Profit and Tradition in Rural Manufacture
Sandal Production
in Sahuayo, Michoacán, Mexico

Victoria Forbes Adam

Doctorate of Philosophy

University College London

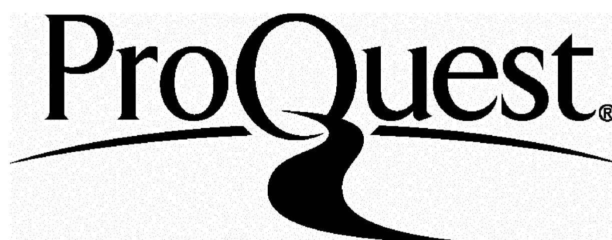
1994

ProQuest Number: 10045483

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS
The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript
and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed,
a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10045483

Published by ProQuest LLC(2016). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.
This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

ABSTRACT

This thesis is about the history and contemporary structure of sandal manufacture in Sahuayo, a market town in Michoacán, western Mexico. Special attention is paid to the social and cultural organization of production and to the role played by patronage, kinship and other relationships such as compadrazgo within different kinds of productive units. Attention is also paid to the organization of households supplying labour to the sandal industry and employment in this sector is compared to other forms of economic activity in the town.

The thesis argues that the political history of Sahuayo had played an important role in shaping the strategies and practices of entrepreneurs and producers alike. Of particular significance was the process of national state consolidation, accomplished during the agrarian reform years of 1920 to 1940. Changing political configurations created a new regional agrarian bourgeoisie, backed by the institutional apparatus of the state. This group did not favour the Sahuayan elite class and it sought to bring local manufacture within the sphere of state control.

Attention is paid to the various ways in which the Sahuayan bourgeoisie sought to resist this process of state encroachment. The thesis argues that a history of entrenched mercantile control, itself the outcome of a complex and antagonistic relationship with the national state, favoured the expansion of household production controlled by merchant capital and based upon the elaboration of putting out systems and various forms of subcontracted labour. Likewise, state-impelled efforts to unionize factory workers in the 1950s, and a disastrous confrontation with local capital, had consolidated working people's mistrust of government in all its forms. Producers had therefore remained fiercely independent and preferred to depend upon personalized relations of patronage than to engage in more collective forms of political struggle.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis was researched and written over a period of ten years, during which time I received assistance, advice and support from many friends and colleagues. First of all though, I would like to thank my teachers Joel Kahn and Stephen Nugent, whose lectures and seminars during my undergraduate years first captured my interest and inspired me to embark upon this project. I am also deeply grateful to my tutor, John Gledhill, for his unfailing patience and attention throughout the research and writing period. His observations on the draft chapters were always fascinating and stimulating. They opened up new vistas of thought and analysis and pushed me to examine themes which would otherwise have been left undiscovered. The final version of this thesis has been greatly enriched by his comments.

In Mexico those who provided friendship and hospitality are far too numerous to mention, but I would like to offer thanks to my fellow anthropologists and friends in Zamora, and especially to Jesús Tapia, Jorge Zepeda, Humberto González and Margarita Calleja. Their practical advice about how to actually set about doing fieldwork, and their assistance throughout the project, was absolutely invaluable. For their unstinting generosity and hospitality I would also like to thank Lucia Mantilla and Rogelio Luna, Jesús Tapia and Dominique and Thierry Linck, all of whom provided me with a place to stay at various points during my fieldwork.

In carrying out my field investigation in Sahuayo I was lucky enough to find myself among people whose warmth, humour and openness meant that the research itself was easily accomplished and also great fun to do. In the early days of the research I was greatly helped by

Señor Cura José Alvarez Ruíz, who found me accommodation and helped me make friends in the shoe-producing neighbourhood. For my knowledge of the intricacies of sandal production I am indebted in the first instance to Padre Enrique Mireles, who provided a detailed and fascinating account of the history of sandal manufacture. I spent many happy afternoons with him and his sisters in their tranquil courtyard. Don Luis Ortega and Don Juan Ochoa provided invaluable insights into the process by which sandal production expanded between 1940 and 1980. María Arceo, with whom I lodged during my first months, was my first real friend in Sahuayo and one of my best and most thorough informants, not just about sandal production but about a whole range of complicated cultural and social issues. For the kindness and hospitality afforded by María and her parents I will always be grateful.

Salvador Avila Farías and Gerardo Sánchez Prado upbraided me for "wasting my time" when, for reasons of shyness and fear of being intrusive, I held back from doing field research. They presented themselves for practice interviews, gave me a comprehensive lesson in the vocabulary of shoe-making and basically told me what questions to ask. Don Antonio Vivas, Leonardo García and other members of the cooperative taught me a great deal about the politics and economics of sandal manufacture and, by permitting me to attend and participate in their meetings, gave me the opportunity to chart the history of this collective endeavour. Teresa Aredondo deserves special thanks for her assistance with my survey of households. Without her introductions, explanations, guidance and hard work it would have been impossible to carry out the survey. Scores of other individual producers, workshop and factory employees, who are far too numerous to mention, told me the history of their lives and explained in detail every aspect of their work.

I would like also to thank Salvador Avila Farías and his wife Concha, and Ramon Granados Ochoa and Teresa Farías. As well as being invaluable informants they were good friends to whom I could turn for advice or assistance and whose houses were always open. Doña Angelita's shop was one of my most frequent haunts and her unfailingly sharp tongue and humorous advice kept me on the straight and narrow. Her daughter Josefina was also a good friend and companion. I would like to say thank you to my compadres Liobardo and Teresa and to all my friends and neighbours in the Calle Cuauhtémoc.

Staff at the municipal office were extremely helpful and provided me with a great deal of statistical and other information about the population and occupational structure of the town. For information about local politics, and for his willingness to engage in long and ruminative conversations, I am greatly indebted to Felipe Prado. The late Don Tarcisio Amezcua was a fund of information about the urban history of Sahuayo and the wit and style with which he recounted his tales provided a unique, stimulating and always amusing perspective on local events. Doctor Enrique Sahagún Cortes was a generous and courteous friend, whose delicious Wednesday lunches will ever remain a happy memory. Finally I would like to thank my girlfriends María Elena and Laura Orozco, Teresa Gomez Amezcua and Amalia Amezcua, for their support and kindness throughout the fieldwork period.

In London I would like to thank my friends in the research department of Amnesty International and in particular Donna Guest and Sara Whyatt, whose friendship and understanding has been unfailing. I am grateful also to my colleague Geoffrey Robinson, who taught me a lot about writing, and to my team-mates Tessa Piper and Celestina Dua, who covered for my increasingly frequent absences (both physical and mental) as completion drew nigh. My thanks to Dr Earl Hopper and associates; to

my neighbour Allen Abramson, who was a fellow-traveller and an ever-sympathetic listener; to Chris Bell for the maps and to all my salsa-dancing friends for helping me to enjoy myself and write at the same time. My fieldwork and writing up would probably never have been achieved without the friendship of my comrade-in-arms, Ruth Hogarth, who has played a central role in my life since we embarked upon our university degrees in 1980. Finally, my thanks to my family, who tactfully avoided referring to this thesis over what must have seemed like an interminably long period of study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES 9
LIST OF TABLES 9
GLOSSARY 11

1. INTRODUCTION 17
1.2 Rural manufacture - the problem defined 22
1.3 The thesis - an overview 29

2. MERCANTILE EXPANSION, <u>CARDENISMO</u> AND THE URBAN ECONOMY 33
2.1 Spanish conquest and the great estate 37
2.2 The eighteenth century (1700-1810) 39
2.3 Insurgency and liberal reform (1810-1860) 42
2.4 The <u>porfiriato</u> (1876-1910) 44
2.5 Revolution and the <u>cristiada</u> 48
2.6 <u>La reforma agraria</u> and <u>cardenismo</u> 51
2.7 Commerce and the logic of concealment 56
2.8 Conclusion 63

3. THE POLITICS OF RURAL MANUFACTURE 67
3.1 The Cárdenas and sombrero manufacture 70
3.2 Huarache production: the birth of a rural industry . . . 73
3.3 After 1960: the consolidation of household production . . 77
3.4 Class struggle, morality and the social value of labour . 82

4. CREDIT AND DEBT IN HOUSEHOLD WORKSHOPS 88
4.1 The social organization of workshop production 91
4.2 Autonomy, family and <u>compadrazgo</u> in household workshops . 96
4.3 The Rodriguez family workshops 97
4.4 Roberto Gálvez' <u>taller</u> 99
4.5 Migrant labour in the Carranza workshop 101
4.6 Patronage and independent production 104
4.7 The Gudiños' workshops 105
4.8 The Garza family workshops 107
4.9 Carlos Silva's workshop 109
4.10 Lionel Ortīz 110
4.11 Conclusion 112

5. PROFIT AND TRADITION IN HOUSEHOLD ENTERPRISE 116
5.1 From workshop to enterprise 118
5.2 U.S. migrant labour in the household enterprise 119

5.3 Capital investment 121
5.4 The problem of debt 123
5.5 Debt in Don Gregorio's workshop 124
5.6 Patronage and familiarity: the labour force 125
5.7 Guadalupe's _taller_ 129
5.8 Conclusion 132

6. IMAGES OF MODERNITY - THE HUARACHE FACTORIES 137
6.1 The birth of the factories 139
6.2 Factory production - the tip of an iceberg 143
6.3 The conditions of factory labour 146
6.4 The politics of factory labour 150
6.5 Conclusion 159

7. HOUSEHOLD, LABOUR AND INCOME 161
7.1 Household structure and the domestic life cycle 166
7.2 Family organization in the _barrio de los huaracheros_ . . 172
7.3 Household labour and the huarache sector 177
7.4 Social connection, patronage and economic activity . . . 181
7.5 _Machismo_, obligation and household income 187
7.6 Female-headed households - a collective option? 196
7.7 Conclusion 201

8. THE SAN JOSÉ COOPERATIVE 206
8.1 The challenge to profiteers 209
8.2 Collective production and organization 212
8.3 State policy, _artesanías_ and San José 217
8.4 Division and manoeuvre 220
8.5 Conclusion 225

9. THE POLITICS OF TRADITION 228
9.1 The role and significance of rural manufacture 233
9.2 Hegemony, resistance and the culture of social relations 236
9.3 Intimate cultures in Sahuayo 241
9.4 Hegemony and invented tradition 247
9.5 Female purity 251
9.6 Traditionalism and _machismo_ 253
9.7 Cultural closure, images of disorder 256
9.8 Conclusion 261

APPENDIX I 263

REFERENCES 266

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Location of Sahuayo 14

Figure 2. Los Altos de Jalmich and La Ciénega de Chapala 15

Figure 3. Plan of Sahuayo 16

Figure 4. Hacienda del Monte and Hacienda de Guaracha . . 40

Figure 5. Kin and affines in the Rodriguez and Gálvez families 100

Figure 6. Forms of assistance in the Rodriguez and Gálvez workshops 100

Figure 7. The Carranzas - household and kinship structure 102

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Source of initial capital: workshops formed between 1950 and 1985 92

Table 2. Patterns of migration among huaracheros 93

Table 3. Household workshops: occupation of fathers of huaracheros. Workshops formed between 1950 and 1985 96

Table 4. Capital investment and level of production in the factories 140

Table 5. Mechanization in the factories 141

Table 6. The labour force: factory, maquila and domestic labour 145

Table 7. Hours of work in the factories 147

Table 8. Prestaciones (benefits) 149

Table 9.	The labour force in the Herrera factory	150
Table 10.	Family wages in the Herrera factory (and relationship to David Herrera)	151
Table 11.	Wages for non-family labour in the Herrera factory	151
Table 12.	Men's weekly wage and income levels	153
Table 13.	The sex composition of the factory labour force	154
Table 14.	Renumeration for women's work in Sahuayo (weekly incomes)	155
Table 15.	Households divided by levels of income and phase in the domestic life cycle	169
Table 16.	Average household size and economically active members by economic group and phase in the domestic life cycle	172
Table 17.	Family structure according to economic group . .	173
Table 18.	Extended households according to economic group and phase in the domestic life cycle	175
Table 19.	Household labour: employment in the huarache sector compared with other forms of employment	178
Table 20.	Economic activity: male heads of households . .	180
Table 21.	Male household heads: employment in the huarache sector compared with other activity .	181
Table 22	Economic activity: female heads of households .	198
Table 23.	Female-headed households: occupational structure of household members	198

GLOSSARY

Spanish words used frequently in the text

Adornadora Woman who decorates or finishes a manufactured article, such as sandals or sombreros
A destajo Payment by piece rate.
Agrarista Supporters of land reform.
Aguinaldo A perk given by an employer to his workers, such as for example a bonus payment or present at Christmas.
Albañil Construction worker (literally a bricklayer).
Arriero Muleteer.
Baldío Empty plot of land.
Banco de acabar A machine for smoothing and rounding the edges of shoes or sandals.
Barrio Neighbourhood or quarter in a town or village.
Cabecera municipal Administrative capital of municipality.
Cacique In Sahuayo generally used in the sense of "boss", or person in control of resources and therefore the livelihood of others. Other meanings will be clarified where appropriate in the text.
Camioneta Van.
Carnaza Low quality leather made from pigskin.
Chancla Colloquial term for ladies' shoes or slippers.
Charro Mexican horseman.
Compadre/comadre Co-godparent.
Confianza Trust (a relation between individuals).
Corte Cut out pieces of leather which are sewn together in shoemaking.
Corral The enclosed backyards of dwellings.
Corrella Leather thongs used for weaving huarache.
Cosedora Industrial sewing machine used for attaching the soles to the upper part of shoes or sandals.
Cristero Supporter of the cristiada rebellion of 1926 to 1929.
"Droga" Colloquial term for debt (literally "drug").
Ecuaro Plot of land located in the hills. Originally distributed to hacienda peons for subsistence, today constitutes a form of private-landholding.
Ejidatorio A member of a land reform community (ejido) whose rights are officially recognized; not necessarily the de facto cultivator of the land.
Encorrelladora Weaver of huarache.
Fábrica Factory.
Fayuca Contraband or smuggled goods.
Fideicomiso Trust established by the government for the promotion of particular branch of manufacture or agricultural production.
Frijol(es) Beans.
Ganadero Cattle-man, rancher.
Gente humilde "Humble people". Often used by the rural poor to describe

themselves.
Gremio Literally a guild, often used as a collective term to describe members of a particular trade or craft, such as shoemakers.
Guaje The upper part of a shoe or sandal.
Hacendado The owner of a hacienda
Hacienda Most frequently used to denote a landed estate. The word also retains its broader meaning of "finance".
Horma Last for shoemaking.
Huarache Woven leather sandals, originally worn by peasants.
Huarachero A maker of huarache.
Hule de llanta Tyre rubber, frequently used to sole sandals.
Indemnización Generally used to describe payment made by an employer to an employee who has been made redundant or is leaving work for some other reason.
La hora inglesa Literally the "English timetable", describes a working week which begins on Monday and ends on Friday, during which hours are fixed and regular.
Machismo The cult of masculinity.
A Maquila To subcontract labour.
Maquilero Producer carrying out a part of production for a larger enterprise.
Mayordomo Foreman.
Mensualidad Monthly payment of debt or deposit.
Mesa directiva Executive committee (usually elected) of a cooperative or union.
Oficio Trade or craft.
Patron Employer.
Pedido Order, for example for a quantity of shoes.
Peletería Literally a leather-store, but used to describe stores supplying all materials used for shoe and sandal production.
Peletero Owner of peletería.
Pequeña propiedad Small private property. In practice covers everything from subsistence holdings to illegally large landed estates.
Pespuntadora Machine used for sewing pieces of leather together in shoemaking.
Piloncillo Sugar loaf.
Por tarea To be paid a fixed rate per batch of articles produced (for example per dozen pairs of sandals).
Planta The insole of a shoe or sandal.
Prestación Official benefits accorded to employees, such as registration with the Institute of Social Security.
Ranchero In pre-revolutionary Mexico denoted small private farmers as distinct from latifundists. In Sahuayo often used to refer to cattle ranchers.
Rancho Village.
Raya Pocket-money.
Rédito Interest on a loan.
Seguro Insurance. Also the colloquial term for the Mexican Institute of Social Security (IMSS).

Socio Business partners, members of an association or cooperative.
Sombrero en greña Sombrero before it has been pressed and hardened.
Suajeadora Machine for cutting out pieces of leather for shoes with a metal template. Can be manual or electrically operated.
Suela The sole of a shoe.
Sueldo fijo Fixed wage.
Taller Workshop.
Tanda Informal money-saving tactic, where a group of people pay a certain amount of money each week and take it in turns to receive a lump sum of money.
Terrateniente Landholder.
Tianguis Travelling market (not food).
Toquilla Plaited leather used to adorn sombreros.
Vaqueta Leather hide.
Zapatero Shoemaker.
"Zorra" Literally "fox", colloquial term for little boys who run errands for huaracheros.

Acronyms

NAFINSA — Nacional Financiera, a national, government-controlled credit institution.

IMCE — Instituto mexicano de comercio exterior, The Mexican Institute of Foreign Trade

CROC — Confederación regional obrera campesina, The Peasant and Workers' Regional Confederation

CONASUPO — Companía nacional de subsistencias populares, The National Company for the distribution of subsistence goods

FOSOC — Fondo de descuentos para sociedades cooperativas, The Discount Fund for Cooperative Societies

Fidepal — Fideicomiso de la Palma

IMSS — Instituto mexicano de seguro social, The Mexican Institute of Social Security

PRI — Partido revolucionario institucionalizado, The Institutionalized Revolutionary Party, Mexico's dominant political party.

PAN — Partido de acción nacional, the National Action Party.

