

Contemporary Cornish identity in...

Hidalgo, Mexico



The Cornish were recruited to revive the silver mines of Hidalgo, a region around 80 miles north of Mexico City! Here, the city of Pachuca, and town of Real del Monte, were the two main magnets of Cornish migration (Schwartz 2006)

Cornish in Mexico?

Yes, that's right!

Prompted by economic factors Cornwall experienced significant emigration c.1815-1930. Cornwall's then-flourishing mining and agricultural industries saw migration to areas as diverse as the USA, Canada, Australia, South Africa, and Latin America!

Schwartz (2005) and Payton (2020)

Scholarly context

An extant research gap...

The gap I hope to fill!

Cornwall

Research on historical identities

Research on contemporary identities (Hale 1998; Orange 2012; Scully 2019)

Cornish overseas communities

Research on historical identities (e.g., Schwartz 2003; 2006; Payton 2007; 2020)

Research on contemporary identities (Neale 2018 on Australia and California, and...?)

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South, West & Wales Doctoral Training Partnership



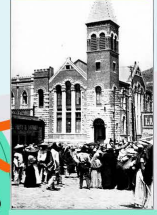
Pachuca's Former Train Station - Now archive/cultural centre. Adapted from: RubeHN (2017)

Architectural influence of Cornishness: Pachuca's former train station, now archive.

Pride in Cornishness

...remains in Hidalgo

Methodist Church, Pachuca. (Wesley Butler 1918)



Descendants of original Cornish miners are now third-fifth generation - many of whom still live in Hidalgo.

The Cornish had a Methodist chapel built (which still stands!)

This is not to say that this contemporary focus is unimportant: Payton (2020a, p.432) argues for a revived Cornish identity overseas, a phenomenon having gained traction over the past twenty years!

Research Questions:

Overarching aim: to explore grassroots spatial experiences of transcultural Cornishness (i.e., experiences beyond official narratives of heritage). I seek to answer:

1. How do shop owners and other grassroots actors responsible for Cornish heritage, shape Cornish identity in the landscape?
2. To what extent does the commodification of Cornishness affect pride in identity?
3. From descendants' experiences, how have experiences of Cornishness transformed, and how do they continue to transform?
4. Framing a future Cornishness in Hidalgo, what do descendants' lived discourses tell us about the extent of its perceived sustainability, the importance of this, and the likely future directions for Cornish identity here?

Questions to be answered by my...

Methodology!



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Pastes [pastrys with an important Mexican twist!] also have their roots in Cornish migration!

Heritage tourism is also important for the local economy!

Methodological choices

Walking + photographing signs in the landscape and analysing these (social semiotic multimodal analysis), complimented by archival research to understand their historic use of signs - the latter known as intertextuality - (Kristeva 1980; 1986).

↓

Interviews with producers of these signs to understand intended meanings and values mediated through visual resources.

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Walking tours (Pink 2008; 2015) with descendants of Cornish (now third-fifth generation of original miners), to understand their experiences including participatory photography.

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Photo elicitation (Rose 2016) + semi-structured interviews with descendants.



Scan here for a special walking tour of Cornish-Mexican Heritage!

These are questions and methods I will explore during my fieldwork in Hidalgo next year!

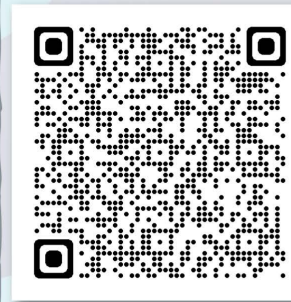
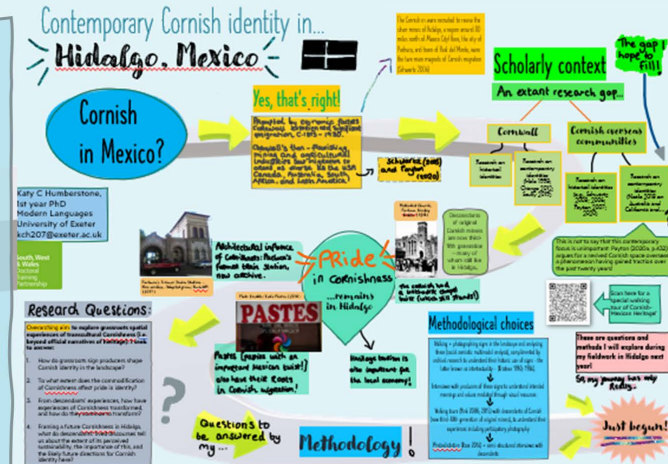
So, my journey has only really...

Just begun!

Contemporary Cornish identity in Hidalgo, Mexico

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