I had early on in my project was that I thought that my scope was too big, even within the enclaves. This issue cleared up when I realized that there are several sub-enclaves, or self-sustained enclaves that have similarities to their encompassing ethnic enclave.

Within the Mexican/Hispanic/Immigrant ethnic enclave (EE) in San Antonio, there are several sub-enclaves (SE). Food truck or taco truck SE, the landscaping SE, the construction and labor SE, the service SE (waiters, dishwashers, cooks, maids etc) and other niche SE's, like that which I ultimately landed on as a focus, which is the Mariachi community in San Antonio. I have more than twenty (20) years of experience in this community, as a musician, director, member, leader, booker, arranger and now researcher. This experience has helped me to focus on issues and behaviors of this SE so as to compare to the larger EE of San Antonio. The research within this SE has helped to spur further avenues of research that signal an expansion of my project.

Visual 5: Possible Areas for Further Research



From the questions and areas of focus that have emerged, I was able to compartmentalize parts of the overall project that has emerged from the study thus far. Considering that there are time and limit constraints, I am currently focusing on phase 1 of the project. The other phases will be left to future endeavours.

Phase 1	Research on entrepreneurial behaviors of Mariachi community (sub-enclave)
Phase 2	Comparison of Mariachi sub-enclave to Ethnic enclave (of San Antonio)
Phase 3	Comparison of Ethnic enclaves (ex. Mexican/hispanic to African American) in San Antonio
Phase 4	Comparison of Regional enclaves to other regional enclaves (San Antonio vs. Chicago)
Phase 5	Comparison of (composite) Ethnic enclaves to National economy

Other Considerations

I have realized that through my journey of moving from the individual to the groups or levels, that my concern is with the way these levels interact. These systems and their behaviors is really the essential piece of what I am trying to figure out. Theories like soft systems thinking, general systems theories, and other systemic theories may be tapped for analysis. I will also have to consider emergent theories from the latter phases of the project, which are still unidentified. This project is a long term project and may be grounds for my final dissertation effort for the PhD program.