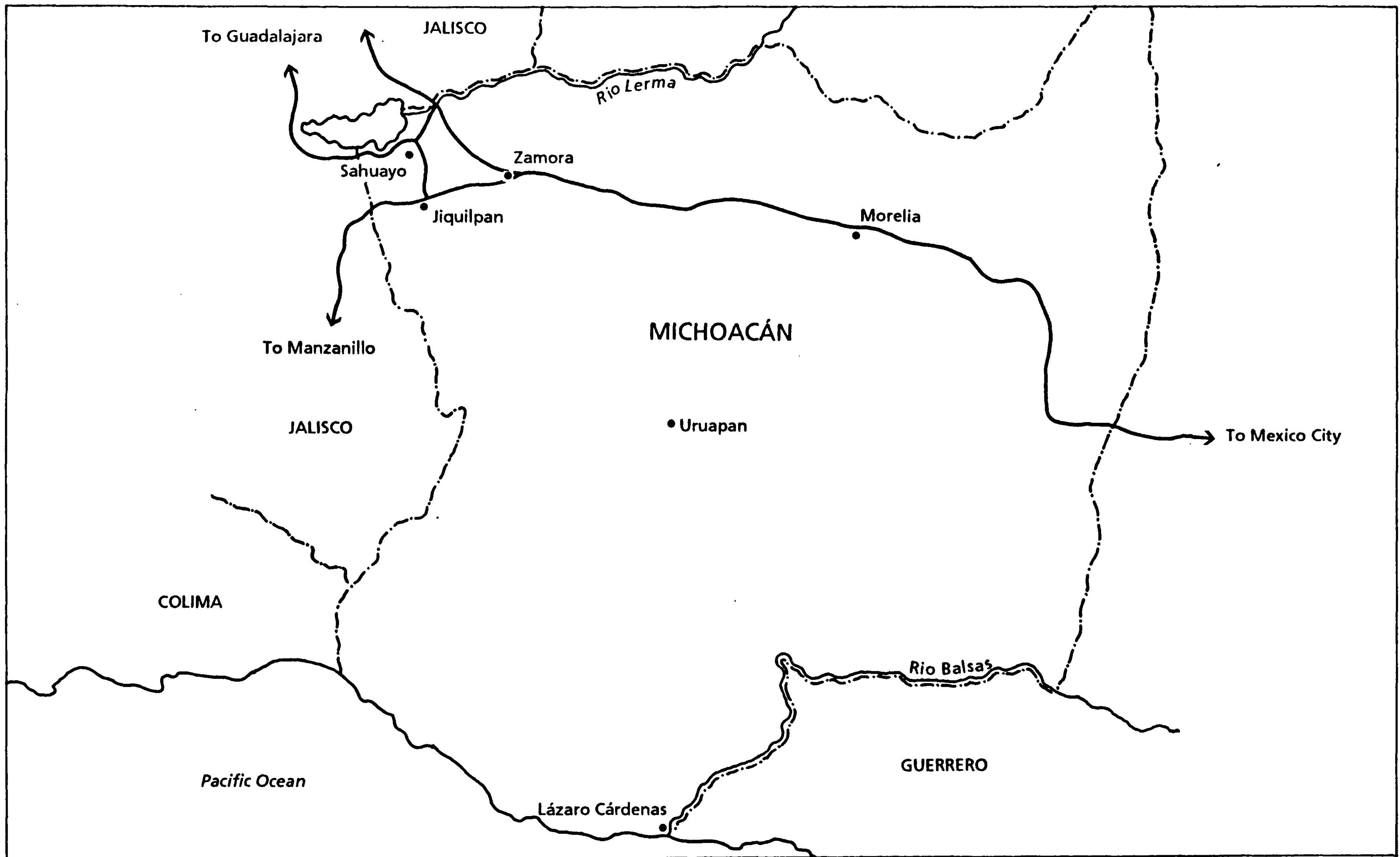


Figure 1: Location of Sahuayo

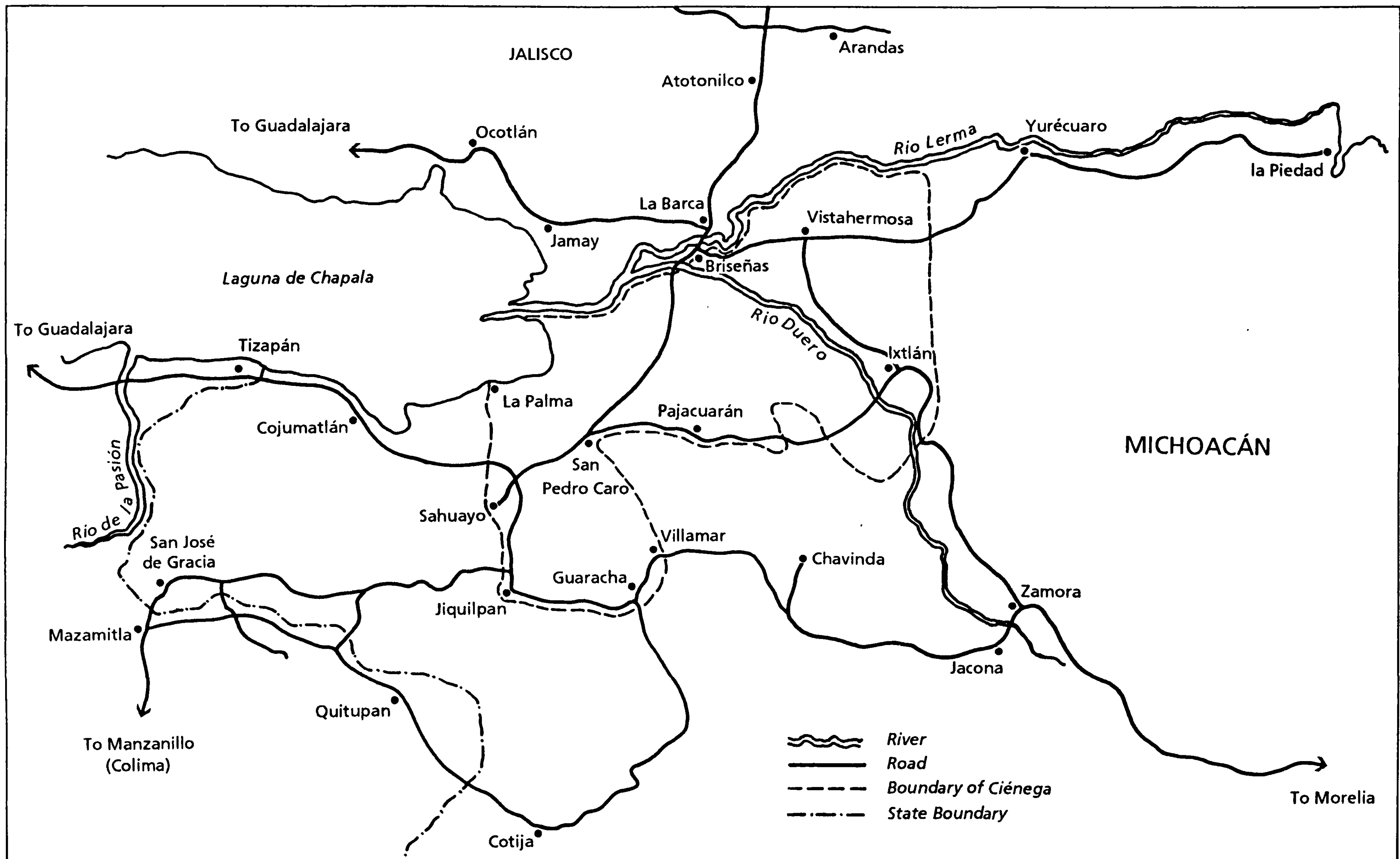


Figure 2: Los Altos de Jalmich & La Ciénega de Chapala

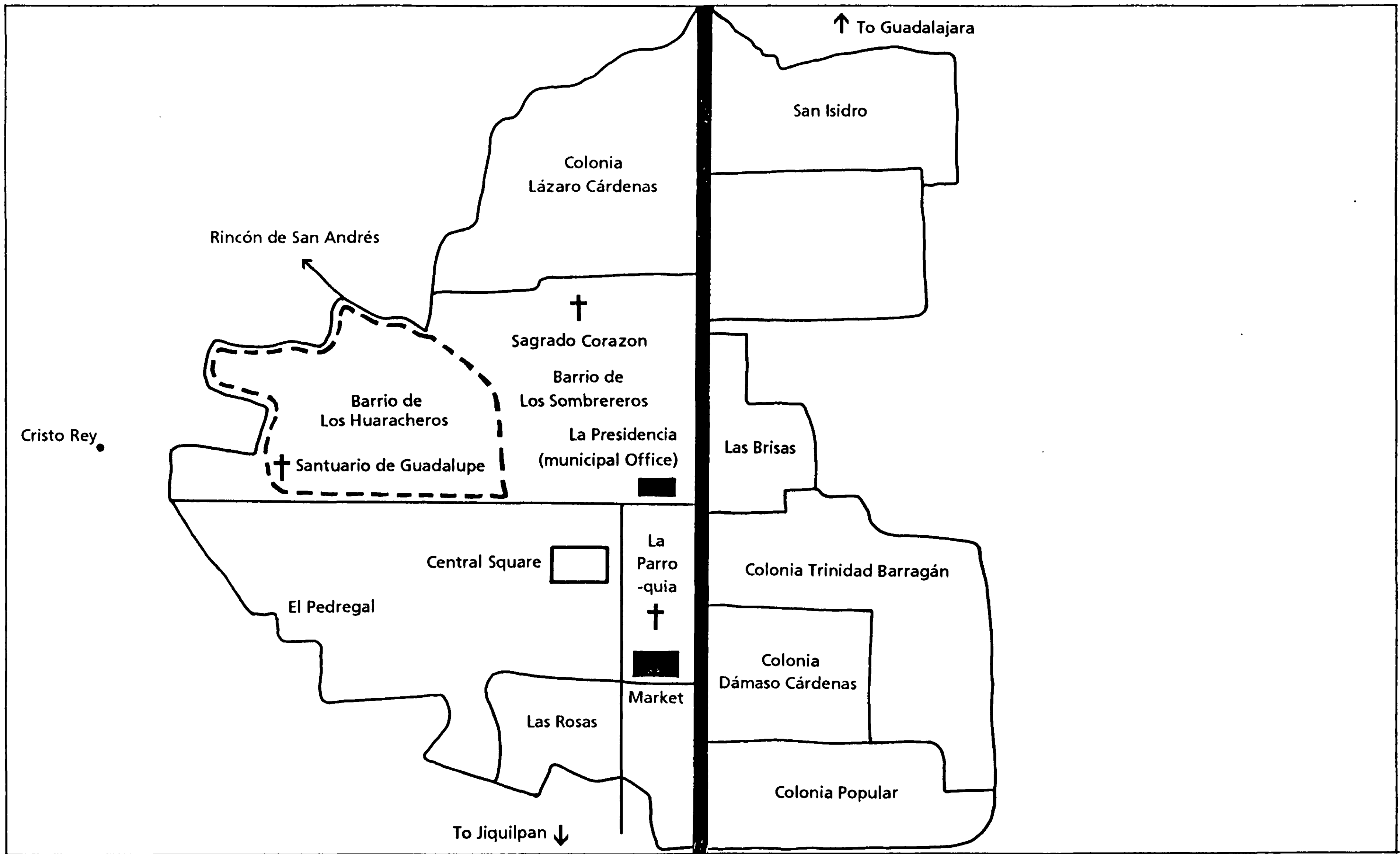


Figure 3: Plan of Sahuayo

1. Introduction

This thesis is about the economic, social and cultural organization of sandal manufacture in Sahuayo, a market town in Michoacán, western Mexico. Known as huaraches, the sandals are woven from leather thongs and attached to flat soles made of rubber tyre, foam rubber or leather.[1] The huarache was originally a heavy sandal produced all over Mexico for campesinos and others working on the land. While production of traditional huarache for local consumption has continued in some regions - such as Oaxaca and Colima - huarache production in Guadalajara and Sahuayo experienced a wave of expansion during the second world war, when hundreds of pairs of sandals were produced for American soldiers serving in Southeast Asia. In subsequent years the creation of lucrative tourist and export markets for artefacts of Mexican culture opened new avenues of production and distribution. Producers in Sahuayo created dozens of new models for men, women and children and these included light open sandals, delicate high-heeled slippers and elegant soft leather brogues. In 1985 there were some 200 household workshops in the town, as well as a handful of more factory-like enterprises. The huarache sector was the source of income for thousands of working people in Sahuayo and surrounding villages. The sandals were sold in regional market places all over the Mexican republic and every week thousands of pairs found their way to retail outlets in the United States and to wholesalers from Japan, Spain, Italy and other European countries.

The municipality of Sahuayo is located at the northwestern corner of the state of Michoacán in western Mexico (see Figure 1). Above

---

[1] Huaraches are produced by weaving leather thongs, or correllas between an insole and pieces of leather which are cut out and tacked onto a moulded wooden last. The upper part of the sandal (the guaje) is either sewn or glued to a sole made of rubber or leather. The sandals can be made entirely by hand using simple cutting tools, although sewing machines (cosedoras), household-based and owned by former huaracheros, are almost universally used to affix the sole to the upper part of the sandal.

Sahuayo lies the Laguna de Chapala, the waters of which feed the rich and fertile plain known as the Ciénega de Chapala.[2] To the north and east of the town, covering parts of the states of Jalisco and Michoacán, lie the non-irrigated uplands of the region known as Los Altos de Jalmich (see Figure 2).

The town of Sahuayo had grown up around the parish church which lay at the edge of the central square (see Figure 3). The old part of the town was made up of some three or four older _barrios_ or neighbourhoods, which had developed during the last years of the nineteenth century, and a further half or dozen or so _colonias_ which had sprung up since the 1960s. Banks and commercial establishments, including hardware, general goods and furniture stores, jewellers and pharmacies were located on the central square or in the immediately surrounding streets. In these streets dwellings built of adobe stood alongside more elegant brick houses built at the turn of the century, and - increasingly - newer brick constructions with plaster facades and impressive brass fittings and railings.

To the west of the _plaza_ the town rose up a hillside, at the top of which stood a statue of _Cristo Rey_ (Christ the King) his arms outstretched over the town. Between the statue and the _plaza_ lay the _Santuario de Guadalupe_, church and focus of social life for residents of the _barrio de los huaracheros_, or sandal-makers. The huarache quarter was located in the old part of the town to the northwest of the central square. Houses in the neighbourhood were built of adobe or brick with rendered plaster facades painted bright blue, green or pink. The

---

[2] In the post-revolutionary period the Ciénega was officially designated the _Distrito de Riego 24_. With an administrative office in Sahuayo, the Ciénega comprises some 50,000 hectares and extends over the _municipios_ of Briseñas, Ixtlán, Jiquilpan, Pajacuarán, Venustiano Carranza (formerly San Pedro Caro), Villamar (formerly Guarachita), Vista Hermosa, Tingüindin and Sahuayo. Until the 1960s agricultural production in the _Ciénega_ was primarily devoted to the cultivation of wheat, maize and beans; since then industrialized cops such as sorghum and safflower have been introduced.

northern edge of the _barrio_ was delineated by the Calzada Amezcua, beyond which lay fields. To the north and west the _barrio_ was expanding and included several newer streets, which boasted brick dwellings with concrete floors. During the day, the neighbourhood echoed to the sound of sewing machines and small boys could be seen carrying sacks full of sandals to and from the weavers' homes. Through the open doorways women sat weaving in their sitting rooms and occasionally a _huarachero_ could be seen cutting endless strips from leather hides. The sombrero-producing neighbourhood was located below the _barrio de los huaracheros_, and to some extent spilled over into the newer and poorer _colonia_ Lázaro Cárdenas, which contained a few household workshops and supplied wage labourers who worked in workshops and commercial establishments all over the town. The poorest part of the old town was the _barrio del Pedregal_ which lay south of the town rising up the hillside. The male population of the neighbourhood worked as wage labourers in the central market, in construction and as agricultural labourers. The _barrio_ was also renowned for its musicians and _mariachi_ orchestras.

At the eastern edge of town, cutting a swathe from north to south, lay the _carretera nacional_, the main road linking Guadalajara to Morelia. The _carretera_ was lined with garages, car and truck dealers, beer franchisers and warehouses storing fodder, corn and other wholesale goods. To the east of the _carretera_ the town was expanding, with the construction of four or five residential _colonias_. The most well-established was Dámaso Cárdenas, where of many of the town's car mechanics and repair workshops were located. The other _colonias_ - Las Rosas, San Isidro and Popular - were less well organized with poor infrastructure. There were few roads in San Isidro for example, which was mostly occupied by _campesinos_ working on rented plots of land. In contrast the _colonia_ Las Brisas, which also lay to the east of the main road, was known locally as the "high life". The _colonia_ was purely residential and contained ostentatiously decorated dwellings built by members of the local bourgeoisie.

In 1985 the population of Sahuayo was estimated at some 50,000.

Famed as a bustling and dynamic commercial centre, the town attracted customers from the surrounding regions of western Michoacán and southeast Jalisco. Among the many goods sold wholesale and retail by Sahuayan merchants were furniture, animal fodder, groceries, wholesale grains and pulses, pharmaceutical products, shoes and electrical goods. The town also boasted a lively productive sector, with small factories producing ceramic tiles, clothes and training shoes. In addition a multitude of family workshops were engaged in the fabrication of bread, ice-cream, sweets and so on. Many others among the working population ran repair workshops for electrical appliances and bicycles; or worked as plumbers, locksmiths or carpenters. But Sahuayo was most highly famed for its production of leather huarache and palm sombreros, the latter worn by campesinos throughout the region.

The origins of sandal manufacture in Sahuayo dated back to the mid-nineteenth century. Lack of access to agricultural land, and the availability of leather for tanning in a region where cattle raising was widespread, provided opportunities for the urban working population to earn their living through artisanal production of sandals from around 1850 onwards. A tradition of household production, with skilled huaracheros owning their own tools and means of production, was well established by the early 1900s. In the face of a huge increase in demand for huaraches in the 1940s, members of tanning and huarache-producing families developed putting-out systems, setting production in motion in dozens of household workshops. After 1940 production was almost entirely directed toward tourist and export markets and, with the industrialization of the tanning process in the late 1950s, control over production moved into the hands of merchants, or peleteros, who controlled the supply of leather and other raw materials. Huarache production requires a hefty investment of leather and leather had always been costly. In practice producers with little capital at their disposal have continued to depend upon a structure of credit and debt relations with entrepreneurs of one kind or another.

Despite expansion and growth huarache manufacture was

predominantly carried out in household workshops. The elaboration of systems of subcontracted labour was particularly well suited to the demands of fragmented and highly competitive markets and the myriad of small workshops allowed enormous flexibility. Entrepreneurs receiving orders from clients could activate the workshops and organize the production of the exact quantities, styles and models of huaraches requested by their clients. When orders for huarache declined or disappeared, the entrepreneurs simply withdrew, leaving the producers to fend for themselves. Furthermore, the new tourist and export markets sought above all commodities which embodied idealized images of Mexican rural culture. The defining appeal of the huarache was its hand-made character and this in turn implied a labour-intensive process of production. The weaving of the sandals, the most time-consuming task, was always carried out by women, whose labour was defined as "supplementary" in terms of local cultural values and was poorly renumerated. The low value of women's labour was one reason why huarache production had remained profitable. Even in the factories, those employed to operate machinery made up but a small portion of the total labour force. Much of the more time-consuming work involved in the cutting of the leather and weaving was put out to _maquilas_ (subcontracted workshops) and domestic labourers. Thus the risks inherent in producing for uncertain markets were partly borne by _huaracheros_ in household workshops.

At the same time, thousands of retail stalls along the Mexican coastline, in tourist towns and along the border with the United States, were prepared to buy small quantities of sandals from individual producers. The market was unstable but it was also extensive and _huaracheros_ were able to produce and sell directly to their own clients, thus retaining a degree of independence from the entrepreneurs. Thus, despite a process of expansion huarache production continued to be controlled by entrepreneurs whose orientation was mercantile rather than industrial and production in household workshops or _talleres_ - employing family and domestic labour - had continued to predominate.

1.2 Rural manufacture - the problem defined

The growth of "traditionally organized but market-oriented and principally rural industry" in late eighteenth-century Europe has been defined by some authors as "proto-industrialization", a precursor to the development of fully capitalist modern industry (Mendels 1972). According to this view, agricultural producers turned to manufacture as a solution to the problem of seasonal under or unemployment. The industries provided opportunities for the accumulation of capital in the hands of mercantile entrepreneurs. Merchant capital was basically in the form of raw materials, goods in process and accounts receivable, rather than in fixed investments.[3] The transformation from this phase to fully capitalist industry occurred when demand for textile products increased in the late eighteenth century and entrepreneurs suffered mounting costs. The division of labour time between agriculture and industry, with absolute priority for agricultural work, limited the production capacity of each cottage. Expansion then involved increasing the dispersion of the workers and a growing distance between merchants and producers led to an increase in theft and delays in production. Production costs were relatively high, dependent as they were on natural

---

[3] In Marx' formulation merchant capital is the "oldest free state of the existence of capital" (Marx 1976). Merchant capital requires no other conditions of its existence than those necessary for the simple circulation of commodities and money. Merchants' capital is indifferent to the products it circulates, and the latter may be produced under a variety of conditions (for example petty commodity production). As capital, however, it is driven to accumulate. Crucially, merchant capital does not appropriate surplus labour through buying and selling labour, but through political control over the product of labour, ensured by its alliance with the politically dominant class. Mercantile surplus is invested in the expansion of trade and trade monopolies, making entire branches of production dependent upon it. This in turn eventually leads to a requirement for increased productivity, and the reorganization of production. Marx argued that where this did not occur and merchant capital continues to develop its effects become more and more enervating, so that "wherever it still predominates we find backward conditions".

forces which restricted the rate of exploitation. These obstacles created the need for technical and industrial innovation, changes which were funded by the capital accumulated by merchants during the proto-industrialization phase. At the same time, industrial specialization in some regions created a market for agricultural goods among the growing section of the population that was no longer entirely self-sufficient in food.

This in turn set the stage for the next phase, during which industrialization was accompanied by large-scale urbanization and the emergence of industrialized agriculture with its capacity for producing food surpluses sufficient to feed the urban population. Mendels argues that even in relatively backward continental regions proto-industrialization tended to induce the passage to modern industry. Entrepreneurs who had engaged in putting out, and workers who had come to depend upon manufacturing felt the brunt of the British lead in manufacturing. Those who had remained isolated from market forces or specialized in commercial agriculture were not subject to the same pressure toward modern industrial development. Nevertheless in some regions existing industry declined and Mendels observes that the success of the transition depended on natural resource availability, the location of essential new fuels and raw materials and, above all, the sociopolitical framework within which it was carried out. Other circumstances permitting then, rural manufacture controlled by merchant capital was defined as a transitional phase which would create the impetus for its own transformation or disappearance during the long process of transition to fully industrialized production in Europe.

Studies of small-scale manufacture in contemporary Africa, Asia and Latin America focused on the realization that capitalist development and urbanization did not necessarily bring a corresponding development of employment and the wage form. Instead, much productive activity continued to be household or family based and "rural" features such as kin networks and ethnicity persisted. The concept of the "informal sector" was defined by Hart (1973), whose study of employment in Accra,

West Africa showed that only 48 per cent of the urban population were employed within the officially recognized economy. The mass of the remaining urban population were engaged in economic activities which escaped official recognition and enumeration. The informal sector, then, was comprised of a myriad of small enterprises which exhibited their own patterns of organization, were characterized by low levels of capital investment, and had little or no technology. Informal sector enterprise was said to be resilient and highly competitive, showed a high degree of flexibility and was dependent on the proliferation of credit networks. This dualist thesis assumed the unproblematic co-existence of two autonomous sectors, each with its own dynamic and potential for growth. Criticisms of the formal/informal sector thesis are numerous, citing its failure to identify the relations between the sector and its indiscriminate application to a jumble of empirical phenomena broadly associated with unemployment and poverty (see in particular Connolly 1985).

In a re-evaluation of the informal sector Roberts (1978) argued that the development of a "small-scale sector" was the outcome of a particular form of industrialization. He claimed that within peripheral economies the state has played a key role in the promotion of industrial development. During the decades following the end of World War II the need for rapidly increased productivity led the state to concentrate resources on the development of a highly capital-intensive industrial sector. The strategy failed to create employment opportunities for an expanding urban population and a small-scale sector therefore emerged in the interstices of its large-scale counterpart. The small-scale sector was dependent on and "convenient" to capitalist enterprise under conditions of fluctuating markets. Large-scale enterprise, unwilling to risk capital investment, developed putting out systems which could be activated when demand was high. In the event of slackening demand the large enterprise would withdraw and leave the smaller units of

production to fend for themselves.[4] Roberts and Long's (1984) study of regional development in Highland Peru looked at the ways in which this sectoral model might be applied to rural industries in peripheral economies. They argued that proliferation of small-scale enterprise in provincial areas was a consequence of marginalization from capital-intensive production in metropolitan centres. Rural enterprise was said to be structurally linked to the capitalist sector for example, via food production, or manufactured goods sold at terms of trade favourable to the formal sector.

Marxist critiques of the formal/informal sector thesis have also focused on the "interdependencies between different elements of the ensemble", and the exploitative nature of relationships between the two sectors (Moser 1978). During the 1970s the structural Marxist framework originating in France, and developed by philosophers such as Althusser, Balibar, and anthropologists such as Meillassoux and Terray, held out the promise of new standards of rigorous analysis and the possibility for theorizing the co-existence of different forms of production. Drawing on the concept of petty commodity production a plethora of study and debate ensued.[5]

The persistence of petty commodity production in contexts of capitalist development - both urban and rural - was noted by numerous researchers, and initially explained in terms of the articulation of modes of production. Bienefield (1975), for example, argued that within peripheral economies the dominant capitalist mode of production was articulated with a variety of pre-capitalist modes, each more or less

---

[4] Useful empirical studies using Roberts' sectoral model have been carried out in a number of Mexican cities. See Arias 1981, Calleja 1984, Lailson 1980.

[5] At the simplest level Marx (1978) defined petty commodity production as a transitional mode between feudal (or other non-capitalist), and the capitalist mode of production. It consists of commodity production based either on the self-employment of the producers, or on the sale of the excess product of subsistence production.

transformed through its relation with the former. Petty commodity production was therefore defined as a form of production existing at the margins of the capitalist mode, but integrated into, and subordinate to it. These authors argued that the petty commodity sector was functional to the capitalist mode of production. The "conservation/dissolution" thesis claimed that where the capitalist mode is pervasive the main tendency is for dissolution of petty commodity production. Where capitalist relations of production have not been fully established the tendency is for the petty commodity sector to be "conserved". The conservation/dissolution thesis was subsequently criticized for having simply replaced one dualist thesis with another, and for the functionalism implicit in the formulation of petty commodity production as a convenient adjunct to capitalist production. Clammer (1978), for example, has argued for the need to explain the persistence and proliferation of small-scale activities, the relative autonomy of these forms of production, and their internal organization.

More recently, authors such as Castells (1986) have emphasized the role of the state in regulating the conditions of existence of informal sector production. For Castells informalization is defined by the production and distribution of goods and services outside the institutional framework developed by society to legitimate particular forms of demand and negotiation between classes. The lack of regulation is supported openly or tacitly by the state and may affect the status of the labour force and the conditions of labour, as well as permitting for example systematic fiscal evasion, fraud or involvement in criminal activity (for example trade in contraband goods). Informalization thus frequently results in low wages and a heterogeneous labour force within which the power of organized labour is progressively undermined. For Castells informality has emerged as a result of a growing disjuncture within the national economy of countries like Mexico. On the one hand a dynamic productive sector is incorporated into the world economy and on the other hand a series of "destructured segments" provide subcontracted labour, goods and services for some national markets.

In a useful and pertinent critique of petty commodity production theories Scott (1986) has observed that an emphasis on theoretical rigour and an obsession with characterization of structure has led to the reification of what are in reality richly diverse historical processes. Moreover, the economic sphere had been privileged to the exclusion and neglect of political processes and the issues of class relations and class conflict. She has noted in particular that: "there is little on the power relations involved within the labour process or the ideology that underlies them - despite frequent mention of patriarchy, family labour and household relations". Moreover, since analyses of petty commodity producers have been primarily formulated in terms of exploitation at the point of production (mechanisms by which surplus value is appropriated and so on), other forms of subordination - arising from kinship, gender, ethnicity and so on, have remained at the margin of analysis. Smith (1986) has also argued along these lines, stressing the importance of contextualizing petty commodity production both economically and politically. She notes that different contexts engender different structures and defines differences between forms of production as the outcome of class struggle rather than immanent tendencies within a given type of production or a consequence of the impact of market forces.

In a study of the expansion of rural industry in upland regions of Western Mexico, Wilson (1990) has drawn upon various strands of analytical argument emerging from theories of rural industry, petty commodity and informal sector production. She argues that the expansion of rural industry since 1960 has occurred in regions where there is a marked division between irrigated, fertile land and non-irrigated upland areas. These industries are "new" in terms of form of organization, technology and markets, although they have emerged in a region within which various forms of rural manufacture have ebbed and flowed since the eighteenth century. In the recent period, limited development of capitalist agriculture in the upland regions meant that those living there suffered impoverishment and chronic unemployment, and it is in

these centres that rural industry has developed. Since the 1960s small centres have tended to develop a specialization in one or other branch of production. Thus for example the population around the city of León - national centre for the production of men's shoes - is involved in shoe production; and villagers within the orbit of Moroleon and Guadalajara are engaged in the production of sweaters and other jersey articles. Production is therefore linked to larger enterprises in metropolitan centres through various systems of subcontracting. Much of this production is clandestine and the workers unprotected by the state or labour organizations. Finally, the manufacture of shoes and clothing in western Mexico has long been associated with female labour and Wilson examines in some detail the social construction of gender within the region and the ways in which this has shaped the organization of productive activity itself.

Huarache production in Sahuayo shared some of the characteristics identified by Wilson - the working population of the town had for example long suffered from lack of access to land for subsistence production and this was certainly a factor influencing the development of manufacturing activities. Moreover, many of the elements of productive organization described by Wilson - subcontracting, domestic labour, payment a destajo (by piece rate) and so on - were present in the huarache sector. Likewise the social construction of gender, the low value accorded to women's labour and a narrow definition of what was appropriate as women's work, were fundamental to the continued profitability of huarache production. Nevertheless, in a number of important respects huarache manufacture in Sahuayo differed from the rural industries which had sprung up elsewhere in Los Altos de Jalmich. In the first place huarache production had been established in the eighteenth century and was the outcome of a long tradition of artisanal production in which individual producers owned the means of production and fashioned the sandals in a labour process which was skilled rather than mechanical. Second, and partly because tourist markets demanded a hand-made commodity, the productive process had not undergone a

technological transformation, but had retained its artisanal character. Third, many producers continued to exercise control over the distribution of their produce - selling their sandals directly to retailers. Finally, huarache production was independent of industrial production in urban conglomerates and to a significant extent control over the accumulation of wealth or capital was exercised at the local level.

1.3 The thesis - an overview

This thesis seeks to understand why the huarache sector in Sahuayo had endured and why it continued to be so successful. Drawing upon Scott and Smith's critiques of petty commodity production theories, the thesis argues that the contemporary structure of huarache manufacture could not be understood without reference to historical processes and events which had shaped the regional and urban economy as a whole. While the best studies of informal production have included a careful historical contextualization such studies have nevertheless tended to focus upon the characteristics of productive or industrial development within a region or locality. They have thus precluded investigation of other aspects of political, cultural and economic life which may be fundamental to an understanding of what is happening in the productive sphere. As the following chapters will demonstrate, the strategies and practices of both entrepreneurs and producers alike had been shaped by political and economic events which had affected not just the huarache sector, but the urban economy of Sahuayo as a whole.

Chapter two contains an overview of the history of Sahuayo and its region. Political transformations during the period of agrarian reform (1920 to 1940) and the consolidation of the Mexican national state, were especially significant in terms of the development of the urban economy of Sahuayo and attention is paid to the various ways in which a landowning and mercantile local bourgeoisie reacted to the political and economic transformations which confronted it. In the region of the

Ciénega, the emergence of a new agrarian bourgeoisie - which among other things, sought to incorporate productive activity into the sphere of state control, threatened to undermine economic domains until then controlled by elite families in the town. The interventionist practices of the new bourgeoisie, which was backed by the institutional apparatus of the post-revolutionary state, acted to reinforce a preference for commercial rather than productive investment and to promote strategies designed to conceal and protect locally-controlled economic activity from the predations of the national state and its regional representatives.

Chapter three describes the history of manufacture in Sahuayo and includes a detailed discussion of the evolution of the sombrero and huarache industries. It examines the political significance of state intervention, the organization of labour within the sombrero industry and the impact these events had on the social and economic organization of huarache production in contemporary Sahuayo. These introductory chapters show how the mercantile orientation of local elites affected developments in the manufacturing sphere, acting to promote forms of production based upon trade monopolies and subcontracted labour. Likewise, the memory of a disastrous attempt at union organization within the sombrero industry during the 1950s had consolidated working people's opposition to state interference. The latter had remained staunchly independent, clinging to ownership of the means of production, and preferring to depend upon relations of patronage with the economically powerful of the town, rather than engaging in more collective forms of political struggle.

The following three chapters describe the organization of the huarache sector in 1985, providing an account of three different kinds or levels of productive organization - the household workshop, the household enterprise and the huarache factory. Chapters 4 and 5 examine the ways in which household workshops and enterprises were established and the importance of factors such as migration, relations of credit and debt and the organization of labour, for their survival. Special

attention is payed to the social and cultural organization of production and to the role played by patronage, kinship or other social relationships such as compadrazgo within these productive units. Chapter six charts the history of the huarache factories, which had emerged during the 1970s to cater for largely export markets. While the factories strove to create an image of modernity and efficiency, and had benefited from significant capital investment and the provision of credit from state institutions, in practice a major portion of the total process of production was organized around subcontracting and the employment of cheap female labour. In a number of important respects, the factories thus conformed to long-established models of practice in the town. The chapter considers the structural, political and economic factors underpinning the strategies and practices of the factory owners.

Chapter seven contains an analysis of the internal organization and occupational structure of households located in the barrio de los huaracheros. A full understanding of huarache production required knowledge of its importance for the survival and reproduction of households within the locality. The chapter therefore seeks to understand what kinds of families and households were supplying labour to different kinds of huarache-producing workshops, to examine the role and significance of huarache production within the local economy as a whole, and to see how it compared with other forms of economic activity engaged in by the local population.

Chapter eight describes the events which occurred during and after the foundation of a huarache-producing cooperative in 1982. The existence of the cooperative was in some sense an expression of the tensions inherent in the relations of patron-clientage binding household producers to huarache entrepreneurs of one kind or another. It represented a challenge to the profiteering activities of the peleteros and a claim for more just and equitable arrangements for the buying and selling of the raw materials necessary for production. The activities of the cooperative were from the outset compounded by the politically-motivated interventions of various state bodies, and this had an

important impact upon the way in which both leaders and members of the cooperative perceived the various options and possibilities for action. In the end the cooperative failed to establish itself for a number of reasons. The state failed to deliver the technical and financial support necessary break the cycle of credit and debt in which producers were entrapped. And faced with a local leadership whose capabilities were at best unclear and at worst suspect; and with a social and economic order which, while exploitative, could be relied upon to provided a steady income, the <u>socios</u> chose to withdraw their support and returned to tried and tested forms of production.

The thesis concludes by examining ideological and cultural aspects of class relations in Sahuayo and in particular the ways in which the hegemony of the local bourgeoisie was sustained and reproduced. An idealized history of Sahuayo - produced by local historians - had portrayed economic prosperity as arising from the actions of individual members of a benevolent and civilized elite class. According to this portrayal, the Sahuayan bourgeoisie had created the conditions in which a conscientious working population could be provided with useful employment producing goods, such as sandals and sombreros, for regional consumption. This vision mythologized many of the less savory aspects of economic practice and concealed the fact that the most important processes of capital accumulation derived from activities extending far beyond the confines of the town. And in reality the working population was under no illusion about the exploitative and avaricious nature of the rich. Nevertheless, the community of Sahuayans was a cohesive one. The majority of the population subscribed to political theories and moral codes which cross-cut class and other social divisions. The chapter looks at the construction of a Sahuayan identity which, because it bound Sahuayans together in opposition to the secular state - with all its connotations of indifference and social disorder - acted to promote conformity with the prevailing social and economic order.[6]

---

[6] Field research was conducted between July 1984 and November 1985. A brief description of the research project is provided in Appendix I.

2. Mercantile expansion, *cardenismo* and the urban economy

The urban development of small towns in Latin America has been the subject of a good deal of discussion in the literature, much of which has emphasized the decline of provincial and market towns under the impact of capitalist penetration and metropolitan expansion at various moments in history. In a different but also problematic vein such studies have frequently failed to address the relationship between economic development and political conditions, and the impact of political events on the urban economy of small towns. This chapter charts the history of Sahuayo's political and economic development, paying particular attention to changes which occurred during and after the last quarter of the nineteenth century. I will argue that a focus on metropolitan expansion as the determinant of decline in small towns fails to capture the underlying dynamic of towns like Sahuayo, which in fact experienced significant growth after 1870, although the form and characteristics of this growth were not entirely evident or intelligible in purely economic terms. I argue that it is necessary to examine political developments and changing configurations of class relations within local, regional and national society in order to grasp the dynamics of the urban economy of the town and contemporary patterns of activity within the commercial and manufacturing spheres.

The idea which has underpinned much social scientific analysis of urban development has been that of urban primacy, whereby national or regional capitals develop at the expense of provincial centres and the primate city monopolizes its hinterland, absorbing capital and other resources. Where such studies have differed is in their assessment of when and how primacy became established. Thus some have argued that provincial centres declined under the impact of Spanish colonial administration, a process which has continued to reverberate to the present day. Such authors have argued that the origin of the Latin American city can be traced to the colonial period and that Iberian mercantilism endowed "urban life" with certain features which have survived post-colonial transformations. According to these accounts the

city emerged during the colonial period as a political and administrative outpost of the Spanish colonial empire (Morse 1971). Regional capitals became control rather than service centres and in contrast rural areas and smaller towns suffered from a lack of access to urban functions and faced stagnation or decline. Kaplan (1965) has suggested that in the post-colonial period the state's failure to resolve the problem of centrifugalism has resulted in the persistence of mercantile relations between town and country-side in certain parts of Mexico. In the absence of a strong state, locally-based hacendados (estate owners) or caciques[1] consolidated their power. Regional market-places emerged, controlled by local merchants who established monopolies over the exchange of consumption goods. The resultant pattern of growth was additive rather than developmental in the structural sense and it served to reproduce the urban nuclei-rural satellite relationship in these regions.

Others have argued that the export-dependency phase of 1860 to 1910, during which the core states of the global economy achieved the transition to monopoly capital, was responsible for a pattern of urban macrocephalism which inhibited the growth of regional urban networks. Export-dependency essentially defined the periphery economies as suppliers of raw materials to the core states (Wallerstein, 1984). Within this system peripheral economies required only one major node to articulate the exporting regions to their external markets. The development of infrastructure allowed large cities to dominate rural hinterlands, local industry was destroyed and foreign investment tended to strengthen one city above all others (Hardoy 1975, Johnson 1970).

Yet others have attributed primacy to the relationship between industrialization and agrarian transformation. National policies aimed

---

[1] The term cacique has been much discussed in the literature. Chevalier (1962), defines the classic cacique of the colonial era as mestizo rather than indigenous and as an "ambiguous" representative of the popular classes at the regional level. In the absence of a strong central government, the state is forced to negotiate with locally-based caciques to maintain political stability.

at rapid industrialization, such as those introduced in post-1940s Mexico, required the reorganization of agricultural production in order to ensure a supply of foodstuffs to a rapidly developing urban sector. In both spheres developments were capital-intensive causing a huge relative decline in employment opportunities and creating a marginalized labour force. The newly created rural surplus population was forced off the land and into the cities, where an "informal" sector developed in response to the failure of the new industries to generate employment. The upshot of this process was over-urbanization within a few centres and the decline of provincial and other small towns (Quijano 1974, Roberts 1978).

While many of these arguments are at least partially relevant to an understanding of the urban economy of Sahuayo, they cannot deal very satisfactorily with patterns of growth or economic expansion in small towns. Furthermore, such studies have paid little attention to political developments at the local level, or to the ways in which the inhabitants of a particular region or town have reacted to processes of change. In a series of more politically oriented and historically detailed studies, analysts of Mexican regional history have focused on the political as well as the economic processes affecting the development of regions within the national economy of countries like Mexico. These studies have in particular noted that under certain conditions provincial and regional bourgeoisies have sought to retain a degree of autonomy and control over economic and political affairs (see for example Cerutti 1989, Pansters 1989, Rivière d'Arc 1973). De la Peña (1986) has argued, for example, that between 1875 and 1910, under the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, economic growth in Guadalajara <u>stimulated</u> the urban development of some strategically located regional centres, among them undoubtedly Sahuayo. Nevertheless, there has been a tendency to simply transpose primacy arguments into a regional arena and to disregard the significance of local or regional political forces. De la Peña goes on to argue that after 1940 growth in Sahuayo was impeded by its proximity to the western capital, Guadalajara. In fact, as we shall see, the

Sahuayan bourgeoisie had actively prevented certain kinds of expansion within the urban economy; and in particular it had eschewed dynamic growth in the productive sphere. Rather, the local elite had found its interests best served by the maintenance of a relatively closed structure within which commercial activity based on trade monopolies was the most important sphere of capital accumulation.

Urban development in Sahuayo was rooted in a secular process of expansion which had begun during the eighteenth century. The character of economic development in the town was throughout the 1700s shaped by its location at the edge of the enormous and land-engulfing Guaracha hacienda. The absorption of available land into the hacienda reduced the possibilities for agricultural or subsistence production, and acted to promote a movement towards artisanal production and commerce within the municipality of Sahuayo. During the latter half of the nineteenth century rich Sahuayans acquired some private landholdings thus providing the basis for a process of capital accumulation. The town's location at the northern edge of the Ciénega, and between it and the road from Mexico City to Guadalajara, allowed Sahuayan landowners and traders to benefit from changes in national policy, in particular the development of communications and substantial infrastructural investment. By the end of the nineteenth century, Sahuayo was an established centre for regional commerce and artisanal production.

But it was the political transformation wrought by the 1910 revolution and the agrarian reform of the 1920s and 1930s which most fundamentally affected the political economy of Sahuayo and acted to shape the course of future commercial and manufacturing developments. A consolidated national state began to emerge under the leadership of Lázaro Cárdenas, a native of neighbouring Jiquilpan, during the 1930s. The essence of the Cárdenas project was to effect the consolidation of a national state through the provision of financial, technical and other assistance to various sections of the working population, thus undermining the power of the porfirian landowning and urban elite. In the Ciénega, regional configurations of power were transformed during

this period with the demise of the great estate and the emergence of a new regional agrarian bourgeoisie, dominated by members of the Cárdenas family itself. The Sahuayan landowning and commercial classes were not favoured by the *cardenistas* and in the 1950s the latter dismantled Sahuayan control over the flourishing local sombrero industry, incorporating this sector of production into the domain of state control.[2] In the years after 1960, when the Cárdenas family itself had ceased to run the state government, *cardenista* control over the official political apparatus, and thus their link to institutionalized power at the state and national levels, continued to play an important role in terms of intra-elite conflict in the Ciénega and to affect the strategies and politics of elite families in Sahuayo. The *cardenistas* undermined the economic domains nurtured by the local bourgeoisie in towns like Sahuayo; and the latter's encounter with *cardenismo* was irredeemably imbued with antagonism. The interventionist and predatory nature of the *cardenista* state acted to reinforce mercantilist patterns which had been established throughout the western region during the years of the *porfiriato* and before. It acted to consolidate a preference for the expansion of markets rather than production and as the impetus for strategies of concealment from fiscal, social security and other incursions of the institutionalized state apparatus.

The following pages provide an elaboration of the themes touched upon in the preceding paragraphs. They describe the economic and political events of which the urban history of Sahuayo was composed, and look at the ways in which these events shaped the attitudes and practices of local elites in the town.

---

[2] The history of sombrero manufacture in Sahuayo will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 3.

2.1 The Spanish conquest and the great estate

During the two centuries which followed the arrival in 1519 of Spanish conquistadores in Michoacán, the combined processes of Indian depopulation, Spanish settlement and the introduction of livestock set the stage for the development of particular patterns of agricultural activity and urbanization within the region. The first invaders carried out a census of the Purépecha peoples which subsequently served as the basis for the redistribution of land under the encomienda system.[3] In 1524 Hernán Cortés simultaneously gave in encomienda the marshy lowlands around Sahuayo and the villages of Guarachan, Caro (now Venustiano Carranza), Pajacoarán, and Jacona, to two Spanish conquistadores thus provoking a dispute over possession of the land around Sahuayo and Jacona. In the spring of 1528 the region was pacified by order of the governor of Michoacán and following this a series of missionaries arrived in the region. From 1555 Sahuayo fell within the administration of the Augustine convent in Jacona and by 1570 Sahuayo, Guaracha, Tangamandapio, and Pajacuarán were part of the parish administrated by Ixtlán (see Figure 2).

From 1545 legislation introduced by the Spanish Virrey resulted in a massive influx of livestock in the region. First, the Virrey forbade the raising of livestock in the centre of Mexico on the grounds that it was invading and destroying agricultural land belonging to the Indian population. Second, between 1550 and 1556 he prohibited the raising of cattle on land not owned by the owner of the cattle, and ordered the estancias or farms to be set up well away from centres of population. As a result large tracts of land suitable for the raising of livestock were given to the Spanish in the region of Zamora, Sahuayo and Jiquilpan. According to González (1979), the most significant process during the last 25 years of the sixteenth century was the distribution of land among the Spanish conquistadores. During this period the Indian

---

[3] Under the encomienda system the Spanish Crown "commissioned" Indian communities (from one or more villages) to the Spanish settler. The Indian population was thus obliged to provide labour tributes.

population in the region declined significantly and in 1598 a list of Indian villages commissioned by the Virrey omits Sahuayo and Cojumatlán altogether, implying that these settlements were already almost entirely depopulated.

A process of land concentration, which eventually led to the formation of the Guaracha hacienda, was consolidated during the first decade of the seventeenth century, with the formation of an estate known as the Hacienda del Monte, which covered an area of 50,000 hectares. Its borders were marked by Jiquilpan, Quitupan, Mazamitla, the Pasión river, Tizapán, Cojumatlán and Sahuayo. In 1625 the estate passed to Pedro de Salceda Andrade, who joined it to an already vast tract of land and formed the Hacienda de Guaracha, which by 1643 comprised most of the Ciénega de Chapala (see Figure 4). Surrounding villages, such as Sahuayo, San Pedro Caro and Cojumatlán were sparsely populated during this period. The population of Sahuayo, for example, was documented as having 45 families in 1630 (González op.cit). The principal activities were livestock raising and agriculture. Some land was rented to small producers but during most of the seventeenth century large tracts in the western part of the hacienda lay fallow because there was simply not enough labour to work it (Zepeda 1985).

2.2 The eighteenth century (1700 to 1810)

By 1840 Guadalajara, capital city of Jalisco, was established as a mercantile and administrative centre for the Spanish colonial government. Throughout the eighteenth century the city consolidated its political, judicial and fiscal control over the occidente, a territory which included what are now the states of Jalisco, the north western region of Michoacán, Colima, Nayarit, Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, the eastern part of San Luis Potosí and the southern portion of Sinaloa (De la Peña 1986). After 1850 Bourbon reforms consolidated local oligarchical control over agriculture, mines, banking and commerce (Alba 1986, De la Peña op.cit.) and the city boasted hospitals, seminaries, a university, cathedral as well as the Palacio de la Audiencia and the

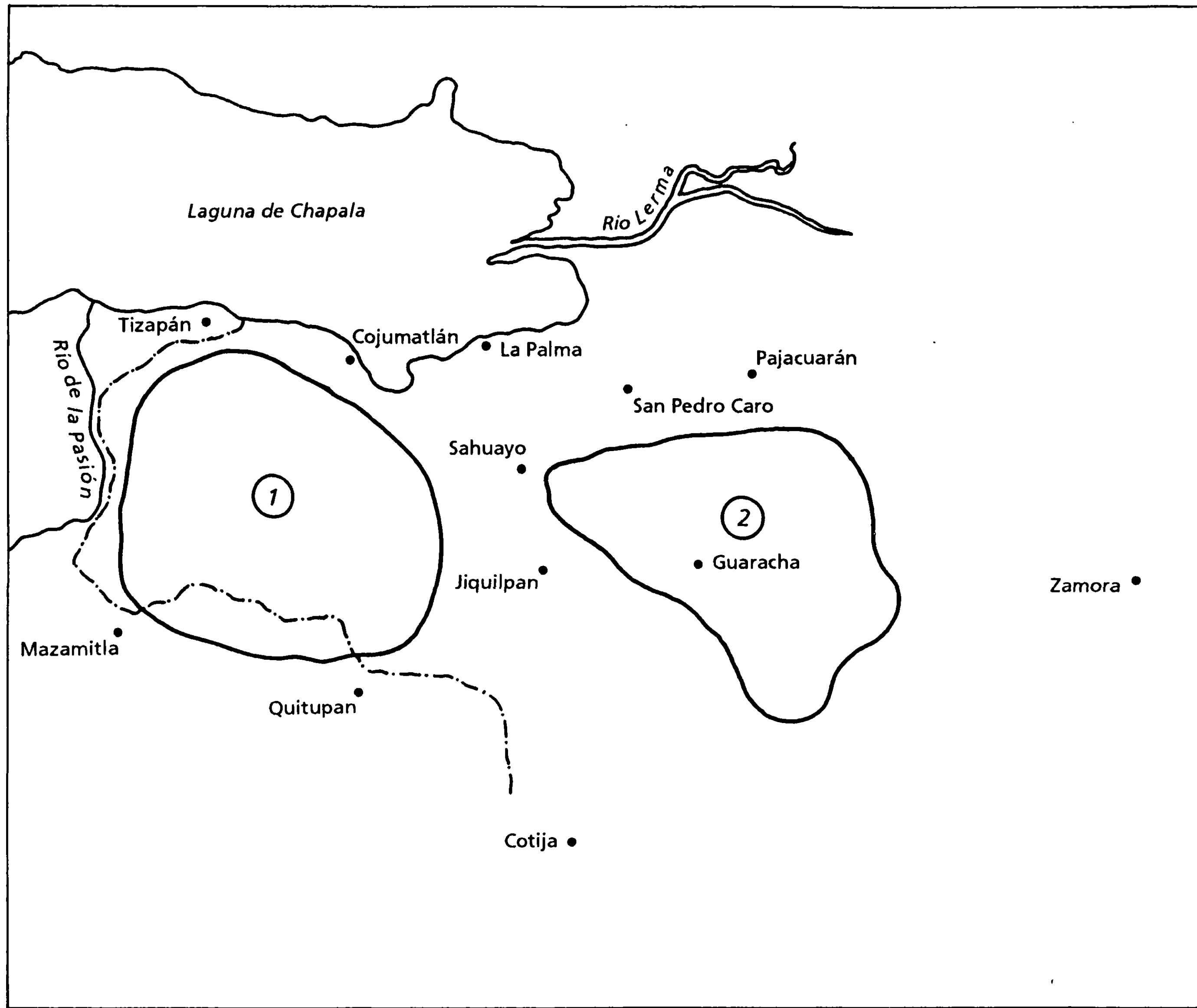


Figure 4: ① Hacienda del Monte & ② Hacienda de Guaracha

town hall (Rivière d'Arc 1973, Van Young 1980). A dispersed population throughout the region surrounding Guadalajara engaged in artisanal and household production for local consumption. Goods produced included shawls, towels, aprons, cigarettes and shoes. While the creation of a system of intendencias had reduced the territory administrated by Guadalajara, it strengthened and reinforced its administrative capacity through the creation of new roads and maritime routes toward the north, as well as the promotion of agricultural enterprise, cattle-breeding and commercial activity. In effect, the function of the city was to gather agricultural products from its vast territory for transportation to Mexico City, and to receive manufactured goods for distribution from Guadalajara.

A more general process of economic growth in eighteenth century New Spain has been described by Hamnett (1986). He charts the expansion of particular sectors of the economy in specific areas, including the mining, cereal and livestock sectors of the centre-north-west (the Bajío), and the region surrounding Guadalajara. In the upland region known as Los Altos de Jalisco, which lay to the north and northeast of the Chapala Lake, no significant indigenous population competed with the advance of Hispanic settlement, and the social base of agricultural production became the rancho.[4] Ranchos in Los Altos were able to develop as suppliers of foodstuffs to the expanding mining regions of the Bajío. During the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century they supplied wheat, meat and leather to Guadalajaran markets. In general, however, the ranchos were not immune to the process of hacienda expansion, a process which characterized the whole of the Guadalajaran zone. The haciendas tended to control access to arable pasture and water supply. With regard to land tenure, the ranchos were based on a varied structure of rental arrangements and private ownership and at times were themselves part of the great estates (Hamnett op.cit). In the case of Guaracha, land belonging to the Del Monte hacienda, in

---

[4] The rancho was a small private landholding, generally but not exclusively used for cattle raising.

the upland area to the northeast of Sahuayo, probably fell into this latter category.

As the century progressed, agricultural expansion was accompanied by significant commercial development. Hamnett (op.cit.) emphasizes "the expansion of mercantile connections and interests, coupled with the impact of mercantile finance in the localities beyond the provincial capitals" during this period. In the first half of the eighteenth century Miranda (1962) notes the emergence of mercantile relations within the region of the Cienéga and shows that Sahuayo was one of the centres where commercial activity was occurring. There was evidence of leather tanning and the fabrication of huaraches and saddlery, as well as some involvement in arriería or long-distance trading. Sahuayo also experienced significant population growth. By 1720 the cabecera, or municipal capital boasted 1,000 inhabitants, and by 1750, 1,500. In 1750, the municipio as a whole contained 7,000 inhabitants. Zepeda (1985) suggests that the pattern of population growth and distribution in the region was determined by the process of territorial expansion of the land-hungry, non-productive hacienda. Sahuayo, on the edge of the hacienda, absorbed population from communities whose land had been engulfed by it. In addition the town was developing some commercial and artisanal activity through the creation of markets to serve rancheros and others attached to the Guaracha hacienda. The hacienda itself was not immune to the process of mercantile expansion and in 1790 Guaracha was acquired by Victorino Jaso, a merchant from Tangancícuaro. He reorganized the estate's production estate to serve his own inter-regional commerce (Gledhill 1991).

During the eighteenth century, the longue durée of urban economic expansion in Sahuayo can probably be best understood in terms of its peripheral location with respect to both the hacienda to the southeast and the upland region which lay to east and north east of the town - Los Altos de Jalmich. The physical location of the town restricted access to land during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, impelling its residents toward commercial activity and household production of

articles for consumption by the local population. To the north and north east the expansion of agricultural production by Hispanic farmers on smallholdings provided opportunities for commercial growth within regional market places. From the mid-eighteenth century lack of land became a problem in the region of Los Altos. In the Ciénega, the Guaracha hacienda continued to engulf indigenous communities and by the late eighteenth century encompassed an area of 96,000 hectares. The basic principle of this form of latifundism was the acquisition of rental income to support a social position by means of extensive landholding (Gledhill op.cit). Extensive cattle breeding and sharecropping were the principal activities given the near-total absence of investment aimed at increasing productive activity (Zepeda op.cit).

2.3 Insurgency and liberal reform: 1810 to 1860

At the national political centre the insurgency began as an assault against Spanish rule by frustrated creole elites. But at the regional and local levels the insurgency was a broader expression of limited popular discontent which erupted in the periods preceding and following the war itself. Distinct regional characteristics explained different responses to government policy, and popular rebellion was marked by violent attacks on landed property and mercantile exploitation, both of which, as noted above, had been expanding throughout the eighteenth century (Gledhill, Hamnett op.cit). In the Ciénega, support from the insurgency was drawn from indigenous communities struggling to retain their lands. Hamnett notes the recovery of indigenous populations in the villages surrounding the Chapala lake during the latter half of the eighteenth century. These communities were involved in both direct action and legal disputes from the 1780s onward. Localized rebellion was at its height during the occupation of the island of Mezcala at the centre of the Chapala lake from December 1812 until January 1816 (Ochoa 1985).

The ethnic composition of Sahuayo was fundamentally altered by the war of Independence. In 1809 there had been 2,160 inhabitants in the

<u>cabecera</u> of Sahuayo. Drawing on contemporary censal data González (op.cit.) infers the existence of five distinct socio-economic groups: a few mulattos and slaves, including descendants of negros imported to the region between 1595 and 1640; domestic servants; the indigenous community; the free poor; and the rich. The free poor worked as peons on the hacienda but were also employed as traders and artisans. The indigenous population, which joined the insurgency, was virtually wiped out during the conflict, but there was an influx of mestizos and creoles who fled the war-torn villages along the southern shores of the lake. The result was a net increase in population and by 1821 there were 9,000 inhabitants in the <u>municipio</u>. During the period following the war, however, agricultural production slumped and the Guaracha hacienda returned to production for its own consumption. A period of local poverty and disease (there were cholera epidemics in 1833 and 1850) ensued, and the municipal population of Sahuayo dwindled to approximately 3,000. It remained at this level until the latter half of the century.

In 1825 a national constitution was drawn up and new political and administrative divisions were created. The constitution for the state of Michoacán was drawn up in 1825, its capital being the city of Valladolid (now Morelia), and the state was divided into four departments: The north which belonged to the capital; the west belonging to Zamora; the south to Uruapan and the east to Zitácuaro. Each department was in turn subdivided and the Zamoran department comprised five regions, those of Zamora, Tlazazalca, Jiquilpan, Puruándiro and La Piedad. These subdivisions were shortly afterwards split into <u>municipios</u> of which Jiquilpan contained four: Jiquilpan, Cotija, Guarachita and Sahuayo. Sahuayo administered two <u>tenencias</u> (administrative sub-divisions),San Pedro Caro (now Venustiano Carranza) and Cojumatlán. (González op.cit).

Between 1821 and 1855 a series of struggles between liberals and conservatives ensued at the national centre and disentailment of church property was set in motion. In 1856 the Lerdo Law specified that ownership of all urban and rural real estate belonging to ecclesiastical

and civil corporations would be assigned to tenants and lessees. Lerdo had envisaged the creation of a middle class of rural landowners, but in fact the reform laws resulted in the transfer of concentrated landholdings from one dominant class (the church) to another - the hacendados (Hansen 1971). Probably more important in terms of regions such as the Cienēga, the haciendas were able to encroach upon Indian communal property and increase their holdings because the laws applied to civil corporations as well as to ecclesiastical property.

In 1863 an event crucial to the future history of Sahuayo occurred. The reform wars had resulted in disorganization and rent defaults on the hacienda. This in combination with endemic maladministration brought the Guaracha estate to crisis point. In 1862, the then owner sold 50,000 hectares from the Hacienda del Monte to some 50 buyers, the majority of whom were Sahuayan merchants and rancheros from Los Altos (Gledhill op.cit). The acquisition of this land was the take-off point for a process of capital accumulation which was to form the basis for Sahuayo's development as a dynamic commercial centre during the last 30 years of the nineteenth century. An additional and complementary development was the setting up of a steamboat which operated between La Barca and La Palma in 1868, thus creating an opportunity for products from the Ciénega to be easily transported to Guadalajara and elsewhere (Zepeda op.cit). Sahuayo's position, next to La Palma and between it and the Ciénega, gave it a strategic advantage over other commercial centres, such as Jiquilpan and Cotija, until then a centre for arriería between the Ciénega and Colima to the south west (Moreno 1980).

2.4 The *porfiriato* 1876 to 1910

During the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz the national economy was characterized by the rapid consolidation of markets for primary products and an expansive thrust of both national and international capital encouraged by policies aimed at attracting investment in productive activity (agriculture, mining, manufacture). State investment in public

works and the creation of an infrastructure capable of responding to attendant demand for improved communications and transportation systems, such as railways, was also highly significant. These developments were aided by a military dictatorship which guaranteed support to the army and protection against insurrection (the Porfirian "social peace") (Hansen op. cit).

In the region surrounding Guadalajara, the pax porfiriana was strikingly characterized by the expansion of rural manufacture, organized in household workshops and carried out by peasants engaged in subsistence agriculture. National agricultural policy strengthened the hand of the hacendados and on the great estates effort was directed towards increasing productivity and servicing the burgeoning national markets. Porfirian hacendados frequently engaged in a range of economic activity - commerce, banking and industry as well as livestock and agriculture - and were often directly involved in the promotion of rural industry. Alba (1986) and Arias (1985) note in particular the production of aguardientes de caña (alcohol made from sugarcane), cigarettes, flour, soap, paper, beer, chocolate and the emergence of oil and flour mills. The abundance of leather in regions such as Los Altos had given rise to workshops engaged in saddlery, and in household tanneries. Such was the extent of this rural industry that by the end of the porfiriato only one tenth of the population, and a similar proportion of industrial establishments, were located in the capital (Arias op.cit).

Broader national and regional transformations were fully reflected in the locality of the Ciénega. During the last decade of the nineteenth century national economic policy changes resulted in the transformation of the Guaracha hacienda, higher productivity and increased orientation toward the national market. National communications were radically improved and the new infrastructure provided rail and road links to the national capital and to Guadalajara. By 1910 the hacienda controlled a total land area of around 35,000 hectares, and there had been substantial investments in irrigation. The estate had 20,000 head of cattle. In the 1890s a steam-driven mill had been constructed, and by

1896 Guaracha accounted for ten per cent of the sugar production of Michoacán. All production was commercial. A railway linking the region to Guadalajara and Mexico City, was routed through the hacienda's land (by-passing Sahuayo and Jiquilpan) in the early 1900s. More significantly perhaps, the owners of the hacienda were a Guadalajaran banking family linked to the Porfirian elite. They possessed access to considerable financial capital and a diversified portfolio of investments (Gledhill op.cit). This connection was productively cemented via a marriage between the _hacendado_ family, the Morenos, and the Cuesta Gallardos, family friends of the president. The Cuesta Gallardos had received a concession to reclaim 500 square kilometres from Lake Chapala, which was achieved in 1910, thus making available nearly 50,000 hectares of highly arable land for cultivation.

While the _pax porfiriana_ spelled disaster for some, for others it offered considerable opportunity, particularly those located near major roads, or able to mediate between regional and national market networks (De la Peña op.cit). In Sahuayo, those engaged in commerce were increasingly able to exploit the economic potential arising from Sahuayo's strategic location in relation to the Ciénega, Los Altos de Jalmich and the new road linking Guadalajara to Morelia and Mexico City. Sahuayan merchants' acquisition of private landholdings in 1862 provided a solid basis for a process of mercantile accumulation. Local entrepreneurs sought to carve out an economic niche through investment in trade and the cultivation of long-distance trading networks served by _arriería_ (mule-trains). Economic expansion attracted migrants from villages in Los Altos and Sahuayo experienced rapid population growth during the period. From a population of approximately 3,000 in 1850, by 1873 it had grown to 12,326, and by 1900 there were 20,000 inhabitants. Demographic growth was related to the development of commercial and manufacturing activities. Fishing, and cattle breeding continued to be important, but Sánchez (1896) also notes the appearance of artisanal production alongside already existent activities such as basket-making and matting. Articles produced included sombreros, shoes, soap, wooden

rosaries and ironware. Most important, in terms of the future progress of huarache manufacture, local tanneries were established and were able to take advantage of the existence of cattle hides which could be processed and transformed into leather.

Until the 1890s Cotija, lying due south of Jiquilpan, had been the most important commercial centre in the region and its merchants organized trade activities which linked the Ciénega with the state of Colima and the coast. Sánchez suggests that during this decade Sahuayo became the most important market town within a radius of 50 kilometres and Gudiño Villanueva (1978) writes that by the beginning of the twentieth century Sahuayo rivalled Cotija both as a commercial centre and in the sphere of arriería. By the end of the century Sahuayo boasted 100 teams of mules. Each team consisted of 50 mules plus 10 horses. The merchandise included fresh cod and the famous pescado blanco (white fish) from the lake, cheese, soap and above all sombreros, huaraches and saddlery. On route traders bought queso cotija (cheese made in Cotija and, like parmesan, used for adding flavour to food), dried chillis and piloncillo (sugar loaf). The muleteers travelled extensively, as far as Veracruz, Oaxaca, Tabasco, Chiapas, Campeche and even Guatemala. From these parts they returned carrying coffee, cocoa and fabrics.

In addition agriculture on irrigated land and milk production continued to be important (González op.cit). A particularly decisive event in the development of Sahuayo as a regional centre occurred in 1909 with the building of a dyke around the eastern edge of the Laguna de Chapala, from La Palma to Jamay, and a bank along the length of the Rio Duero (see Figure 2). The project was completed in 1912 and made possible the cultivation of around 46,000 hectares of high quality agricultural land until then unworkable because of periodic flooding. Many Sahuayan merchants and landowners bought holdings on the reclaimed land (Prado 1976, García Urbizu 1963). Zepeda (op.cit) notes that the spatial organization of the region was significantly altered by the draining and damming of the lake. Until then Sahuayo had been located at the northern frontier of the region it was part of; the centre of this

region had been a triangle consisting of Cotija, Jiquilpan and Guaracha. After the lake was drained Sahuayo achieved a regional centrality it had hitherto been lacking.

2.5 Revolution and the *cristiada*

By the end of the porfiriato the process of land concentration had reached new heights. Several thousand haciendas owned 50 per cent of the nation's wealth and those not affiliated to the dominant Porfirian elite were increasingly dissatisfied with the political ossification of the regime. National political tension was exacerbated by the world recession of 1907. A slump in world markets meant a sharp decrease in the price of primary products such as copper, sugar and cotton, commodities upon which the national economy depended (Gilly 1983, Hansen op.cit). The development of a political opposition and a liberal challenge to the Porfirian regime dissolved into civil war in October 1910. A number of authors have argued that the Mexican revolution was above all a moment of violent eruption within a long-term process of national state centralization. This had begun during the Independence period and advanced, albeit in a somewhat contradictory fashion, during the reforma. The process had experienced a modernizing thrust during the porfiriato, and been completed during the 1930s. Throughout, centralization proceeded through the forging of alliances with heterogeneous and popular social forces in the provincial towns and the countryside. During the armed struggle (1910 to 1920), a series of spontaneous, geographically separated peasant movements were articulated to more powerful groups through military caudillos, regional political leaders who commanded their own semi-professional or improvised forces and controlled territory (Knight 1980).

As Gledhill has remarked, centrifugal or anti-centralizing forces were more powerful in some regions than in others. For a complexity of reasons, the call for national unity meant little within the region of the Ciénega and the revolutionary movement drew sparse support from its inhabitants. Sahuayo had enjoyed a period of prosperity with the

expansion of the urban economy during the porfiriato and had no immediate reason to rebel. For less pragmatic reasons, those attached to the Guaracha hacienda were similarly "anti-revolutionary". Gledhill (op.cit) has argued that while repressive and coercive in its practices, the hacienda regime offered a kind of security, and actually fostered anxieties about the world outside the hacienda; the revolution confirmed a belief that this world was a wilderness of poverty and chaos. For the people of the Ciénega "revolution" in effect meant that their towns and villages were subjected to arbitrary violence and destruction by revolutionaries and marauding bandits alike.

In 1926 political conflict and violence again erupted during the civil conflict known as the cristiada. The conflict continued until 1929 and was characterized by outbreaks of fighting in different parts of the country. It was at its most intense in the western states and for the people of the Ciénega there can be no doubt that it was both more genuinely popular and more significant that the revolution. Ostensibly the rebellion was a response to the secularism of the revolutionary state. Article 130 of the 1917 Constitution had denied the church any legal personality and gave the government power to intervene in matters relating to worship. The church and the clergy were denied the right to own property, teach or vote and enforcement of the article had provoked conflict in 1918 and 1919 (Meyer 1976). On 31 July 1926 all public worship was suspended and in August there were riots and insurrection throughout the central plateau. As legal negotiations for constitutional reform broke down, the cristero army began to consolidate its forces. At the beginning of 1929 the popular church-based organization, Union Popular, issued a call to arms and sporadic conflict ensued until June 1929, when an agreement allowed worship to resume. Churches and other church property were returned and an amnesty was granted to the armed rebels. National church authorities urged the cristeros to lay down their arms and the government called off the troops (Gonzãlez op.cit).

The people of the western states had responded to the call to arms with aclarity. During 1927 there were uprisings in Cotija, San José de

Gracia and Cojumatlán and by the end of July about one thousand Sahuayans had taken up arms. By the end of 1927 the whole of western Michoacán had joined the insurgency. Between March and June 1929 the Western Division numbered some 25 thousand men, armed and organized in regiments, although usually acting as guerillas for lack of ammunition (Meyer op.cit).

In Sahuayo the cristiada received a great deal of support. In August 1926 the first band of guerrilleros de Cristo Rey was established and at the end of 1926 several hundred soldiers entered Sahuayo, arrested various priests and leaders of the rebellion and converted the parish church into barracks. But for the population of Sahuayo the most momentous event of the rebellion occurred in 1928. In March government forces engaged in combat with cristeros on the outskirts of Cotija and trapped 32 rebels in a cave. Government troops forced the trapped men to leave their refuge by burning chilli at the mouth of the cave. Two of the rebels escaped on the road back to Sahuayo and the leader of the band, along with two children, were taken to Zamora where the leader was subsequently executed. The remaining 27 were incarcerated in the parish church in Sahuayo. Prado (op.cit) writes that they were told they would be set free if they would say "long live the supreme government!", but that all refused to do so. One by one they were sent out of the church and shot dead. The execution of the cristero "martyrs" united the population and intensified support for the movement. Women as well as men were passionately committed to the cristiada. Sahuayan women took provisions to rebels hiding in the hills and some made public declarations of support for the rebellion (González 1979).

Meyer suggests that the church assumed a central role in the rebellion because it symbolized that which had not yet been appropriated and subsumed by the hegemonic revolutionary state and this characterization was doubtless applicable to Sahuayo albeit for different reasons among different classes of local society. At all events, the cristiada consolidated local antagonism toward the national centre. In the ensuing years it came to symbolize the struggles of a

Christian community in the face of an antagonistic state and it has continued to occupy in important place in local history.[5]

The destruction of the revolutionary years had been catastrophic for agricultural and economic development in the Ciénega. Regional capital was withdrawn as the rich fled to Guadalajara or to the upland villages. Agricultural decline resulted from military and bandits in the region, the seizing of land, the danger of (commercial) travelling, and the destruction of the harvests themselves. As González wrote:

> "the Sahuayo of 1918 gave rise to a feeling of pity: agriculture was left with few farmers, cattle raising decimated, industry in ruins, trade paralysed, arriería dead, bandits in operation..."

Economic depression was temporary, however, and by the 1930s production and commercial activity in Sahuayo had once again reached levels approaching those characteristic of the porfiriato. The municipio also sustained a population of 8,000 residents between 1910 and 1930, despite violent upheaval and attendant outmigration (González 1979).

2.6 *La reforma agraria* and *cardenismo*

From the years between 1930 and 1960 a much more profound transformation was set in motion with the rise of Lázaro Cárdenas and the elaboration of the cardenista project within the region and the nation as a whole. The latter sought, for the first time in Mexican history, to consolidate the national state through the incorporation of the popular classes into the political process and to bring the masses within the sphere of state control. Within the Ciénega, the contradictory nature of the cardenista project - which did not ultimately envisage the development of genuine popular participation - was compounded by the actual presence of powerful but notoriously corrupt members of the Cárdenas family within

---

[5] The cultural meanings attached to the cristiada, and its ideological significance, will be discussed in more detail in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

the region, and by the presence of a regional bourgeoisie which remained intransigent in the face of state encroachment onto its political and economic terrain.

Agrarian reform in Mexico reached its high point during the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934 to 1940). The reforma agraria has been interpreted by some as an aspect of an overall strategy for capitalist agricultural development. According to this view the redistribution of land provided a political and economic safety valve for pressures from below. Others have argued that it was a means of securing the political support of the peasantry through the provision of technical and juridical aid - as well as arms - to peasants allied to agrarismo (the land reform movement). At all events, the state aimed at - and largely succeeded in - wresting power from large landowners and the destruction of the hacienda system. Ultimately, however, the reform did not deny the existence of large holdings, or effect socialistic land redistribution. Rather it created a new bourgeois class linked to the state, and through assimilation to this group, some members of Porfirian land-owning bourgeoisie were subsequently able to recoup the losses sustained during the 1930s. Nevertheless, it was through the process of reform that the agrarian sector was definitively incorporated into the sphere of state control (González, Hansen op.cit, Hewitt de Alcántara 1980).

In a more satisfying analysis, Knight (1980) has argued that agrarian reform was the final episode in a long process of national state consolidation. In a similar vein, Gledhill (op.cit.) has suggested that the reforma agraria was the primary element within a broader centralizing project, embodied by the politics of cardenismo. As Gledhill has observed, at the provincial level cardenismo's social base comprised minor functionaries, professionals, some petty bourgeois tradesmen, artisans - "social elements at the forefront of every phase of political agitation since independence". The mark of its success was that the building of a viable national state became increasingly dependent upon the incorporation of the masses into the institutional

structure of the state apparatus itself. Despite this, as Gledhill further notes, provincial and local antagonisms to the emergent state structure continued to compound the smooth course of national development and the cardenista state. Paradoxically it was in the Ciénega, birthplace of Don Lázaro, that resistance to state encroachment was at its most intractable and complex.

Ochoa (1985) has described the process by which the Cárdenas family created an agrarista grouping, known as la hilacha[6], in Jiquilpan during the 1920s in order to consolidate a locally-based cardenista group which would ally itself to the movement for land reform. This group later became the Democratic Party of Jiquilpan and it supported Lázaro Cárdenas during his candidacy for the state governorship in 1927. Agrarismo among Sahuayan peasant cultivators had been largely fomented by the Picazo brothers, natives of Sahuayo. Juan became a local deputy in the state government in 1928 and oficial mayor in the Chamber of Federal Deputies in 1934. Rafael Picazo had assumed the municipal presidency of Sahuayo during the early 1920s and had urged peasants to abandon their claims for land restitution - already rejected by the government - and to put forward applications for dotaciones (the granting of expropriated land) from the rich landowners of Sahuayo and from the Guaracha hacienda. Some dotaciones were granted during the 1920s. In 1930 large tracts of land were expropriated from two hacendados in Sahuayo. The peons of Guaracha had consistently refused offers of dotaciones, but in 1935 the force of cardenismo prevailed and Don Lázaro, then president of the republic, created the Emiliano Zapata ejido. The latter affected 3,320 hectares of hacienda land.

In May 1936 the Banco Nacional de Crédito Ejidal S.A. commissioned a study of the developmental potential of the ejidos surrounding Guaracha. In December the Emiliano Zapata and Totolán ejidos united in the Sociedad Colectiva Agrícola Ejidal Industrial Rafael Picazo and shortly afterwards bought the Guaracha sugar-mill. There ensued a series

---

[6] Literally a rag, meaning that this group was comprised of the (relatively) poor.

of internal disputes between ejidatorios, difficulties which were compounded by economic problems afflicting production. The mill was eventually abandoned. Dámaso Cárdenas, brother of Lázaro, installed his own flourmill in Jiquilpan and ensured that water used to power the Guaracha sugar-mill was diverted there.

The demise of the great estate and its hegemonic control of the regions's resources opened up new opportunities for political and economic control in the Ciénega particularly as the presence of the central state was not established until well into the 1960s. Various factions of an emergent regional bourgeoisie in Jiquilpan vied for political control of the region, but by the end of the 1930s the reins of power were firmly in the hands of the president's brother Dámaso (among other things state deputy and state governor between 1950 and 1956) and his clique. A new regional agrarian bourgeoisie, dominated by Don Dámaso and politically sanctioned by the institutions of the national state apparatus, dominated the political life of the region until the end of the 1950s. During this period the dynamism of Jiquilpense capital was progressively undermined as the rich competed to secure their wealth by virtue of proximity to Don Dámaso and his entourage. One member of the Jiquilpense elite observed that the Cárdenas provided employment to any local aspirant in the public sector and that "everyone preferred a secure wage than to take risks in business". He noted that the local rich declined to develop economically but competed for favours from the state and its patrons.[7] In contrast the elite of Sahuayo - excluded and actively autonomous - sought to expand commercial and productive activity beyond the sphere of state control.

The Cárdenas and their entourage were not particularly favourably disposed to the Sahuayan bourgeoisie which had proved so adept at exploiting economic opportunities during the porfiriato. Competition for

---

[7] This information was kindly provided by Jorge Zepeda, who conducted interviews with members of the Sahuayan and Jiquilpense bourgeoisies, in mid-1985.

control of regional resources was already a feature of relations between Sahuayan and Jiquilpense landowning and entrepreneurial families, and the Cárdenas were inclined to exclude the former and favour the latter when it came to the granting of state patronage. Nevertheless, some interaction with state institutions, and engagement with national and provincial political processes, was both necessary and inevitable; and as Gledhill (op.cit.) has observed, in the face of the enduring economic power of members of a heterogeneous regional bourgeoisie, the *cardenistas* were forced to "accommodate" the former in order to maintain stability. Denied access through the formal apparatus of state institutions in the ensuing years, the Sahuayans chose to cultivate informal mechanisms of patronage and alliance with political figures in the state and national government as a means by which to protect economic activity from political intervention or control.

Thus, the Cárdenas had "respected" the land of the half dozen or so major Sahuayan *terratenientes* during the *reforma agraria*. Some families were favoured and the Cárdenas had even stopped expropriations to protect their wealth. In other cases a *permuta*, or exchange was made, whereby the *hacendados* bought properties for the *ejidos* and kept the best land for themselves. The extent to which informal mechanisms were successful may demonstrated by the position of one former land-owning and mule-trading family. The family was originally connected to the Porfirian bourgeoisie of the late nineteenth century and through friendship with the owners of Guaracha hacienda had been given responsibility for the sale of the Hacienda del Monte in 1862. Concessions received from the land sale provided the basis for land acquisition and the expansion of trading activity. Informal alliance with the Cárdenas protected the family assets and by 1985 the head of this family was a major shareholder in a national producer of wine and liquor, and owner of a chocolate factory in Guadalajara. The family had also been involved in the chilli trade, owned warehouses in Guadalajara and in the wholesale market, the *merced de abastos* in Mexico City.

In the post-reform period those Sahuayan families which had allied

themselves politically with the Cárdenas amassed considerable fortunes. The Picazos, for example were richly rewarded for political activity during the *reforma*. They eventually acquired much of the fertile land reclaimed after the lake was drained definitively in the 1930s and in the ensuing years this wealth provided the basis for diversification and expansion. By 1985 the Picazos had diversified into commercial spheres, but remained one of the richest families in Sahuayo. Others simply benefited from having established a friendship with one or other of the Cárdenas. One family, originally from San José de Gracia, settled in Sahuayo during the *porfiriato* and by the 1930s controlled a large part of the grain crop in the zone, apparently under the patronage of Don Dámaso.

2.7 Commerce and the logic of concealment

In effect, *cardenismo* and its regional protagonists produced in the Sahuayan bourgeoisie a profound antagonism toward the state and all its institutional paraphernalia. In the post-reform years, this antagonism acted to consolidate an already well-established preference for commerce rather than manufacture, and the elaboration of strategies designed to conceal economic activity from the prying eyes of the state and its institutions. Between 1920 and 1970 the expansion of manufacture in Guadalajara, and particular forms of agrarian transformation in the zones of the Ciénega and the Bajío Zamorano, also acted to promote the expansion of commercial activity in Sahuayo.

During the thirty years following 1920 Sahuayan merchants continued to flourish as regional markets expanded. The possibilities for developing such markets were enhanced by the creation of public transport facilities and the construction of roads which proceeded apace during these years. In 1939 a regional public transport cooperative was established in the town and provided a frequent bus service to large towns such as Guadalajara and Morelia, between Sahuayo and Jiquilpan, and to some smaller villages. The market building itself was completed in 1941 and Sahuayo's position as an important supplier of dry goods

(chilli, beans and groceries) as well as fresh vegetables was consolidated. By the mid-1940s, the town had become an important market centre supplying a region encompassing the Ciénega de Chapala and the south of Jalisco. After the mid-1940s the road from Sahuayo to La Barca was constructed. A road from La Barca to Ocotlán subsequently connected Sahuayo by an alternative more direct route to Guadalajara. A series of minor roads, which criss-crossed the Ciénega also improved communications and facilitated links between Sahuayo and the surrounding towns and villages. The most noteworthy of these were the roads from Briseñas to Yurécuaro and La Piedad, Briseñas to Zamora, and La Barca to Atotonilco in Jalisco. Smaller roads to villages such as Venustiano Carranza and Pajacuarán were also important in the creation of effective communications and commercial routes within the region (see Figure 2). In 1952 the highway between Jiquilpan and Manzanillo road was completed and in 1958 the new road from Mexico City to Guadalajara. Both were crucial in linking the Ciénega to national markets (see Figure 2).

Regional manufacture was increasingly concentrated in Guadalajara after 1920 as merchants based in the provincial capital sought to gain control of the potential for regional market expansion. This process acted to destroy much of the rural industry which had flourished under the _porfiriato_ throughout Jalisco and in parts of Los Altos (Alba, Arias op.cit). Productive hegemony in Guadalajara did not completely destroy industry in Sahuayo, however, but it did serve to limit the parameters within which local industry could succeed. Proximity to Guadalajara was conducive to the consolidation of Sahuayo's role as a trading post for the distribution of consumption goods produced in the Jaliscan capital throughout regional markets. By 1970 Sahuayo had achieved fame as _villa de los precios bajos_ (town of low prices). It attracted customers from a region encompassing the west of Michoacán and the southeast of Jalisco, with a total population of 500,000. It was an important supplier of furniture, electrical equipment, clothes, glassware, fodder, fertilizer and related products, groceries, fruit and vegetables, alcohol and pharmaceutical products and, of course, of _huarache_ and sombrero

(González op. cit. and field investigation). Conditions of prosperity prevailed throughout the 1970s and most of my informants agreed that Sahuayo's role as regional pueblo surtidor (supply town) reached its peak during these years.

From the mid-1960s a movement toward particular forms of entrepreneurial activity was given impetus in the face of agrarian transformations in the Ciénega, the Bajío de Zamora and the region surrounding La Piedad to the north east of Sahuayo. During the first two decades after 1940, the tierra caliente of the southern part of Michoacán had absorbed the bulk of state patronage and the pace of agrarian transformation in the Ciénega was slow during these years. Corn, wheat, beans and chickpeas were the most important crops in the Ciénega and 90 percent of arable land was devoted to their cultivation in 1940. As the 1950s progressed government policies promoting an accelerated rate of industrial development nationally began to take effect in the region. From the 1960s, sorghum, alfalfa, barley and safflower were introduced, all of which were to play a major role in the production of animal fodder for regional and national markets. By 1976 the cultivation of the basic foodstuffs in Michoacán had been reduced to 50 per cent and, by 1985, it represented only 35 per cent of the total agricultural product of the state (Zepeda 1984).

The opportunities created by agrarian transformations were constrained by the existence of dynamic sectors in both Zamora and La Piedad. Profits to be derived from insertion into a changing structure of agrarian relations were fully exploited by entrepreneurs in both towns and the expansion of wholesale and retail trade in animal fodder and grain was considerable from this period.

In Zamora former terratenientes (landowners) turned to hoarding and speculation and re-established economic control over agricultural production on ejidal lands. In the Bajío de Zamora, intensive cultivation of strawberries was introduced in the mid-1960s, funded by transnational capital. In the town itself the urban bourgeoisie, in large part composed of former landowners, had re-established its

economic power by the 1970s through the exertion of various forms of control over agricultural products and the expansion of commercial networks for the distribution of agricultural produce and animal fodder.

In La Piedad, to the north east of Sahuayo pig-breeding for the national market had expanded considerably; by 1980 Michoacán was the second largest supplier of pork in the country, the bulk of this being produced in the region surrounding La Piedad. The success of this development owed much to the spectacular growth in cultivation of sorghum and other crops which could be used in the preparation of fodder. Entrepreneurs in the town were also able to prosper through the formation of enterprise devoted to the preparation and distribution of fodder and cold meats (Zepeda op.cit).

In Sahuayo a movement away from livestock breeding for dairy production acted to push local *rancheros* into the commercial sphere. Sahuayan cattle farmers had prospered during the 1960s, when dairy production had reached a peak. The chairman of the local association of stock farmers estimated that at that time Sahuayan *rancheros* owned approximately 100,000 heads of cattle.[8] National policy introduced during the Echeverría presidency (1970 to 1976) adversely affected independent *rancheros* in the region. The period saw an upsurge in land distribution, effected through institutionalized procedures for land reform. Land was frequently granted to those submitting petitions for *ampliaciones* (extensions of *dotaciones* granted during the Cárdenas years). Sahuayan cattle ranchers lost pastureland from their holdings even when individual *pequeños propietarios* (smallholders) had been granted *certificados de inafectabilidad* which officially guaranteed immunity from expropriations. The process of redistribution gave rise to land disputes and protracted litigation. There were land invasions and on some occasions troops were dispatched to keep the peace. During the

---

[8] Improvement of stock and the growth of production of *forrajes balanceados* (cattle fodder) had made it possible for cattle to be properly fed during the dry season and the quality of the milk improved (field notes).

1970s the price of fodder increased and government controls were imposed on milk prices. Both contributed to a political and economic climate which was highly unfavourable from the rancher's point of view. This combination of factors resulted in a decline in cattle breeding for dairy products, many ranchers sold their livestock and by 1985 the total number of cattle owned by Sahuayan ranchers amounted to only 20,000.

In addition, as the 1970s progressed further development of Sahuayo's role as a regional market centre would have required increased infrastructural investment, including the construction of a new market place and improvements to the urban road and transport system. While the town continued to function as a bustling commercial centre, attracting thousands of rural workers to its shops and markets, both well-established and emerging merchants chose to avoid investment in infrastructure, and the attendant pitfalls of visibility to state and fiscal institutions, by carving a niche for themselves within national trade networks. After 1975 they were able to establish effective monopolies over wholesale markets dealing in fruit and vegetables, including tomatoes, chilli, onions, carrots, courgettes, lemons and bananas, usually by agreeing to buy at a low cost the total crop of <u>ejidal</u> producers. Thus in 1985 one merchant bought directly from national processors in Monterrey and Mexico City, owned four warehouses in the town for distribution throughout parts of Jalisco, Colima and Michoacán. the activities of another merchant were described by one local informant as follows:

> "Don Juan controls tomato markets throughout the republic. He has tomatoes planted in many states and visits them in his own private aeroplane. He has property in Sinaloa, Sonora, Michoacán and the United States and more than 10,000 people working for him".

Sahuayo had a long history of migration to Mexico City and the mobilization of links with kin and affines who had settled there played an important role in gaining access to national trade networks. The

extent of Sahuayan success in this branch of trade was indicated by the fact that of a total of five hundred stalls in the national wholesale market, the merced de abastos in Mexico City, 150 were owned by Sahuayan merchants, an astonishing proportion given the size of the town.

The forging of informal alliances with political figures in order to ensure freedom from state intervention in the economic sphere was noted by Llaca (1940), who wrote that as early as 1930 "because of the local political situation, Sahuayo has been removed from federal fiscal control". Such strategies became increasingly important in the years after 1940. For those involved in manufacture, freedom from state control meant that labour and social security obligations could be disregarded. But above all, tacit political consent for entrepreneurial freedom of action allowed entrepreneurs to derive profits from the manipulation of state and credit institutions, or to engage in semi-legal or illegal business practices.[9]

Trade in animal fodder and groceries was expanding and the success of emergent Sahuayan traders was in part attributable to the possibilities for manipulating various state-controlled resources, as well as fiscal and credit systems. One former employee of CONASUPO, for example, had systematically ordered larger quantities of corn than was needed to supply local tortillerías. He sold the surplus corn at high prices for use in the manufacture of animal fodder, thus accumulating capital which was subsequently invested in trade in fertilizers and fodder. Another Sahuayan, who in 1960 had owned a grocery shop near the merced de abastos in Mexico City, had declared himself bankrupt three times. On each occasion goods and capital were dispersed among kin and he had continued to trade, buying and selling under his brother's name. Eventually, it had proved impossible to stay in Mexico City and the family had returned to Sahuayo and established a highly successful trade

---

[9] Clearly data about the detailed functioning of these informal mechanisms would shed much light on the hidden operations and activities of commercial elites in Sahuayo. For obvious reasons, however, this was a difficult area to research and time constraints during the fieldwork period did not permit further investigation in this area.

in wholesale groceries.

From the 1960s institutionalized political protection was also a factor in the emergence of trading in smuggled goods and illegal drugs. Sahuayan merchants had established dollar markets and currency exchanges for remittances from the United States. In June 1985 the owner of a fabric store which acted as a "front" for currency trading lost US$40,000 in a single robbery and at the end of 1986 one trader estimated average daily receipts of US $50,000 excluding remittances flowing into the banks.

From the late 1970s, Sahuayan merchants had become increasingly involved in fayuca, trade in goods smuggled from the United States. By 1985 this represented another important area of activity. Fayuca traders dealt in all manner of merchandise including electrical equipment (stereos, cassette decks and so on), clothes, precious stones and gold. The goods were distributed through private sales and in the tianguis (travelling markets). Sahuayan merchants controlled the tianguis in Sahuayo, Zamora and the majority of towns in the Ciênega.

Drug trafficking had begun during the notoriously corrupt government of President Lopez Portillo government (1976-1982). A member of the Sahuayan bourgeoisie had been assistant to the national Chief of Police during this period and was widely believed to have been the mediating link between Sahuayan traders and trafficking networks. It was also apparently the means by which Sahuayan dealers were protected from judicial or police intervention. Since 1976, Sahuayan capital had been invested in the trafficking of marijuana - grown in the sierras of Michoacân - and to a lesser extent cocaine imported from South America.

By 1985 three generations of merchant elites could be discerned, although in terms of economic strategy, practice and ideology there was little to chose between them. The first group consisted of landowning and merchant families who had accumulated wealth during the porfiriato and who had managed to hang on to it throughout the revolution and reform periods. The second were those who had received concessions, patronage or informal "favours" from the Cârdenas; and the third were

traders who had emerged after 1960 and had taken advantage of various conjunctural factors in order to accumulate commercial wealth. For all three groups political and economic transformations had acted to promote the expansion of commercial activity and the development of strategies aimed at the concealment of economic activity from the unwelcome attentions of the state and its institutions. From the end of the 1960s Sahuayan entrepreneurs increasingly extended their business projects beyond the confines of the region and by 1985 extensive regional and national trade networks had been established. Diversification was universal; the rich invested in urban property (chiefly in Sahuayo and Guadalajara), were owners or shareholders of national companies, bought warehouses in Guadalajara and Mexico City, formed haulage companies and engaged in numerous other economic projects. The bulk of these activities went unrecorded or were "hidden" behind declared commercial or other enterprises located within the town.

2.8 Conclusion

The preceding pages have sought to demonstrate that political forces and processes were instrumental in forging the urban economy of Sahuayo. They have suggested that an appearance of economic stagnation - the lack of dynamic productive expansion - was deceptive and that in fact significant processes of accumulation were occurring, although not necessarily within the boundaries of the town, or indeed within the region. Smith (1980) has argued that class relations are the key to understanding the dynamic of urban economies such as that of Sahuayo. She suggests that the political (class) interests of elite groups at different levels of a national urban system will affect the way in which the urban economy functions at each level. In a study of the urban system in Guatemala during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, she argues that the dominant class in the capital city was transformed by the development of agro-industrial and export production and found its needs met by open and competitive urban service groups - thus attracting migrants to the city. In provincial cities and towns, however, a

"traditional" mercantile elite remained dominant and maintained opposition to competition. Such cities were slower-paced and more tightly-controlled; people knew each other personally and could utilize information about one another's family backgrounds. The elites in these towns permitted petty enterprise in their midst, but held the most lucrative positions in commerce and manufacture in tight monopoly; in so doing they strictly limited the growth of competitive enterprise - and with it, urban migration. The lack of dynamic growth under these circumstances was not therefore attributable to decline in the face of metropolitan competition, or to the essentially conservative nature of the bourgeois class. Rather it was the outcome of the active struggle of a mercantile elite to retain monopoly privileges and the profits derived from them.

Smith's characterization provides many useful insights for the analysis of the urban economy in Sahuayo. The most important processes of capital accumulation were based on the creation of trade monopolies within the commercial sphere and, as predicted by Smith, were indeed tightly controlled by a local bourgeoisie. The latter was small, locally based and inter-related by a complex web of cultural, kin and affinal relationships. Such relationships were the basis for negotiation of tacit agreements for the organization of entrepreneurial activity and permitted trading families to establish control over a particular product and to avoid intra-Sahuayan competition or flooding of markets. The prevailing ethos was unequivocally mercantile and the goals of economic activity were money profits, calculated in terms of least cost. This group had avoided the perils of competitive dynamic growth by forging informal alliances with those connected to the political structure and these had also ensured that the rich were protected from fiscal or other state incursions which might have reduced profits.

For entrepreneurs who belonged to this class, industrial investment was frequently the least significant of a number of economic projects and it went without saying that industrial endeavour would be sacrificed in the face of any "adverse" circumstance, whether created by

political pressure, fiscal demand or organized labour. It was in this context that Sahuayo's apparent failure to expand employment should be understood. De la Peña (op.cit.) has observed for example that "In spite of its undeniable agricultural, financial and commercial dynamism (Sahuayo) has been incapable of generating significant levels of employment". In fact, the Sahuayan bourgeoisie was not incapable of but unwilling to generate employment in the town. As the following chapters will demonstrate, it was politically and economically convenient for both entrepreneurs and local producers to sustain relatively closed structures, which were by and large not open to rural migrants and to organize production around credit-debt relations, putting-out systems and various forms of cheap "unfree" labour.

3. The politics of rural manufacture

The historical and political forces which had shaped the urban economy of Sahuayo inevitably influenced the course of developments within the sphere of manufacture. During the latter half of the nineteenth century lack of access to land for subsistence production, the availability of leather, and Sahuayan merchants' involvement in long-distance trade acted to favour the emergence of huarache production on a small scale in household workshops. During the 1940s the industry experienced a rapid thrust of expansion when massive orders for huaraches for American soldiers serving in Southeast Asia flooded the town. After 1950, political rather than economic transformations were to have a decisive effect upon the course of industrial development. Most important of these were the actions of the _cardenistas_.

The previous chapter described the process by which the Cárdenas - natives of Jiquilpan - had consolidated political power through the formation of political alliances in the region. Among the most important of these in Sahuayo were the Picazo brothers. Rafael Picazo had in particular played a critical role in fomenting _agrarismo_ among the peasant populations of Jiquilpan, Sahuayo, San Pedro Caro, Pajacuarán and other communities. Pressure for land expropriation was brought to bear, and the power base of the Guaracha hacienda and other landowning families in the region was progressively undermined. The power of the _cardenistas_ at the regional level was, of course, backed up by control over the institutional structure of the state. Thus, during the period of Don Lázaro's governorship (1928 to 1932), Juan Picazo had occupied powerful positions within the state government. Dâmaso Cárdenas was governor of Michoacán from 1950 to 1956 and _cardenista_ hegemony effectively lasted until the end of that decade. As we have also seen, however, the Cárdenas were forced to contend with a heterogeneous regional bourgeoisie, and landowning families sought to create informal alliances with their entourage in order to protect their interests.

As this chapter will demonstrate, the actions of the _cardenistas_ had a profound effect on developments in the sphere of manufacture in

the region in general and in Sahuayo in particular. In national terms, the actions of the *cardenistas* with respect to industry were both less consistent, and in some respects less radical, than in the realm of agriculture. For example some branches of industry in Guadalajara remained relatively untouched by *cardenismo* during the 1920s and 1930s (Alba 1986). Pansters (1989) has also argued that in Puebla the solidity of the political support provided by Governor Avila Camacho and his elite group during the 1930s meant that it was unnecessary for the Cárdenas to dismantle the regional bourgeoisie through the creation of an organized and unionized working class.

Likewise, in the *Ciénega* regional configurations of power and economic activity displayed a number of specific characteristics, which in turn elicited a particular kind of response from the *cardenistas*. In the first place members of the local bourgeoisie were likely to be involved in a range of economic activity, so a categorial distinction between agriculture and manufacture could not be easily sustained. One consequence of this was that *Cardenista* efforts to undermine various elements of local power could not be confined to the restructuring of agrarian relations, but spilled over into other spheres of productive activity. Second, the concrete enactment of *cardenista* strategy was for a number of years effectively in the hands of Don Dámaso, whose primary goal was personal enrichment. The dismantling of various branches of manufacture during the 1940s and 1950s was in practice frequently a means by which Don Dámaso could appropriate productive resources and bring them under his own personal control. Thus, for example, the *cardenistas* unionized shawl workers in Jiquilpan and created cooperatives which were subsequently appropriated by Don Dámaso. Third, as a native of Jiquilpan, Don Lázaro did act to create mechanisms of patronage and alliance, structured around the institutions of the state, for the benefit of his friends and countrymen. Jiquilpenses who came into the orbit of these manoeuvres were guaranteed wealth and income and this greatly undermined the dynamism of manufacture in the town. In sum, for a variety of reasons *cardenismo* came to be synonymous with the

"asphyxiation" of manufacture in the minds of the rich within the region.

In the early years, Sahuayan entrepreneurs attempted to protect themselves by forging informal links with members of the cardenista group; but such alliance was ambiguous and unpredictable. As history would reveal, it could not be relied upon to provide unconditional support for the activities of a bourgeoisie whose orientation was implacably anti-statist. Evidence of a fundamental opposition between elite families in Sahuayo and the cardenistas was most clearly revealed in the rise and demise of a flourishing sombrero industry. During the 1950s, Cardenista-led unionization of workers in this sector resulted in the eventual appropriation of sombrero production by the national state. This disastrous experience assumed a prominent position within the annals of entrepreneurial history and laid the basis for local models or theories of industrial politics and organization.

After 1960 local entrepreneurial control over sombrero production, which was originally household-based and artisanal, was undermined precisely because the industry underwent a rapid transformation toward more fully capitalist relations of production, thus laying itself open to manipulation by regional elites sanctioned by the institutional apparatus of the post-revolutionary state.[1] In marked contrast, the huarache industry, which evolved in a slower and less dramatic fashion, remained in the hands of local entrepreneurs who managed to exploit economic opportunities in a way which did not jeopardize local political control over production.

---

[1] This process was by no means unique to Sahuayo although there were historical features peculiar to the development of the micro-region. Arias (1986) and Durand (1986) have described the uneasy and at times antagonistic relationship between the state and the industrial bourgeoisie in Guadalajara during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their studies show that deeply-rooted hostility to state-controlled industrialization, and a horror of organized labour, led to a withdrawal of capital from the industrial sphere, leaving the field open to the merchants, who sought to control production by less direct means.

Likewise the memory of the sombrero workers' failed attempt to organize had profoundly influenced the way in which huarache producers perceived their own circumstances and strongly mitigated against engagement in collective forms of political struggle. Rather, it acted to promote a structure within which individual huaracheros sought to retain ownership of the means of production and to negotiate favourable terms of credit through the mobilization of vertical relations of patronage and moral obligation.

This chapter examines the evolution of sombrero and huarache manufacture and the historical context from which the huarache industry emerged. It argues that a history of entrenched mercantile control, itself the outcome of a complex and antagonistic relationship with the state, favoured the expansion of household production controlled by merchant and usury capital. The development of huarache manufacture will be described, with a particular focus on the role played by entrepreneurs during the course of its history. Attention will be drawn to national and international developments affecting the industry where relevant. Finally the significance of cheap female labour in huarache production will be discussed; as we shall see, the social definition of women's work as supplementary, and the low value such labour was accorded, was fundamental to sustaining the profitability of the industry.

3.1 The *Cárdenas* and sombrero manufacture

Production of hand-made sombreros on a small scale was already established by the 1920s. During the early stages the hats were entirely hand-made, woven around the knee of the producer out of soyate, a natural fibre found in the region. Industrial production was initiated by the brothers Chávez during the 1920s and 1930s and the family continued to dominate sombrero production until the early 1970s. In 1921, Alberto Chávez returned from the United States with sewing machines for sewing together the braids or trenza which formed the basic material of the sombrero. At this time the trenza was plaited from palma

(palm), grown in Ario de Rosales in southern central Michoacán and in Teocaltiche, Jalisco. After the 1940s, trenza was largely brought from Chilapa in the state of Guerrero.

The Chávez brothers returned to the United States during the early 1930s and invested in a second phase of mechanization which included the purchase of more sewing machines and presses for the hats. The family was affinally connected to one of the major tanning families of the day and it is likely that capital derived from the tannery was invested in the Chávez' sombrero workshop.

During the following three decades Alberto Chávez consolidated his hold over sombrero production. His success in the first instance was attributable to his gaining monopoly control over the purchase of trenza, woven by household members in the regions where the palm was cultivated. By the 1940s Alberto Chávez had established a large factory, La Guadalupana. By the end of the decade La Guadalupana was employing 400 to 700 workers plus some 800 women working at home "adorning" the sombreros. There was a total weekly output of eight to nine thousand sombreros. From the early 1950s labour disputes within the factory became a common occurrence. Low wages, long hours, the risk of illness caused by sulphur dust (used in pressing the hats), hostility between workers and the favoured mayordomos (foremen) all combined to create serious antagonisms between the workers and Don Alberto.

During the same period, a struggle between the Cárdenas and the Chávez had developed over the registration of La Guadalupana with social security and fiscal institutions, something Don Alberto resolutely refused to do. The cardenistas made their move in 1959 when tensions within the factory erupted and there was a strike. Juan Picazo, federal deputy, cacique and brother of Rafael was sent to agitate in the factory and to "assist" in the organization of a labour union. Thus the cardenistas met entrepreneurial intransigence with the provocation of labour dispute. The treachery of this move was underscored by the Cárdenas' intimate friendship with Don Alberto. During the early stages of the dispute members of the Cárdenas family tried personally to

persuade Don Alberto to comply with government regulations but Don Alberto was not to be moved and the factory closed at the end of 1959. An attempt to relocate the factory near Guadalajara was unsuccessful and Don Alberto subsequently withdrew from manufacturing, invested his capital in land, property and trade and went to live in Guadalajara.

From the end of the 1950s until the mid-1970s, sombrero production fragmented and was dispersed into household units. Fabricantes, the majority of whom were members of the Chávez family or former mayordomos in the factory, controlled the supply of trenza, production and distribution. A host of household producers, each of whom owned and operated a sewing machine, bought packs of trenza from the fabricantes and produced sombrero en greña ("raw sombrero"). The hats were returned to the fabricantes for pressing, adornment and distribution.

State control over sombrero production was consolidated during the 1970s with the arrival of the state body, the Fideicomiso de la palma. Known as the Fidepal it had been created by the government in 1973 as a governmental credit association which ostensibly aimed to promote the cultivation and exploitation of palma. In theory it was also intended to encourage the economic development of producers and artisans working with it. The Fidepal was a cardenista project and Don Lázaro's wife played a leading role within its administrative committee at the national centre.[2] In practice, the Fidepal's intervention broke the monopolistic control wielded by local fabricantes and created a situation in which household producers of sombrero en greña were dependent upon the state for their livelihood.

The change was effected through the provision of abundant quantities of low-cost trenza on credit. Trenza was supplied to household producers who formed themselves into a cooperative. Initially, members of the cooperative were successful in increasing the volume of

---

[2] It is noteworthy that the Fideicomiso de la Palma was both a project in which members of the Cárdenas family were directly involved, and at the same time was typical of state-sponsored projects which emerged during the 1970s under the Presidency of Luis Echeverría.

production, but their efforts were stymied by the *fabricantes'* refusal to buy the sombrero *en greña*. Lacking access to presses and processing materials, the small producers had no option but to hoard their unprocessed sombreros, thus becoming indebted to *Fidepal*. Eventually, the *Fidepal* wrote off the debts on condition that it became a major shareholder in the cooperative. The process of appropriation was completed when, in 1975, the *Fidepal* built a factory, bought machinery, employed a waged labour force and forced out the former independent producers.

By the mid-1980s the bulk of sombrero manufacture was effectively in the hands of the state. Independent sombrero production continued to provide employment for a significant number of the urban population, and a dozen or so *fabricantes* continued to do business. Independent entrepreneurs struggled to compete with the state-owned enterprise and for small producers the situation was economically difficult. Subcontracting by *fabricantes* had become unreliable and wage levels in the *Fidepal* were among the lowest in the town. For entrepreneurs and producers alike, the sombrero industry had been destroyed by the unwelcome interventions of the *cardenista* state. The experience had confirmed the view that unionization inevitably heralds the ruin of industrial enterprise. From the perspective of the working population the history of the sombrero industry expressed a double betrayal: by an entrepreneurial class which showed itself indifferent to the fate of those it employed; and by a state which had failed to deliver its promise of support during the struggle to organize.

3.2 Huarache production: the birth of a rural industry

Huarache production in Sahuayo was properly established during the *porfiriato*. The working population of the town had been steadily denied opportunities for subsistence production since the mid-eighteenth century as available land was engulfed by the Guaracha hacienda. The poor had therefore turned to artisanal production in household workshops, and had been able to forge a living by supplying regional

markets. The expansion of the urban economy, and the development of *arriería* during the *porfiriato*, saw the emergence of trade networks controlled by local elites. Household producers were able to supply the traders and a pattern of variegated artisanal production in small workshops had taken root by the end of the 19th century.

Extensive livestock raising in the region ensured a supply of hides which were processed in small tanneries in Sahuayo and other towns in the region, using natural products available locally. This had led to the emergency of saddlery and the production of leather articles including shoes and huarache. Hides were also imported from other regional centres such as Uruapan in the south and Zacapu to the east. Merchant and landowning families controlled a limited market in hides and other materials necessary for saddle-making and shoe production. Some merchants were also involved in shoe production for markets which until 1940 were local and regional. Huaraches were hand-made, produced in household workshops and sold in market-places in surrounding villages such as Tizapán and Mazamitla to the northwest, Quitupan to the south and La Barca on the northeast side of the Laguna de Chapala (see Figure 2). Some producers also supplied peons working on the Guaracha hacienda. Production was non-mechanized and each individual producer owned the tools necessary for production.

In the early days local tanning families turned to production of saddlewear and huarache for regional consumption, supplying domestic producers with tools and materials when demand for huaraches exceeded the capacity of their own workshops. During the 1940s huarache production in Sahuayo experienced a rapid thrust of expansion. During the Second World War imports from the United States declined and industrial production for national and international markets expanded. In Guadalajara entrepreneurs were able to consolidate and expand the production of goods, such as shoes and textiles, for national consumption (Arias 1986, Lailson 1986). From the end of the 1920s there had been steady growth of shoe production in household workshops, given a context of political stability, abundant labour and effective road and

rail links to national networks. With the onset of war, shoe producers took advantage of increased demand and benefited from the general process of expansion. For huarache producers a huge additional booster came in the form of massive orders from the United States for heavy duty huaraches for troops stationed in Southeast Asia (Arias op.cit and field investigation). The demand for huarache extended to Sahuayo, where some half a dozen tanning and huarache-producing families organized and controlled the production of numerous household workshops. From 1940 to the mid-1950s production of the _sahuayo_ model, or huarache _colorado_ (because it was stained red) was the source of income for hundreds of Sahuayan families.

One member of a saddlemaker's family described how huarache production took off during the early 1940s:

> "My father had many saddleries here, about 50 and they were all producing saddles. He began selling goods to the son-in-law of the _secretario de hacienda_ in Mexico City. When Orley, the American, arrived he knew that my father could produce goods in quantity. My father set to work forming many small workshops. To all those who were willing he took materials he had brought from Uruapan, Zacapu, from wherever there were tanneries. My sister was in charge of buying and selling, she and my brother Manuel. But all my brothers and sisters were working here in one way or another, there were small workshops everywhere. They brought some _pespuntadoras_ (sewing machines) from Guadalajara and all the huarache was sewn here. My sisters slept two or three hours a night because they finished work between one and two in the morning and at four, five, six, they had to begin again. Every week we sent Orley more than 5,000 pairs. Everyone delivered their huarache on Fridays, because on Saturday we sent them all to the United States, we sent them to Nuevo Laredo on the border".

After the end of the war huarache production in Guadalajara declined rapidly. Informants who had worked as _huaracheros_ during the war told Arias (1986) that the quality of the sandals they produced was consistently poor, and that after 1945 wholesalers in the United States had refused to buy them. At the same time Guadalajara was developing as the national centre for production of women's shoes and this was a

significant factor in determining a shift away from sandal manufacture. The field was thus to some extent left open to Sahuayan producers, who continued to fill orders for huarache colorado until the late 1950s.[3]

The years between 1945 and 1965 marked a period of slow growth and the first state in a transformation in the nature of entrepreneurial activity. During these years two entrepreneurs were to emerge and rise to a position of near-total control of the huarache sector. During the 1950s both were directly engaged in huarache production and these productive activities were the basis for a process of capital accumulation which ultimately took them out of the sphere of production and into a new role as suppliers of industrially-produced raw materials.

One of these entrepreneurs was Jesús Trujillo. In the 1930s the Trujillo family owned a small tannery. Don Jesús was born in 1931 and as a child, he worked in the family tannery and sold duros (fried crackers) in the streets of the town. During the 1940s the family was also involved in huarache production on a small scale. In 1949 Don Jesús began to subcontract production of heavy-duty huarache campesino for sale in Tizapán, a village market on the southern shores of the Chapala lake. During the 1950s local markets expanded as peasants made use of the new roads and Don Jesús captured a growing market for working shoes in a predominantly agricultural region. He continued to sell huarache in Tizapán until 1972.

The other entrepreneur who was to consolidate a hold over huarache production was Enrique Luna. At the beginning of the 1920s the Lunas owned a grocery business, a tannery and a huarache workshop. During the Cristiada the family transferred both tannery and huarache workshop to Ocotlán (on the road to Guadalajara). They subsequently moved to Mexico City and established a wholesale meat business before returning to Sahuayo in 1941 with very little money. After a short time Señor Luna abandoned the family and his wife, Leticia, took over the family

---

[3] The volume of production was substantial in Sahuayan terms. One entrepreneur reported that he had supplied 20,000 to 30,000 pairs to American clients every three months between 1950 and 1960.

business. The tannery was re-established and from 1944 the family produced sandals as well, in their own workshop and through subcontracting to numerous household workshops. Until 1949 the Lunas produced huarache for the national market. From 1950 to 1960 the family business, now managed by Enrique, supplied between 6,000 and 8,000 pairs of huarache colorado for north American markets.

By the mid-1960s Jesús Trujillo and Enrique Luna were well established as producers of huarache in Sahuayo and both were also able to draw upon the labours of a pool of household talleres, which could be subcontracted when necessary. Both had played an important role in establishing many such workshops, providing tools and credit to set production in motion.

3.3 After 1960: the consolidation of household production

Huarache production grew and expanded considerably between 1940 and 1960. From the beginning production had been organized around subcontracting and by 1960 there was a myriad of household workshops engaged in production for regional, national and international markets. The demise of the sombrero factory in 1959 had done much to reinforce entrepreneurial antagonism toward factory organization and the perils of organized labour; and this history continued to have an enduring influence on the forms and practices of productive organization in the town. With respect to the huarache industry, after 1960 national and regional economic transformations also served to further deepen and consolidate an already well-established structure of productive relations within the huarache sector and to favour the retention of a labour-intensive process of production based on putting out and domestic labour.

First of all, during the early years of the 1960s artisanal production of leather in the region declined. The development of shoe production in Guadalajara had provided the impetus for a transformation in the tanning process, which was industrialized, with the hides being processed using chemical substances. The transformation affected the

quality and variety of leather available to shoe and sandal producers and, initially at least, decreased costs. During this period many household tanneries in the region of Los Altos de Jalmich folded and trade in leather hides moved into the hands of wholesalers in Guadalajara. The expanding shoe industry in Guadalajara also gave rise to the production of a range of other inputs, such as prefabricated soles (of crepe and foam rubber), heels, varnishes, stains, thread, glue and so on. As sandal production in Sahuayo increasingly catered to tourist markets seeking attractive and carefully-finished products, a need arose for retail outlets where household producers with little disposable capital could purchase small quantities of the inputs they required for production.

The industrialization of tanning and the emergence of markets for a range of industrially-produced inputs created new opportunities for Sahuayan entrepreneurs involved in huarache production. Significantly, they acted to push such entrepreneurs away from direct involvement in production and toward a more intermediary role. During this period both Luna and Trujillo used capital derived from exporting sandals to move into the sphere of supply, establishing peleterías - leather stores - which also traded in a wide range of secondary products used for sandal production. The Luna family had moved their tannery to Guadalajara during the early 1960s, where it was industrialized and mechanized. Enrique Luna opened a peletería in 1967, which was supplied in part from his own tannery. By 1980 the Lunas had ceased to produce huarache altogether and were involved in subcontracting on a sporadic, irregular basis. Don Jesús established a peletería in 1962 and also moved to establish control over production of leather in a number of urban centres in the region.[4] By 1985 Don Jesús owned the biggest peletería in

---

[4] In his own words: "I more or less produce the leather. I buy raw hides and send them to tanneries in the region. I have three suppliers who sell me all their hides, I either buy them bleeding, or I salt them myself - I have my own salting baths. I advance money to the slaughterers too. I sell the merchandise from the peletería to clients in La Barca, Jamay, Ocotlán, Ponzitlán, Chapala, Jocopotec. I even

Sahuayo and controlled the single largest volume of production (5,000 pairs of sandals weekly), organized through subcontracting to some 20 maquilas or dependent workshops. Both entrepreneurs had taken advantage of favourable conditions during the post-war period to expand huarache production for regional and national markets. Both played a key role in capitalizing the industry, providing credit, materials and tools for the establishment of a host of household talleres, the survival of which depended upon a continuous supply of credit.

As important, was the creation of national and international markets for typically Mexican "folk" articles for tourist consumption. A national state strategy for the development of a Mexican tourist industry, in which the promotion of artisanal production in rural zones played a key role, had begun after the 1940s.[5] The creation of markets for commodities which embodied qualities of "Mexicanness" and exotic rural culture was instrumental in ensuring continued - and expanding - markets for the sandals manufactured in Sahuayo and it was during this period that an abundance of new models or styles of huarache were created, catering to a range of tastes. The once straightforward, heavy-duty campesino and sahuayo models were replaced by lighter more sandal-like varieties designed for women and children as well as men. The creativity of Sahuayan producers at all levels, and their readiness to invent, adapt and continually push forward the frontiers of their craft, has also played its part in ensuring that the Sahuayan huarache industry has maintained its hegemonic position among huarache producers throughout the country, and its domination of national and international markets.

---

supply the peleterías where huarache factories here in Sahuayo buy their leather".

[5] State strategies for the promotion of craft and artisanal production were largely motivated by the need to find a political solution to rural unemployment in the wake of the development of capitalist agricultural production (see Novelo 1976). These questions will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

For Jesús Trujillo and Enrique Luna this burgeoning demand for sandals permitted both to consolidate their roles as dominant entrepreneurs within the huarache sector. Enrique Luna had produced huarache colorado for export throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1970s he diversified and produced a variety of lighter models and by 1976 the family had invested in a number of sewing machines and other equipment, was producing exclusively for export and employing some 20 people. In 1969 Don Jesús was also able to export huarache to the United States. An American client came to Sahuayo in search of a "typical" Mexican product and in 1970 Don Jesús established and subcontracted to a number of workshops. Throughout 1970 these workshops produced 12,000 to 14,000 pairs of uppers or guajes each week, which were sent to a factory in Los Angeles to be soled and finished. In 1982 demand for these sandals diminished and in 1983 the factory was closed. By 1985, however a smaller business had been established by the same American client and Don Jesús was controlling production of 5,000 pairs of guajes each week, dispersed throughout 20 workshops.

Nevertheless, tourist markets contained their own limitations. While able to sustain the local industry they remained inherently unstable, fragmented and highly competitive. State policy for the promotion of craft production had done little to protect producers or entrepreneurs from the vicissitudes of market conditions and this too had mitigated against the expansion of more fully capitalist relations of production. The craft character of the huarache itself attracted exporters who had come to Mexico in search of easy profits. These buyers were themselves operating independently of institutionalized commerce, could not draw on credit facilities, make advance payments and so on. Under these circumstances the organization of production in autonomous household workshops involved significantly less risk than investment in, or transformation of, the productive process itself. When demand for huarache increased entrepreneurs mediated between clients and producers and activated production, supplying materials and taking a part of the profit realized through sales. When demand slackened, such entrepreneurs

bore no responsibility for the fortunes of the individual producers who were obliged to find other employment or to find their own outlets for the sandals they produced. At the same time, the fragmentary character of tourist markets - there were thousands of retail outlets along the coast and throughout the republic - provided opportunities for huaracheros to sell the sandals they produced, either directly to visiting clients, or by travelling to tourist resorts and towns bordering the United States of America.

State promotion of Mexican commodities for tourist markets also permitted some producers to obtain credit and other forms of financial and technical assistance via government institutions established to encourage craft production, although in practice such institutions tended not to help the poorest but those who were already in possession of some capital (Novelo 1976). In Sahuayo, the expansion of export markets and the availability of credit provided the impetus for the emergence of half a dozen huarache-producing factories in the 1970s. Almost without exception the factories were established by individuals or families who had no history of involvement with huarache production, but sought to profit from the tourist boom. Using capital derived from business, agriculture or other activities, machinery was introduced to cut, sew and perform other tasks usually carried out by huaracheros working at home. In the factories production was aimed at the export markets of the United States and Europe, while in the family workshops producers worked to fill orders for clients with shops and stalls in Mexican market places. The factories thus existed alongside the workshops, each sector producing for relatively distinct markets.

Nevertheless, in 1985 huarache production in Sahuayo was overwhelmingly carried out in household talleres by household producers who owned their own tools and means of production. Wage labour for the talleres was recruited from among friends, neighbours or relatives living in the locality and family labour was deployed in nearly all workshops. The handful of factories in the town had some of the characteristics of fully capitalist industry - a complex internal

division of labour, wage-labour and fixed timetables. In practice, however, the rhythm of production was sensitive to market fluctuation, the length of the working day was variable and a significant part of the process of production occurred _outside_ the factory walls. While one _peletero_ did control substantial proportion of the total volume of production, this was achieved via subcontracting arrangements and in the face of decreasing demand the level of production was reduced accordingly.

3.4 Class struggle, morality and the social value of labour

The preceding paragraphs have described the events and processes which underpinned the emergence of household production in which merchants rather than industrialists controlled production. The industrialization of tanning had consolidated the role of local merchants supplying household producers; and the emergence of tourist markets seeking essentially hand-made and exotic commodities had acted to reinforce a structure of artisanal, household-based production. As we have seen, however, the response to these practical considerations was informed by entrepreneurs' and producers' understanding of the political world which they inhabited. In the post-revolutionary era the new national state and its institutions had been irrevocably linked with the "destructive" actions of the Cãrdenas and their entourage within the region. In the sphere of manufacture this view had been all too clearly corroborated; and memory of the sombrero fiasco served to remind both entrepreneurs and producers of the folly of productive integration and expansion.

Sahuayan entrepreneurs were above all concerned to avoid embroilment with the state, with all that this had come to signify in terms of the erosion of political and economic control over productive activity. Within the huarache sector a vertical structure within which entrepreneurs dealt directly with atomized household producers was clearly beneficial. The potential for labour organization was contained, and the economic costs of maintaining a full-time labour force avoided. Huarache production had thus remained household-based, concealed and

beyond the reach of state control.

As discussed in the previous chapter, entrepreneurs also sought to conceal the extent of their wealth - as well as the risks inherent in an unstable world - through the diversification of economic activities and Trujillo and Luna were no exception to this rule. Don Jesús was involved in the production and distribution of leather and related materials across an area which went far beyond the confines of the local economy. He supplied hides wholesale to peleterías in Guadalajara, where he had established a second outlet. In addition he owned a great deal of property, much of it on the highly valuable highway at the edge of the town, and traded in agricultural products such as animal fodder, meat and vegetables. The Lunas had a history of diverse activity, and branches of the family lived permanently in Mexico City, Guadalajara and the United States. Locally the Lunas owned a haulage company - highly profitable in a zone where trade in animal fodder and other agricultural products was extensive - and the family owned property in Sahuayo, Mexico City and the United States.

But the prevalence of household-based production was not simply the consequence of producers' subordination to entrepreneurial interests. Huaracheros themselves preferred to work in their own household workshops. From the beginning producers had not been wholly dependent on entrepreneurs to sell the sandals they produced and this had exerted an important influence over the huaracheros. During phases of expansion (in particular during the 1940s and the 1970s) entrepreneurs had gained control over the distribution of most of the sandals produced in the town. Nevertheless, the possibility for independent marketing had existed throughout. Once an individual huarachero had managed to establish a workshop, the potential for realizing profit from sales was there and as forthcoming chapters will demonstrate, household producers were frequently able to generate incomes that were high relative to other forms of economic activity in the town.

Furthermore, the sombrero strike and its consequences had far-reaching implications for the structure and organization of the labour force in Sahuayo. From the perspective of the working population, the sombrero workers' attempt at collective organization had demonstrated that rather than improving labour practices, explicitly political struggle had resulted in the dismantling of the factory and a deterioration of the terms and conditions of labour. The entrepreneurs or _fabricantes_, who had remained in control of a portion of the total volume of production in the town, were embittered and antagonistic toward those who worked for them and there was little room for negotiation. Conditions of work and wage levels in the state-controlled _Fidepal_, established in subsequent years, were in some respects worse than those which had prevailed within _La Guadalupana_.

Within the huarache sector two important and inter-related lessons were learned from this experience. In the first place, producers sought at all costs to retain ownership of the means of production and to avoid incorporation into the sphere of wage labour. Huarache production had evolved historically around a vertical structure of credit and debt relations between entrepreneurs and producers. In the absence of alternative sources of capital, producers were forced to turn to entrepreneurs for supplies of raw materials. Indeed, the existence of continuously reproduced credit and debt relations between producers and suppliers was the cornerstone of the industry and all producers had to establish an effective credit arrangement or lose the source of their livelihood. Successful functioning of this relationship was often achieved via the creation or mobilization of an extra-economic bond, notably through relations of kinship or _compadrazgo_ and established vertically between patron and client. In effect, these cultural aspects of productive organization were part of a strategy to maintain the flow of credit. In general, the strategies pursued by _huaracheros_ were the outcome of historical experience and of their assessment of the political and economic realities which confronted them.

In a context of entrenched mercantile control, the memory of a disastrous collective confrontation with "capital" (the sombrero strike), and the state's failure to deliver its promise of substantive support, engagement in explicitly political struggle was viewed with extreme distrust. Instead, huaracheros found that the boundaries of the credit-debt nexus could be more effectively negotiated on moral, rather than political terrain. Producers continued to invest in kinship and compadrazgo - and to a theory of rights and obligations defined by them - because the parameters of the credit-debt relationship, the terms of credit and conditions of labour could be more effectively altered through this channel. The vitality of these non-economic relationships was in part the outcome of producers' ability to bring pressure to bear on entrepreneurs to balance the terms of trade a little more in their favour. While political pressure had proved counter-productive, the exertion of pressure defined in terms of Christian justice and moral obligation was effective within a local culture which had identified with the transcendent values of the Catholic faith in opposition to the secular values of the national state.

The idea that the rich were in some sense morally obliged to provide for ordinary working people had also fundamentally affected the way in which labour itself was perceived. Because the struggle for basic rights and conditions had been waged on moral rather than political grounds the value of labour had also come to be construed in terms of the social identity and moral responsibilities of the bearer of that labour. Thus, as heads of families, it had been established that men had a right and duty to provide for their wives and children; and their labour was at least in principle valued accordingly. Likewise, the labour of other members of the family was defined as contributing to the total family budget and such labour was paid at a lower level. Within this logic, women's labour was accorded the lowest value. The primary role of women was to care for their husbands and children and women's paid work was always defined as supplementary, something done "in-

between" their real work as mothers and wives.[6]

This social valuation of labour was especially significant in terms of the organization of huarache production, which was at all levels dependent upon cheap female labour. Historically the weaving of huarache had been established as women's work and it was carried out by women working at home rather than in the huarache talleres. With the creation of tourist markets the huarache had been reinvented as a typical Mexican artefact, an artesanía, defined by its hand-made, woven character, and the integral role of manual labour within the productive process was thus definitively reaffirmed. As women's work, and as domestic labour fitted in between other domestic chores, weaving was defined as supplementary and was poorly renumerated. Needless to say, the social construction of women's labour as secondary to that of men, was not borne out by everyday experience. For many women, domestic outwork was not at all supplementary but necessary for the survival of the household. In addition, married men were frequently unable or unwilling to obtain work which would make up the lion's share of household income, thus obliging women to work long hours doing poorly paid work in order to maintain levels of daily consumption.[7]

Women's attitude to this state of affairs was ambivalent. What was acceptable as women's work was narrowly defined and in a context where access to the labour market was restricted and remuneration poor, there were good reasons for married women with children to work at home. In the first place, women's identity as women and mothers remained intact; and secondarily, domestic outwork allowed women to control their own labour time and to resist incorporation into the antipathetic schedules of wage labour. Thus, for example, activities which could be carried out at home - such as weaving sandals or selling cenas (suppers) - became an

---

[6] Humphrey (1987), has discussed a similar social construction of worker identities in Brazil. See also Ehlers (1990), Ong (1987) and Wilson (1990).

[7] Questions of labour, employment and household organization are fully discussed in Chapter 7.

extension of domestic labour, something that could be "fitted in" between household chores and childcare and did not interfere with the rhythm of domestic life.[8]

While the low value of female labour was in part explicable as one aspect of a structure within which labour was socially and morally - rather than contractually - defined, it was also rooted in the broader culture and political economy of the town. Brass (1986) has argued that under certain conditions authority and control may be exerted through the invocation of political or ideological idioms (he cites kinship ideology) to restrict access to the labour market. For huarache producers and entrepreneurs it was the existence of just such constricted "unfree" female labour which guaranteed profits. Without cheap female labour - at the very core of the productive process - retail prices would have been forced up and existing levels of profitability would have been difficult if not impossible to sustain.[9]

---

[8] Stolcke (1984) has described a similar ambivalence among women working on sugar plantations in São Paolo, Brazil.

[9] The cultural construction of sexuality in Sahuayo was highly complex, and was rooted in the broader culture and political economy of the town. These themes are explored in greater depth, in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

4. Credit and debt in rural manufacture

Throughout its history the household workshop or taller had been the basic unit of production in Sahuayo and in 1985 there were between 150 and 200 household workshops in operation. The largest single volume of production, 5,000 pairs weekly, was controlled by one entrepreneur who subcontracted labour to huaracheros producing in household workshops known as maquilas. Altogether the factories produced approximately 6,000 pairs of sandals each week and a similar quantity was produced by a dozen or so profitable household enterprises. Average weekly production in the household workshops was 60 pairs of huarache. In 1985 the total output of the talleres could thus reach as many as 9,000 pairs in a single week, a volume almost equivalent to the output of the factories and household enterprises put together.

Typically, the household workshops were tacked onto the back of the family dwelling and were semi-open sheds with dirt or concrete floors. The household workshops were run by individual huaracheros, who owned their own tools and equipment necessary for production. The workshop's basic equipment consisted of a wooden workbench on which to cut leather strips or correllas from leather hides (vaqueta), an electrically-operated banco de acabar, a machine for smoothing the outer edges of the sandals and occasionally, a manual suajeadora or leather-cutting machine. Huaracheros worked on low chairs and their basic tools consisted of curved knives, hammers and chisel-like tools for cutting slits into the leather. Weaving was always carried out by women working at home and all huaracheros organized the activities of their weavers or encorrelladoras.

The workshop was the social centre of the home. It was site of household social life and the place to which children gravitated on arriving home from school. Huaracheros traditionally worked from Tuesday to Saturday, beginning each day at around 8am and continuing until 2pm. The lunch break might last from half an hour to one and a half hours, after which work continued until 8 or 9pm. Many producers sold their sandals themselves, travelling on buses to regional markets on Sundays.

Others sold to clients visiting Sahuayo. Work intensified as the week progressed and pressure mounted for orders which had to be completed by Sunday. Changing rhythms of demand were manifest in changes in the atmosphere of the *taller*, which was more relaxed at the start of the week, or when demand slackened during the colder season (November to February).

Labourers in the *talleres* were employed on a casual, week to week basis. They worked to the same timetable but by implicit mutual agreement were free to be "unreliable" and to seize other jobs should more profitable opportunities arise. *Huaracheros* and their labourers were responsible for cutting *correllas* from leather hides and for preparing the soles and insoles of the shoes. Workers were paid a weekly wage, or worked *por tarea*, receiving a fixed rate per dozen pair of sandals. But the number of workshops employing adult labour was a small proportion of the total. Usually the individual *huaracheros* did most of the work and were assisted by young boys or *zorras* (literally foxes), who worked for a few hours before and after going to school. The *zorras* fetched and carried sacks of huarache to and from the sewing workshops and weavers' homes, "flattened" the woven leather with a hammer, took the shoes off the lasts, polished them and so on. In many *talleres* the *zorras* were the *huarachero's* sons and they generally received a few hundred pesos a week as *raya* or pocket money. *Zorras* from other households were paid a low wage. Weaving was often carried out by female members of the family. Wives tended to be unpaid and young daughters received pocket money. Older girls were paid at the normal rate for weaving but were responsible for buying their own shoes and clothes with the money they earned.

The independent workshop, where sandals could be made and sold without recourse to middlemen, contained the potential for profits which could never be realized by those working as wage labourers in a region where the bourgeoisie remained implacably opposed to organized labour in all its forms. *Huaracheros* were well off in terms of local wage levels, with established workshop owners earning on average between 15,000

(£37.50) and 25,000 pesos (£62.50) each week.[1] Nevertheless, the cost of huarache production was high, requiring above all continuous and substantial investment in leather, as well as other materials such as rubber, glue, thread, varnish and so on. And on the face of it there was little to protect small producers from the vicissitudes of markets which were unstable, competitive and fragmented; not surprisingly the majority of huaracheros faced periodic debt problems. Under these conditions, the risks entailed by expansion were great and most avoided such risks, opting instead for the stability afforded by steady production of small quantities of sandals each week. The question arose as to how producers managed to maintain a continuous flow of production and to protect themselves against debt or lack of employment. In practice, huaracheros with little capital at their disposal had no option but to become involved in relations of dependency of one kind or another, both to establish their talleres in the first place, and thence to maintain production.

This chapter examines the nature of these dependencies and the social and cultural relationships around which they were constructed. As we shall see, the fortunes of individual producers were ultimately determined by the particular matrix of credit and debt within which they were embedded, and by the forms of support and patronage which they had managed to secure and maintain. In effect, there were two distinct, but overlapping, kinds of alliances elaborated by producers: those which were horizontally-based, between relatives or compadres of equal standing; and those which involved a more explicitly asymmetrical and vertical relationship between producers and patrons or entrepreneurs.

The following material is divided into three sections. The first provides an overview of the social organization of credit and debt relations within household workshop production. The second examines the

---

[1] The minimum wage was 860 pesos daily, or 5,160 pesos weekly in mid-1985. The majority of Sahuayan men earned more than this whether employed or self-employed, but the earnings of many ranged between the seven and 10,000 peso mark. Wage and income levels are discussed in detail in Chapters 6 and 7. There were 400 pesos to the £ in mid-1985.

ways in which horizontal alliances were formed between household producers and how these alliances were the basis for the transmission of skills, materials and other forms of economic assistance. It looks at the various ways in which huaracheros mobilized these horizontal bonds, and exploited opportunities which had arisen from their general situation, in order to retain productive autonomy. The third section looks at vertical relationships between producers and entrepreneurs and in particular examines variations in the content of such relationships and the ways in which differentials arose. It shows how economic differentials between household producers could not be explained in productive terms alone. Rather, a more complex understanding of the social and cultural elements of the relationships between patrons and producers was necessary in order to understand why some fared significantly better than others.

The analysis is based upon information drawn from life history interviews with some 120 huaracheros, conducted during the field research. More detailed information about volume, cost and organization of production, as well as the distribution of the finished product, was also collected from 20 of these individuals. The case studies presented below have been chosen because they illustrate a particular aspect or aspects of the dependencies which organized workshop production.

4.1 The social organization of workshop production

As we saw in the previous chapter, the development of factory labour, and the attempt to use political means to improve the terms and conditions of employment, had proved disastrous for the working population. In the perception of the vast majority of the working population of Sahuayo, wage labour was unequivocally associated with material impoverishment and political humiliation. For the huaracheros, the struggle to retain productive autonomy in the household workshop was in itself an aspect of resistance to proletarianization and the humiliations of the wage contract. The development of horizontally-based alliances was one way in which such resistance was organized. Through

the creation of a broad complex of local social relationships, which could be mobilized around bonds of kinship, marriage, compadrazgo, or friendship among others of equal standing, producers sought to protect themselves against complete dependency upon entrepreneurs or suppliers. The vitality and efficacy of these horizontal bonds was reflected in the fact that at least some of the capital and materials needed for the formation of the workshops had been secured through the mobilization of relationships between relatives or compadres in 33 per cent of the independent household workshops (see Table 1). As we shall see, huaracheros continued to rely on such bonds throughout the life of their workshops.

Table 1: Source of initial capital (workshops formed between 1950 and 1985)

	Workshop (%)	Maquila (%)
Relative(s)	33.3	5.8
Peletero	20.8	26.4
Former employee/ huarache	16.6	50.0
Former employee/ other	-	5.8
Savings	12.5	-
Migration	6.2	11.7
Other activity	6.2	-
Not known	2.0	-

Workshop owners' determination to resist permanent incorporation into the waged labour force was also evident in the ways in which they reacted to economic difficulty. Virtually all huarache producers faced periodic debt and although some form of maquilaje or subcontracting arrangement was the most commonly chosen means of resolving such problems it was not the only one. Some huaracheros engaged temporarily in other labours, as peones del campo (agricultural labourers) or bricklayers. Others migrated for short periods of time to the United

States, Guadalajara or Mexico City. With the wages earned debts were repaid and the workshops reverted to normal production.[2] But the majority of small producers chose not to migrate - many told me they could not imagine leaving their families alone - preferring instead to rely upon relatives, compadres and local patrons to assist in the resolution of debt problems (see Table 2).

Table 2: Patterns of migration among huaracheros

Destination: (%)	US	Guad.	Mexico City	Other	None
Huaracheros	31.2	6.2	4.1	4.1	54.1
Maquileros	29.4	11.7	-	-	58.8

Nevertheless, there were limits to the operations of horizontal alliances and to the possibilities afforded by strategies such as migration; and the functioning of all household workshops was fundamentally based upon vertical relationships between entrepreneurs and producers. While a significant proportion of workshop owners (33 per cent) had entered the huarache sector with the help of relatives, a greater proportion (37.4 per cent) had done so with the assistance of peleteros or former employees in the huarache sector. In the maquilaje or subcontracted sector, this proportion was far higher, at just over 76 per cent of the total. Moreover, all household producers depended upon vertical relationships with entrepreneurs - whether suppliers or larger producers - for the continued functioning of their workshops. Credit and

[2] One huarachero recounted, for example: "In 1978 I went to the US because my huarache was not selling, I wasn't earning enough to live on, I was just building up debts. I stayed two years in the States, working as a gardener. They paid quite well and I managed to pay back what I owed, to support my family and bring back a bit more money. When I returned I reopened the taller in my house and began making huarache as a maquilero for my father."

debt relations thus lay at the very core of the industry.

Establishing a taller was an expensive business and peleteros familiar with the personal history and economic circumstances of the huarachero were, in many cases, involved at this initial stage, providing the materials and credit necessary for the formation of the taller. Once established, all producers were dependent upon credit arrangements with the peleteros for a supply of materials bought at the beginning of each weekly cycle of production. On Mondays huaracheros liquidated their accounts for the previous week in the peleterías. Paying for the previous week's materials secured the next week's credit and a new batch was advanced to the huaracheros on the same day.[3]

In addition, entrepreneurs virtually always provided producers with lasts, which were loaned on a semi-permanent basis. The importance of these loans should not be overlooked. The moulded wooden lasts cost between 2,000 and 4,000 pesos (£5 and £10) per pair, and a single producer required dozens in order to function. The cost of lasts was far beyond the reach of the vast majority of huaracheros and entrepreneurs owned stocks of hundreds of pairs of lasts which were distributed amongst workshops throughout the barrio. The provision of lasts was generally an aspect of an initial credit relationship between entrepreneur and producer, but in practice it was an informal system and the entrepreneurs did not necessarily withdraw their lasts when a particular productive contract came to an end. The system was advantageous to some huaracheros, who were able to use the lasts for the production of sandals for their own clients. However, the generosity of the loan greatly depended on the relationship between entrepreneurs and individual producers and was one of a number of ways in which the patron-client structure produced economic differentials among producers.

---

[3] Those unable to honour their credit were charged interest at between two and seven per cent monthly. Negotiation of the rate of interest also depended on the socially-defined parameters of the relationship between the huarachero and the peletero.

Among the 200 workshops were some 50 talleres within which the credit-debt relation was more directly apparent. Known as maquilas, these workshops provided subcontracted labour for entrepreneurs or factories filling orders for known clients. Most frequently, the maquileros produced the upper part of the sandal, known as the guaje. They were responsible for cutting the correllas and organizing weaving in the same way as independent workshop owners. Entrepreneurs provided lasts and materials and, when the guajes were delivered at the end of the week, the cost of materials was "deducted" from the payment due to the maquileros. The status of any workshop might change at different moments in its history, and the maquilaje relation was an option for huaracheros in economic difficulty. For others, the establishment of a maquila was a stage in the development of the taller, a first step on the road to productive autonomy. The maquilaje relation could ensure a regular supply of work while the producer collected together resources and sought clients of his own. But more often than not, working for an entrepreneur or factory was the only viable choice for the maquilero. Producers who, for a variety of reasons, were unable to secure capital or clients could not obtain credit in the peleterías and were forced into a position of dependency. Maquileros tended to come from poor households, and to have less access to social networks and connections with others who could provide capital, materials or credit, although this was not always the case.

Household production within the huarache sector was thus organized around an intricate network of alliances, wherein even the simplest transactions were underpinned by relationships which transcended the purely economic. Productive organization was constructed around bonds of trust or confianza between producers and those to whom they turned for assistance. The consolidation of such elements of trust was essential for all huaracheros and the possibility of becoming involved in the industry depended on knowledge of and being known by other huaracheros and suppliers. Indeed, research data indicated that all those who had established a household taller were natives of Sahuayo and that many

huarache-producing families had been involved in the industry for more than one generation (see Table 3). The huaracheros operated within a social world where well-established kin and other relationships served in the transmission of skills, property and tools across generations, and as a protection from economic adversity. Most huaracheros had entered the workshops at the age of 12 or so as helpers or zorras and had thus served a long apprenticeship. Equally important, these years were also spent in developing a network of connections which could be activated when the possibility for forming an independent workshop eventually arose.

Table 3: Household workshops: occupation of fathers of huaracheros (workshops formed between 1950 and 1985)

	Workshop (%)	Maquila (%)
Huarachero	39.7	22.7
Tanner	-	5.9
Peasant	27.7	38.2
Sombrero	4.0	11.7
Trader (arriero)	4.1	2.9
Employee, shoe workshop	6.2	-
Petty trade	9.3	-
Bricklayer	4.0	7.8
Taco stall in Mexico City	3.0	-
US migrant labour	-	5.8
Ranchero	-	5.0
Other	2.0	-

4.2 Autonomy, family and *compadrazgo* in household workshops

Within the household sector the most independent huaracheros were those who produced sandals in their own workshops and sold them directly to clients they had secured for themselves. In terms of everyday practice these producers were politically conservative and economically cautious. They experimented little, producing small quantities of sandals each

week and sticking to the traditional, tried and tested models of huarache which, almost without exception, they sold to retailers in regional markets and coastal resorts. In order to enter this world, while at the same time minimizing the risks involved, it was necessary for aspiring huaracheros to obtain materials and to begin production in the knowledge that there would be a possible client or clients for the shoes. Where possible these requirements were met through the operation of networks of relatives or compadres of equal status. Well-established bonds between producers and former employers or entrepreneurs were mobilized for assistance in the face of more serious problems, such as illness or other debt. The workings of these inter-locking relationships between workshop producers, their kin, affines and compadres can be illustrated by reference to the Rodriguez and Gãlvez talleres.

4.3 The Rodriguez family workshops

Don Eduardo had been a campesino with his own ecuaro (plot of land) who also sowed maize on rented plots on the non-irrigated uplands to the west of Sahuayo. The Rodriguez had four sons and a daughter. During the early 1940s the eldest son, Gerardo, migrated to Tampico on the Gulf coast where he worked for the nationalized oil company, PEMEX. Remissions from Gerardo were used to establish a huarache taller in 1960, which was the responsibility of a second brother, Josẽ. In 1966 Josẽ died in a car accident and the workshop was taken over by Ricardo Rodriguez, a third brother. Ricardo had began work in 1949 when, at the age of seven, he ran errands for various bakeries and sold sweets in the plaza. In 1954 Ricardo entered a sombrero factory as an errand boy and then became an operator of the pressing machines. Two years later he travelled to Tampico where he stayed for 11 years. Despite higher wages than in Sahuayo, he returned after failing to secure a contract of permanent employment.[4] Upon his return, he entered the family taller

[4] Through Gerardo, Ricardo was able work for PEMEX but he remained a temporary labourer throughout. He recalled that to secure a permanent contact he needed to become a member of the official trade union. Union

where he worked as an employee until José died. Ricardo continued to run the family workshop and in 1985 organized the purchase of materials for himself and his younger brother Juan.

Juan began working in 1956 at the age of nine. He was a _zorra de huarache_ for José who was at that time employed in one of the large exporting workshops. Juan later moved with José into the Rodriguez family workshop. In 1966, one year after his marriage, Juan began producing three or four dozen pairs of sandals each week with credit and materials provided by Ricardo. These were in turn sold to Ricardo, who controlled sales of the production of both workshops. Juan's _taller_ had been stable since 1970 and in 1985 he continued to produce seven dozen pairs of huaraches each week. Juan earned between 20,000 (£50) and 25,000 pesos (£62.50) each week, and was able to pay for five of his eight children to attend a private school. His eldest daughter had worked briefly in a factory producing men's working boots but was unemployed at the time of the interview and dependent on her parents.

The Rodriguez family had established itself as a huarache-producing family over two generations. The operations of the original family _taller_ had provided the economic means for Juan to establish his own workshop and his brothers had helped to ensure its survival (see Figures 5 and 6). An uncle had also given Juan a plot of land upon which he built a house, using savings and a loan from the _Caja Popular_.[5] Thus, the kinship structure had allowed Juan's family to create for itself an added measure of security. Nevertheless, the family's economic security had been seriously threatened when Juan's wife had fallen ill in 1982. To pay her medical bills Juan had withdrawn all the family savings from the _Caja Popular_ and had borrowed money from the owners of

---

membership was, however, tightly controlled and in practice there were only two options for obtaining a card. One was to pay a registered worker to claim he was a relative and the second was to replace one of his own relatives. Neither option was available to Ricardo.

[5] The _Caja Popular_ had been established in 1961 and was a local, cooperatively-run savings bank and credit institution.

the workshop where he had worked in the late 1950s. The money was being repaid in monthly instalments.

4.4 Roberto Gálvez' *taller*

Roberto was a compadre of Ricardo Rodriguez and had married Alicia, the only girl in the Rodriguez family (see Figure 5). Roberto started his working life as a projectionist in one of the local cinemas. He worked as an employee in a huarache workshop and in 1969 started work with Ricardo Rodriguez. In 1982 he set up his own workshop with money saved from that employment. In 1985 Roberto was making between three and five dozen pairs of shoes between January and October, which he sold to clients visiting Sahuayo. His weekly income varied between 12,000 (£30) and 15,000 pesos (37.50) each week. The workshop was unmechanized, except for a small electric banco de acabar and Roberto worked with his eldest sons (aged 10 and five years), who were paid 100 pesos each day for the hours they worked after school. Roberto used cheaper materials (foam rubber, carnaza) to produce a variety of commercial, popular models for sale in tourist resorts. He also kept a stock of chiquitos, children's sandals which were cheap to make and easy to sell.

When Roberto left the Rodriguez workshop Ricardo had given him a plot of land in a colonia to the south of the town. With the help of a loan from the Caja Popular Roberto was eventually able to build a house on the plot, which he rented to another family. Roberto and his family rented their two-roomed house from a comadre who lived in Guadalajara. The family had chosen to stay within the barrio de los huaracheros, which was known to visiting traders, but the house they had built was a useful asset and a kind of insurance against possible future hardship.

A complex of relationships, those of marriage, compadrazgo and work, firmly linked Roberto to the Rodriguez family and they had provided him with employment and land, which were the take-off for the taller. Once his own workshop had been established, Roberto had also developed an amicable relationship with the peletero Enrique Luna, a relationship which was consolidated through compadrazgo at the baptism

of their fourth child. The wealthy Lunas were thus morally bound, not only to assure a supply of credit and materials, but also to play a part in providing for the well-being and education of one of the Gãlvez children. Roberto also worked periodically as a maquilero for the unmarried sisters of Enrique Luna (see Figure 6).

Figure 5: Kin and affines in the Rodriguez and Gãlvez families

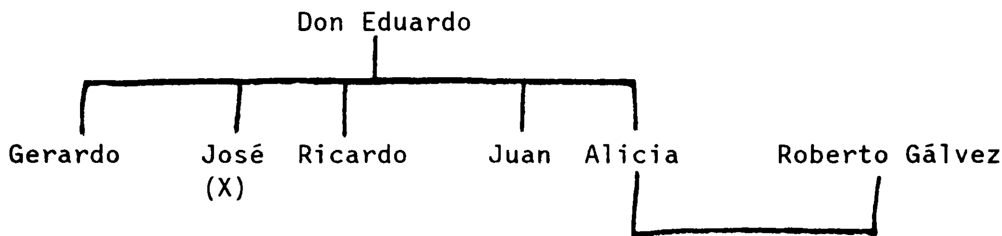
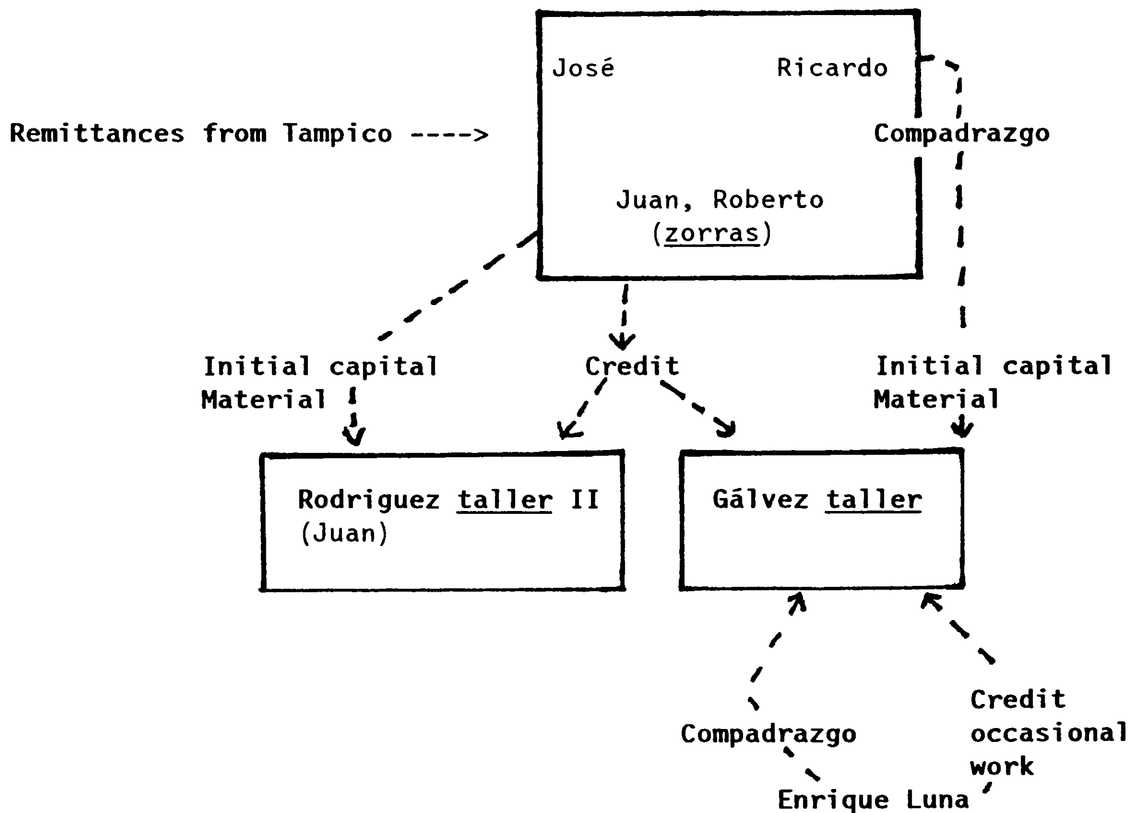


Figure 6: Forms of assistance in the Rodriguez and Gãlvez workshops



4.5 Migrant labour in the Carranza workshop

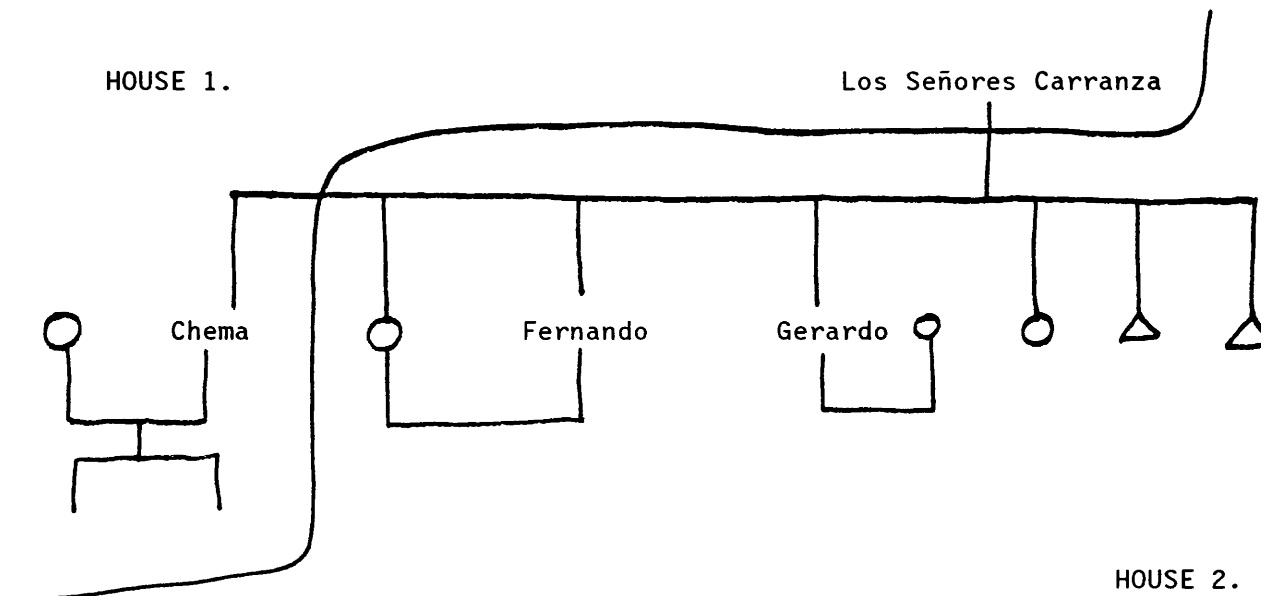
As we have seen, a significant proportion of huaracheros sought to retain a degree of independence - at least insofar as this entailed production of complete pairs of sandals and direct sales to traders or retailers. The Rodriguez and Gãlvez, for example, sought to avoid maquilaje and other forms of dependence through the mobilization of horizontal bonds of kinship, marriage or compadrazgo. Their workshops were stable but not dynamic. Such huaracheros expected to increase levels of production through the incorporation of their children's labour into the taller but were unlikely to choose alternative strategies, such as investment in machinery, to improve the functioning of the workshop. The more dynamic Carranza household provided a striking contrast, despite the fact that the same pattern of inter-generational cooperation, kin and affinal relationships, was evident. Nor were significant relations of patronage the key to explaining this dynamism, although the Carranza workshop was a maquila. Rather, it was income derived - albeit from an unusual source - from migration to the United States, which differentiated this workshop from its more static counterparts.

The Carranzas occupied two adjacent houses, both of which had been left to Doña Carranza's mother by a rich invalid she had nursed. In one lived the elderly Señores Carranza, their son Chema, his wife and their three children. In the other lived Fernando, married to Chema's sister and their two children; Chema's brother Gerardo and his wife, plus two brothers and a sister, all unmarried (see Figure 7). The workshop was located in house 2. Thus, in addition to Chema and Fernando there were three economically active adult men, all contributing their labour and incomes to the household and its workshop. Only Chema and Fernando had children to support, so the ratio of working members to dependents was unusually high.[6]

---

[6] The average number of children per household, across all those interviewed, was 6.4, of whom approximately 45 per cent were not active, or provided a small contribution to total household income. It was

Figure 7: The Carranzas - household and kinship structure



Señor Carranza was a peasant who sowed maize on borrowed plots on non-irrigated land. His eldest son, Chema, had begun work as a zorra in a larger workshop. In 1967, aged 14, he formed his own workshop with money borrowed from a neighbour who traded shoes. Jesús Trujillo supplied materials and credit. The workshop was successful and in 1971 he was employing as many as 15 labourers and was earning between 3,000 and 5,000 pesos a week. In 1971 he went broke "por andar en el vicio" (for drinking and gambling), the workshop closed down and Chema turned to casual labouring in various factories. After 1974 he re-established the household workshop and applied for work as a maquilero. In 1985 Chema was working with his three brothers producing between 150 and 300 pairs of guajes weekly for two enterprises. He had established friendly

---

common practice for married couples to set up a separate household soon after marriage, and although parents and in-laws frequently provided assistance of one sort of another, the direct pooling of resources which occurred in the Carranza household was atypical in this regard.

relations with most of the factory owners and producers in the more successful household enterprises and was known as a reliable and efficient worker.

But the fortunes of the Carranza workshop had been most fundamentally affected by the marriage of Chema's sister to Fernando. Fernando's father had been shoemaker and Fernando had become skilled as a machine operator and maintenance man. He had worked in the two biggest huarache factories in Sahuayo before going to the United States in 1977, aged 17. In California Fernando injured his back while working in a meat factory and - after an 18-month legal dispute - received compensation from his employers. He spent the bulk of this money while still in the States, but on his return in 1983 received a further sum of several thousand dollars, which he used to buy a sewing machine. In 1985 Enrique was sewing an average of 1,000 pairs of sandals a week and charging 30 pesos per pair. In a single week he was therefore able to earn as much as 30,000 pesos (£75), although the work was seasonal and the machine itself was expensive to maintain.

In 1985 Chema and Fernando had obtained a loan from a local bank and were about to expand into production of women's huaraches. Shoe-producing relatives of Fernando had introduced him to clients in Mexico City and had guaranteed the bank loan. Fernando's familial connections with wealthier _zapateros_ (shoemakers), his fortuitous migrant history and his skill as a machine operator and maintenance man had created a wider range of productive options for the Carranza workshop. This was particularly true when these advantages were combined with the material resources (space and labour) the Carranza family had at their disposal.

This case was unusual, in the sense that the expansion of productive activities in the Carranza household did not arise from any planned or systematic investment of, for example, income derived from migrant labour, or from the extension of relations of patronage. What it did illustrate, was that a full understanding of differentiation between workshops required a nuanced and multi-factoral analysis of the labour histories of the individual _huaracheros_, and the varying ways in which

relationships and resources could be exploited to take advantage of unexpected economic opportunity.

4.6 Patronage and independent production

The linkages between the Rodriguez and Gãlvez workshops, and within the Carranza household, were primarily kin-based and affinal. They had developed between families and across generations but they nevertheless existed among people whose social status was equal, although in the case of Roberto Gãlvez, a vertical bond of compadrazgo with the peletero Enrique Luna also played an important role in the life of his taller. Other producers were more directly dependent on employers or entrepreneurs, whether for credit, materials or sales outlets, in order to maintain the cycle of production. The content of these relationships was highly variable and the most successful, from the perspective of the individual huarachero, were those where the contractual or purely economic linkage had been reinforced by social alliances of one kind or another and where a degree of social closeness had been established between patron and client. In fact, the degree of social closeness between producers and their patrons was perhaps the single most important determinant of the economic prospects of the taller; and the fruit of successful patronage was the possibility for producers to escape the cycle of credit and debt and increase their own productive autonomy. Huaracheros unable to establish social closeness with their patrons were more chronically entrapped in the credit-debt nexus. For such producers, credit arrangements were less generous and less flexible. Those working as maquileros were less likely to receive regular work than the more favoured producers, and the terms of the maquilaje arrangement tended to be weighted more heavily in favour of the entrepreneur.

Social closeness between producers and entrepreneurs - whether peleteros or factory producers - was principally and formally established through the relation of compadrazgo. As we shall see, however, the existence of compadrazgo alone was by no means sufficient

to explain the workings of these vertical alliances in practice. It was indeed common for huaracheros to invite their peletero or factory owner to become godfather to their children and many - perhaps the majority - of producers had established some such relationship. Clearly, the underlying intention of such invitations was always the creation of a bond of moral obligation, with all the connotations of extensive patronage and financial support such bonds could, ideally, entail. While the existence of a socially-defined bond of patronage did usually result in some favours being granted to producers, the extent of such favours was highly variable. As the following data reveal, for some producers the alliance had permitted the accumulation of some wealth and, for example, the acquisition of property. Most frequently, bonds of compadrazgo between entrepreneurs and producers worked to assure a more or less continuous supply of credit, materials or orders for sandals. At the opposite end of the scale were those who had been unable to establish an effective relationship of patronage. The economic status of workshops owned by this group of producers was much more fragile and impermanent and the huaracheros did not benefit from "special" arrangements or favours, such as offers of extra work and so on. It was among these producers that resentment and hostility toward the peleteros was most intensely felt and most clearly expressed.

The following case studies show more concretely how differences in the nature of the patron-client relationships between peleteros and producers affected the fortunes of the huaracheros.

4.7 The Gudiños' workshops

The Gudiño brothers, who occupied spacious and fully modernized two-story houses in the same street, provided perhaps the clearest illustration of how bonds of patronage could permit a household taller to increase profits. Despite an appearance of low-level production in small workshops, both Alfonso and Santiago were actually producing some 250 pairs of sandals each per week. Both owned their own vehicles and obviously enjoyed a higher standard of living than many of their fellow

producers.

The father of Alfonso and Santiago had been a pespuntador, sewing shoes for the peletero, Jesús Trujillo. The two sons had been brought up in the various talleres in which their father had worked. Both began working at the age of seven or eight (in 1959 to 1960) for a local huarachero and regional trader, where they remained for about five years. Alfonso attended a local seminary for a time but left when the fees became too great a financial burden for the family. Between 1960 and 1970 both boys worked in a prosperous household enterprise, owned by a man named Trino Flores. Alfonso eventually took over the administration of the enterprise.

In 1970 Alfonso and Santiago set up their own workshop together and worked as maquileros for their former employer. An uncle also lent them some money to buy basic materials. Soon after this, the brothers began producing for Jesús Trujillo, and in 1974 they became economically independent of one another, although they still shared premises. Santiago continued to work for Don Jesús for a time, but recalled that this proved unprofitable. After a short period Santiago became independent of Don Jesús and secured his own clients, travelling by bus to Mexico City and Morelia to sell his huaraches. He also started making decorated and varnished women's sandals, and by 1977, when he married, he was able to buy some machinery. In 1980 Don Jesús sold him the house he was still occupying in 1985.

By 1985 Santiago was producing 280 pairs of women's sandals per week. He had two permanent employees and two zorras working for him. His net weekly income varied between a minimum of 25,000 pesos (£62.50) and a maximum of 50,000 (£125) or even 60,000 pesos (£150). Alfonso was in a similar situation although his circumstances were more complex owing to the fact that he had become secretary of an emergent huarache-producing cooperative (see Chapter 8). Alfonso had also brought his house from Don Jesús. The workshops were fully separated from the households and neither their wives nor their children were employed producing the sandals.

The good fortunes of the Gudiño brothers were not immediately explicable. On the face of it productive organization and clientele were identical to those of many other huaracheros who nevertheless remained unable to accumulate similar amounts of capital or to expand production. Closer inspection revealed, however, that both brothers had established close and long-term bonds with their former employer and with Jesús Trujillo. Trino Flores, compadre, to Santiago, had provided substantial initial credit and materials for the two brothers to establish their own workshops in 1970. More important, was the relationship between the Gudiños and Jesús Trujillo, who had been a compadre of their father. Through this latter connection, Alfonso and Santiago had benefited from a continuous stream of credit, and the provision of other facilities such as interest-free loans, enabling both to buy and renovate their houses and to expand the activities of their workshops. The strength and enduring nature of the Gudiños' bond with Don Jesús was attributed by the brothers to the fact that as a young man Don Jesús had fallen in love with their mother and as a consequence had felt sentimentally attached to her children.

4.8 The Garza family workshops

Señor Garza had worked in one of the tanneries belonging to the peletero Jesús Trujillo and the two had become compadres at the baptism of his son, Javier Garza. Javier was born in 1959 and he began working as a zorra alongside his father at the age of six. From 1964 he worked in various huarache-producing enterprises until, in 1970, Jesús Trujillo provided materials and lasts for Señor Garza to form a household workshop. Javier returned to work with his father and they repaid the initial "loan" from Don Jesús by producing huarache directly for him. The cost of the advanced materials was deducted from the price paid by Don Jesús per pair of sandals. Javier's father continued to work in the tannery and by late 1972 the Garzas were able to buy a plot of land. By the end of 1973 they had managed to build a house there.

At the beginning of 1975 Javier got married and left home after a dispute with his father. He was thus suddenly forced to seek new sources of credit and assistance. A former employer provided lasts and his brother-in-law (also a huarache producer) put him in touch with a local trader. The trader in turn arranged for Javier to obtain credit with the peletero, Enrique Luna, and lent him money to buy more lasts. After several months Jesús Trujillo again invited Javier to work as a maquilero and, because the terms were favourable and included the provision of lasts, he agreed to do so. Javier continued to work for Don Jesús until mid-April 1976, when the supply of work ceased and he went to the United States. He stayed for four months before returning to his workshop, but was unable to sell his huaraches and he turned to trading in pork, buying from merchants in La Piedad.

Don Jesús again offered work to Javier in 1981 and in 1985 Javier produced between 120 and 200 pairs of complete sandals each week as a maquilero for Don Jesús, earning a net profit of 15,000 pesos (£37.50). He employed one labourer who was paid a wage of 7,000 pesos (£17.50) and they were helped by three zorras. Javier was able to return to workshop production in part because Don Jesús had continued to fulfil the obligations associated with his role as godfather, and this also affected the terms of the maquilaje. Unlike many such producers, Javier produced complete pairs of sandals in his workshop, rather than the guajes or uppers, which was less profitable. But the relationship between Don Jesús and Javier also exemplified the asymmetrical nature of such alliance, and the outer limits of the dependency which existed between them. In 1976 when the supply of orders had temporarily ceased, Don Jesús had simply withdrawn from the maquilaje arrangement. Javier had retained the lasts originally lent to him by Don Jesús and in 1981, when the demand for huarache again expanded, Javier found himself virtually obliged to respond to Don Jesús' offer of work.

4.9 Carlos Silva's workshop

Not all workshop producers were in a position to develop profitable alliances with their patrons; and those who were not embedded in a network of huarache-producing families were heavily dependent on rather fragile bonds with peleteros or factory owners for work and materials. Carlos Silva, for example, had worked periodically as a maquilero for the Trujillo family for many years, but had never managed to establish himself as an independent producer for his own clients. Carlos was born in 1949 and was 36 at the time of the fieldwork. He, his wife and their seven children (all boys) lived in the paternal house along with two sisters and Pablo, a nephew of his wife. Carlos' father had been a peasant who sowed maize on rented plots and his mother was an encorrelladora.

Carlos began working with his brother at the age of ten, as a zorra. The two worked in various exporting workshops during the late 1950s. In 1971 Carlos began working for Paco, eldest son of peletero Jesús Trujillo. He began as an employee in the workshop, then set up as a maquilero with help from Paco. After Paco was killed in 1978, Carlos had turned to working for Don Jesús.[7] The provision of work had remained steady and in 1985 Carlos was regularly producing between 120 and 180 pairs of guajes each week for Jesús Trujillo. His net weekly income was relatively low - between 10,000 and 12,000 pesos (£25 and £30) each week.

Pablo had also been involved with Paco Trujillo. He had begun as a zorra in 1957 and worked in various workshops. In 1974 he entered a workshop set up by Paco in a nearby village. Five men, including Pablo, worked eight or nine hours daily there. They lived in the workshop, returning home only at weekends. After Paco's death, Carlos went to work for his widow, Guadalupe Andrade. He then travelled for a couple of

---

[7] Paco Trujillo was murdered under mysterious circumstances in 1978 and the workshop passed into the hands of his widow, Guadalupe Andrade. The history of this workshop is particularly illuminating and it is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

years with Paco's ex-associate before returning to work with Paco's younger brother in the village workshop. At the beginning of 1985, the village workshop closed down and Pablo began making children's sandals on his own account. He worked in a brother-in-law's house where there was a sewing workshop and produced between 20 and 30 pairs of sandals each week. Pablo worked for himself but contributed to the upkeep of Carlos Silva's household.

The fact that both Carlos and Pablo had been involved with the Trujillo family over a period of years was a factor binding Carlos to Don Jesús and ensuring a regular supply of work. It was also the case that many of those who had worked for Paco had either continued working for Guadalupe after his death, or had been taken on by Don Jesús. Carlos emphasized in particular that he could rely upon Don Jesús to provide regular work. Nevertheless, the boundaries of the maquilaje were contractually rather than socially defined and over the years it had borne little fruit. Despite seven years of workshop production Carlos was obliged to enlist the labour of all household members to maintain levels of production and consumption. All Carlos' children worked for him after returning from school each day, and his sisters received a low rate - or no pay - for weaving the huarache.

4.10 Lionel Ortíz

The workshop of Lionel Ortíz illustrated how difficult it was for huaracheros to survive if they were unable, or unwilling, to forge effective social alliances with potential patrons. Lionel's father had been a brick-maker and in 1964, when Lionel was 12 years old years, he had already been working for six years as a zorra. Until 1972, when he entered the Lunas' exporting workshop, he worked in various neighbouring household workshops. He recounted that he stopped working for the Lunas when the seguro (social security) arrived demanding registration of all employees and payment of contributions. The Lunas deducted the contributions from the workers' wages and Lionel was unable to survive. He described his situation at this time in the following terms:

> "I left because there was a problem, we did not earn enough to eat, or one of my children fell ill. They treated us like floorcloths there, if we asked for a loan sometimes they didn't want to give it..."

After moving from workshop to workshop Lionel eventually managed to set up a maquila. However, the workshop did not survive and in 1977 he entered a factory as a wage labourer.

By 1985 Lionel had re-established his maquila and was producing between 180 and 200 pairs of guajes for closed, "luxury" huaraches for the same factory. His weekly earnings were between 8,000 and 10,000 pesos (£20 and £25), among the lowest earnings of all maquileros. He was occasionally able to produce an additional 25 and 50 pairs of uppers for his former employer which might provide a further income of 6,000 pesos (£15). Three of Lionel's sons (aged 13, 11 and 10) worked for their father as zorras, fixing rubber tyre soles onto children's sandals. The children worked five or six-hour days and Lionel stressed the importance of their labour to the total income-generating capacity of the household. Another son (aged 12) worked as a zorra in a neighbouring workshop. The children earned between 500 and 1,500 pesos (£1.25 and £3.75) each per week.

The Ortíz family were in a particularly difficult position economically because Lionel had moved from one taller to another without forming any solid attachments. Nor was Lionel embedded within a network of relatives or affines. His wife had come from a peasant family with no money to spare and he was supporting his widowed mother-in-law. As an ordinary employee the bond between Lionel and his former employers was tenuous, and consequently the maquilaje relationship offered no possibilities for profit. Indeed, maquileros in Lionel's position frequently had a kind of peripheral status and as such they bore the brunt of market fluctuation or other factors affecting the parent enterprise. Thus Lionel observed that he was frequently not paid for his guajes for two weeks or a month at a time; orders were erratic and unreliable; and that rates of pay forced him to reduce the price of

weaving, making it difficult for him to find reliable and quick workers.

4.11 Conclusion

Despite seasonal variation and competitive markets, demand for huaraches was sufficiently constant and sizeable enough to sustain the _talleres_. Nevertheless, the stability of small workshops was in large part attributable to the activities of the _peleteros_. A steady investment of capital, through the supply of credit to small producers, ensured a more or less continuous flow of production. Access to capital for the establishment of the workshop, and to credit for the weekly purchase of materials, was crucial. Credit was negotiated via the mobilization of a range of social relationships, which defined rights and obligations between the participants. Some of these were horizontal and reciprocal, others vertical and asymmetrical (relations of patron-clientage). Both kinds of alliance could be expressed in terms of kinship, affinal bonds or relations of _compadrazgo_. Bonds of "friendship" were also a basis for forms of cooperation or patronage. The stronger the bond - however defined - the greater the possibility of substantial assistance.

The mobilization of credit through horizontal social networks was obviously linked to the ability of such networks to provide assistance. Huarache-producing families with a history of involvement within the industry were in a good position to help kinsmen or _compadres_ begin production, through the transmission of skills and through the provision of materials and equipment. Moreover, because huarache-producing households generated some profit, established producers were able to financially assist younger members of their families or former employees. In this respect huarache production was self-sustaining.

However, the majority of producers sought to create additional alliances with entrepreneurs, who could be prevailed upon to provide more substantial assistance. _Huaracheros_ who had managed to establish a personalized relation of patronage with _peleteros_ or factory owners enjoyed access to favourable credit arrangements and other benefits. These allowed them to expand productive activities, for example through

the purchase of machinery. If successful, such producers were able to realize increased profits and to buy property, as had occurred with the Gudiño brothers. Producers in this position were in the minority however. As we shall see in the following chapter, any significant productive expansion had, almost without exception, occurred via the investment of capital generated outside the huarache sector.

Most huaracheros were unable to establish such close bonds of patronage and relied upon a range of social relationships to sustain productive operations. For example, Roberto Gãlvez learned to produce huarache in the Rodriguez taller, and his economic relationship to this family was later cemented through his marriage to Juan's sister. But quite separately Roberto had established a bond of compadrazgo with his peletero, Enrique Luna, and this defined a set of moral responsibilities which were manifest through expensive gifts and the availability of loans. The compadrazgo relationship also influenced contractual arrangements, providing work for Roberto with the Luna family when he needed it. At the same time, this relationship was limited, formal and hierarchical and was unlikely to result in any significant increase in the level of production or profits in Roberto's workshop. At the extreme end of this continuum maquileros like Lionel Ortíz were unable to generate regular incomes or profits because the maquilaje arrangements between them and the entrepreneurs were defined in purely economic terms and was not reinforced by any bond of patronage or moral obligation.

Inevitably, the structure of patron-clientage created tensions and these were manifest in various ways. Resentment and envidia (covetous envy) toward those favoured by the peleteros were commonly expressed and discussed. Most frequently, however, complaints were levelled directly against the peleteros themselves. The grievances focused upon the extent of the economic power they wielded, and the injustice of a system whereby these local caciques[8] were able to indulge in the arbitrary

---

[8] In Sahuayo the term was frequently used to describe economically powerful figures who effectively controlled the livelihoods of working people.

exercise of power, so that for no intelligible reason some prospered and others were unable to do so. At the extreme end of the scale, some producers found the asymmetrical character of the relationship simply intolerable. Thus, for example, Lionel Ortíz remarked that at one point he had stopped producing as a _maquilero_ even when the terms had been quite favourable:

> "[the owner] gave me better opportunities to work at home, he lent me money, passed me materials and bought the huarache from me, but if you stop working with them they take everything back. Then we had a disagreement because of the tensions between us, its a question of money and problems between entrepreneurs and workers..."

In general, however, such intensity of feeling was not characteristic of _huaracheros_. While it was true that one or two individuals controlled the only available source of credit, and this in itself did not exactly encourage producers to voice their complaints too loudly, it was also the case that the _peleteros_ had capitalized the huarache sector and they were in effect responsible for its continued functioning. Thus resentment was usually mixed with genuine recognition of the positive role played by the entrepreneurs. It must also be said that differentiation between _huaracheros_ was not acute. With the exception of a few, differences in levels of consumption and standard of living were not readily discernible, and this was true among those who had enjoyed the benefits of patronage. This also acted to decrease antagonism toward the entrepreneurs.

The problems faced by producers were not entirely attributed to the _peleteros_. The government was commonly cited as the real source of producers' difficulties. While _huaracheros_ were suspicious of government, and deeply opposed to direct intervention in their productive activities, many also believed that it was the government's responsibility to protect the working population from precisely the kinds of economic injustices they were forced to endure at the hands of the _peleteros_. Thus many argued that the economic problems they

experienced should have been resolved through the implementation of controls over the prices of raw materials.

The structure of the patron-client bond was not systematically related to existing social and cultural relationships although it did draw upon them. Vertical alliances were actively sought and created within the context of the entrepreneur-producer relationship. Within this process, kinship (whether fictive or real), compadrazgo, friendship and other kinds of sentimental attachment were mobilized and put into the service of these alliances. The extent to which these bonds were recognized and acted upon by the patron ultimately depended upon his personal whim. In this respect then, social differentiation arising from variation in the content of patron-client relationships was arbitrarily derived and the outcome of subjective decisions by entrepreneurs. At the same time the fact that entrepreneurs were able exercise economic power in this unpredictable way was a consequence of the political and social context within which the huarache sector was embedded.

The absence of alternative forms of credit pushed the producers into relations of dependency with entrepreneurs - and they had little option but to establish the terms of those relations as favourably as possible. Moreover, whatever the reality, the very variability of the patron-client bond held the promise of individual success, even if in practice this was realized in only a few cases. In contrast, collective organization in the past (the sombrero union) had resulted in the impoverishment of the factory workers, had intensified antagonisms between entrepreneurs and workers in that sector, and had in general mitigated against the development of more collective forms of organization. All these elements reinforced producers' determination to hang on to the means of production and served to promote strategies of economic individualism. Put simply, under such conditions, producers had judged that credit dependency was the only viable option. The arbitrary actions of local caciques were defined as an inevitable, although not particularly pleasant, aspect of the overall structure of economic and political power in the locality.

5. Profit and tradition in household enterprise

The huarache sector in Sahuayo included between 30 or 50 workshops, defined as household enterprises. Superficially, the household enterprise was simply a family taller which had prospered and expanded and it resembled the household workshop in several important respects. The household enterprises were located in the same part of the town as the family workshops and, like them, were housed in sheds built piecemeal onto the roofs of the houses, or in the corral (the backyard). Many of these properties had been in the hands of the same families for years and had originally consisted of small dwellings built on enclosed plots of land where domestic animals were raised. As families had turned to manufacture the organization of domestic space had been transformed accordingly, and it had been possible to accommodate quite extensive workshops therein. Some of this workshop space was improvised and basic, but often considerable renovation and modernization work had been carried out. The interiors of these houses greatly contrasted with the exteriors which usually remained untouched apart from an infrequently applied coat of paint. Even when the houses had been completely rebuilt inside, their aspect was not ostentatious so that from the outside it was not easy to distinguish between much poorer households and those housing the richer owners of household enterprises.[1]

The owners of household enterprises were directly involved with productive activity, buying materials and working alongside their employees. Most of these workshops relied heavily on family labour and to some extent labour drawn from outside the household was incorporated into the family domain. Those working in the taller or in the household ate with the family or in the workshop itself. Daughters took on weaving

---

[1] Although it was obvious that some workshops were more prosperous than others, the category "enterprise" is an analytical one, devised for the purposes of this discussion. A distinction between workshop and enterprise was not reflected in everyday language in Sahuayo, and all workshops located in households were referred to as talleres. For ease of expression I have used the terms workshop or taller and household enterprise interchangeably in this chapter.

in between school and domestic chores, zorras were in and out of the workshop and so on. Thus, in terms of everyday life there was little separation between household and enterprise.

What most immediately distinguished the household enterprise from the family workshop was that it had increased levels of production, with each taller producing between 300 and 1,000 pairs of sandals each week. Household enterprises had also acquired machinery, adding at the very least cosedoras and suajeadoras to the basic stock of hand tools and bancos de acabar.[2] Higher levels of technology resulted to some extent in a more complex division of labour with individuals performing specialized tasks. Unlike the family workshops, the enterprise employed at least two workers, although in many cases wage labour was drawn from within the family itself. In one such enterprise 13 people were employed within the taller, although the average was around six to eight. Owners had also assumed a more organizational role, organizing the buying and distribution of materials among workers and overseeing production in general. In addition, approximately 25 per cent of household enterprises subcontracted work to maquilas. Finally, the majority had acquired small lorries or vans to drive the huaraches to market places at the end of each week.

This chapter examines the workings of the household enterprise and looks in detail at the history and contemporary organization of four such talleres. It looks at the reasons why, despite profitability and an increase in production, these enterprises have retained many of the features commonly associated with "informal sector" production - the incorporation of family labour, lack of contracts, the piece rate and so on. I shall show that, in the first instance, the enterprises had expanded because capital generated outside the taller itself had been

---

[2] Cosedoras were industrial sewing machines used to attach the upper part of the sandal to the sole. Suajeadoras were machines which cut pieces of leather using a metal template; they could be manual or electrically operated. The banco de acabar was an electrically-driven machine for smoothing and rounding the edges of the soles of the sandals.

invested into them. Once the conversion to enterprise had been achieved, profitability was sustained by low wage levels and the availability of a "reserve army" - a pool of labour (including family labour), which could be drawn upon or dispensed with according to the dictates of the market. Following this, I will argue that in the face of a particular combination of material and political constraints, the owners of these talleres opted to accumulate wealth and increase consumption, rather than accumulate capital and expand production.

5.1 From workshop to enterprise

The owners of these talleres explained that they had begun as simple huaracheros and, by dint of hard work, had acquired lasts and machinery and had slowly attained a position of relative comfort and security. While this was partially true, the prosperity of a handful of producers among the many others who worked equally hard but somehow failed to progress, was not explicable in such straightforward terms. As we saw in the last chapter, credit dependency, combined with periodic debt arising from unstable markets, did not on the whole result in sustained profits over long periods of time. Most huaracheros were unable to envisage more than sporadic bursts of increased production. Rather, this somewhat idealized representation of how progress had been achieved was an important aspect of the social construction of these talleres, and one of the ways in which economic development was concealed from public scrutiny.

What differentiated the household enterprise from the household workshop was that all had received an economic boost, through the investment of capital derived from outside the workshop. Such capital had frequently been acquired through wage labour migration to the United States. But it had also derived from agricultural or other economic activity; or through investment by huarache manufacturers in Guadalajara. Once the enterprise had established itself, other possibilities emerged, although it was not entirely coincidental that those who achieved growth were also frequently those who had a long

history of huarache production and access to well-established forms of patronage. At all events, credit in the peleterías was more easily negotiated by the owners of household enterprises. Success brought its own rewards in other spheres too and, unlike the huaracheros in family workshops, this group was in a position to secure some credit from banks and state credit institutions.

5.2 US migrant labour in the household enterprise

Don Juan's workshop was established in 1965; by 1985 the enterprise was producing 600 to 700 pairs of huarache each week during the hot months of February to June and 300 to 400 pairs during the colder months. The workshop was not fully mechanized but a van had been bought in order to deliver the finished huaraches to their clients. The members of his household spanned three generations and the family dwelling in Sahuayo was occupied by Don Juan, his wife and four of their children, plus six children from the marriage of Juan's daughter, María, with Armando. All members of the household were involved in the life of the taller, which was organized and run by Armando's eldest son. Armando, his wife and four more children lived in Santa Ana, California.

Don Juan was born in 1910 and was 75 years old at the time of the fieldwork. He had a long and complex labour history and had turned to huarache production relatively late in life.[3] As a well-known figure in the barrio, it was to be expected that Don Jesús would offer credit and materials for the establishment of the workshop, but it was not until

---

[3] Don Juan's father, like many Sahuayans at the turn of the century, had been an arriero, a muleteer travelling between Colima and Manzanillo on the Pacific coast and León in Central Mexico. He had traded sweets, sugar, alcohol and lard. As a boy, Don Juan had worked building the main road between Jiquilpan and Manzanillo, as a peon del campo (an agricultural labourer) and as a zorra de huarache. From 1928, he was for many years an outworker for La Guadalupana sombrero factory. When the factory closed in 1959, Don Pablo was paid an indemnización, which he used to set up as a travelling salesman trading adornos, the leather thongs which decorate the classic sombrero. In approximately 1965, when Don Pablo began making huaraches, he had been a reasonably successful trader for 30 years.

1970, when Don Juan's son-in-law provided capital earned in the United States, that the workshop began to prosper. Armando had gone to the United States in 1950, aged 24. In the states he and a fellow Sahuayan befriended a lawyer, who provided vital assistance, obtaining papers for both migrants to become union members and find well paid jobs in the construction industry. Some years later Armando bought an enclosed plot of land on the outskirts of Sahuayo. During the 1960s Don Juan raised pigs on the plot for a number of years. And after 1965 profits from sales of the pigs were invested in the taller. In 1970 Armando sent his first investment of 25,000 pesos to Juan and the family bought a sewing machine. Since then, Armando had injected money regularly into the taller.

Another enterprise owner, Don Santiago, had arisen from humble roots. His father had been a peasant and as a young man Santiago worked as a güainero (running errands on horseback). His eldest son had begun producing huarache in the family household in 1972 and as his five other sons grew up, they in turn also became huaracheros working in the family enterprise. In 1985 the taller was producing 600 to 700 pairs of heavy-duty campesino huarache each week, for sale in regional and local markets. Santiago had been to the United States 14 times between 1955 and 1985, originally as a bracero[4] and later por el monte, as an illegal immigrant. Santiago had worked as an agricultural labourer harvesting tomatoes, apples and grapes in the region around Sacramento, California. With the money earned there, he invested in the family workshop and also bought the family dwelling, plus a plot of land in a nearby street. More important perhaps, the acquisition of property meant that in 1982 he was able to secure a loan from the Nacional Financiera (NAFINSA), in order to buy two sewing machines and a suajeadora for the

---

[4] The bracero program was established in 1942 via an agreement between the US and Mexican governments. It permitted Mexican migrant labourers to enter the United States legally in order to help with the harvesting of crops and to work on the railways. The program was ended in 1964.

taller.[5] Production expanded and by 1985 the workshop had also acquired two vans.

In these workshops, capital derived from wage labour in the United States had served as the basis for a take-off into more profitable levels of production, basically through the acquisition of machinery. The possibility of increased profits afforded by possession of machinery was by no means negligible. Possession of a sewing machine, for example probably saved as much as ten pesos in the production of each pair of sandals in 1985.

5.3 Capital investment

In other talleres capital investment emanated from other sources or from a range of sources which, in combination, allowed the enterprise to increase levels of production. We have seen how the vast majority of family workshops came into existence via the peleteros who provided credit and materials. On a larger scale, some household enterprises had emerged after shoe and sandal manufacturers from Guadalajara invested capital in the creation of maquilas in Sahuayo. The availability of abundant cheap labour, ready skilled in huarache production, made this an attractive proposition for shoe companies wishing to add woven sandals to their range of products. The companies provided capital for mechanization and possibly the construction of a workshop building. Although the content of the arrangements varied, it was generally the case for the Sahuayan producers to repay the loan through the production of huarache for the company. Eventually the Sahuayan taller might or might not become independent of its Guadalajaran parent company. In such cases the company sent representatives to Sahuayo to establish contact with potential maquileros. It was no coincidence that such contact was without exception made with successful local producers already in possession of some capital. Most important, these producers were

---

[5] The suajeadora alone was valued at approximately one million pesos.

embedded in broader social networks which linked them to merchants and others in Guadalajara. The shoe companies effectively sought and identified successful producers in Sahuayo when expanding into huarache production. Thus even at this broader regional level the process of differentiation between producers was a function of the kinds of social and personalized alliances individual producers had forged with entrepreneurs.

Don Gregorio's enterprise was born of this type of arrangement, although initially, he had used money earned in the United States to build up his workshop.[6] Don Gregorio Gonzãlez was born to a peasant family in Cojumatlán. Significantly, he had married Josefina, daughter of an important huarachero of the 1950s, for whom he had worked as a travelling salesman. Through Josefina's father, Don Gregorio had become acquainted with important merchants and with owners of shoe-producing and retailing companies in Guadalajara. The family moved to Sahuayo on 1961 and started their own workshop. Don Gregorio went periodically to the United States to work and used savings from this to invest at home. The early development of the taller was also attributable to Gregorio's knowledge of the trade routes along the Pacific coast and the northern border. Eventually Don Gregorio managed to buy a house with a large plot of land in the heart of the barrio de los huaracheros. In 1974 Don Gregorio was contracted by a Guadalajaran company exporting huarache to the USA. The taller became a maquila producing guajes and the sandals were finished in Guadalajara. Credit was advanced for the purchase of machinery and the workshop equipped itself with a number of sewing machines and so on.[7] This proved profitable and the company subsequently decided to establish a factory in Sahuayo. Credit was

---

[6] Don Gregorio's son recalled: "every now and then he went off to the United States; he was an agricultural worker there. He saved money each time and invested it in the workshop".

[7] Don Gregorio's son recounted that: "Through them we bought sewing machines, a "sticher", a compressor and a suajeadora. They gave us good prices, with favourable terms for repayment. We repaid the credit over a long time and through the production we carried out for them".

advanced to the González, who organized construction of a capacious workshop. The family was to repay the invested money through production of huarache for the company.

The González enterprise was initially financed by income derived from Don Gregorio's work in the United States. Economic assistance and provision of materials was also forthcoming from Don Gregorio's wife's huarache-producing family. Because the taller was initially relatively successful it had attracted substantial capital investment from a Guadalajaran company at the height of the etapa de los gringos[8] and the workshop had expanded and mechanized during this period.

5.4 The problem of debt

Despite increased profits, the household enterprise continued to rely on a supply of credit in order to sustain the productive cycle. Problems of debt were perhaps less immediately burdensome than in the family workshop, but the household enterprise was vulnerable to periodic debt crises and it was not uncommon for these talleres to lose machinery, or even property, and to revert to household production or maquilaje until the loss could be recouped. Production in many of the household enterprises was bound to the fortunes of retail traders in tourist resorts and along the US-Mexican border. In practice, fluctuating markets led retailers to post-date cheques, or fail to honour them, pushing producers into a relation of debt with the peleteros, with all its implications in terms of interest payments. Notwithstanding these difficulties, many such enterprises had proved remarkably resilient and adept at responding to turbulent market conditions. The credit system developed by the peleteros was highly significant in providing a means of resolving the debt crises which periodically afflicted the owners of household enterprises. Moreover, while the resolution of debt created further dependencies upon the peleteros, the fact that the peleteros

[8] Literally, the "phase of the gringos", this referred to the 1970s, during which much of the huarache sector in Sahuayo was producing to satisfy a seemingly infinite demand for export to the United States.

systematically provided the means for debt resolution created certain expectations among producers, and meant they could take certain kinds of risks in the knowledge that at the end of the day they could fall back on the likes of Enrique Luna and Jesús Trujillo.

5.5 Debt in Don Gregorio's workshop

Turning again to Don Gregorio's workshop, it can be seen that despite almost insurmountable odds, a huarache-producing enterprise could recover from massive debt and return to former levels of profitability. As we have seen, the workshop had been born from relatively humble beginnings, mobilized capital from a range of sources, effectively deployed family labour (there were ten children, seven of whom worked for the enterprise) and grown dramatically during the 1970s. In 1977 after the Mexican peso was devalued demand for huaraches decreased and the Guadalajara company withdrew the credit it had made available for the construction of the workshop building.[9] The half-constructed building was abandoned for a time, although the family continued to make shoes for the company until 1980. After this maquilaje production for the company was supplemented by independent production. Eventually the González themselves completed the construction with profits realized from the taller. During 1977 and 1978 the family also took bank loans and bought a range of machinery, including two sewing machines, and a suajeadora.

In 1979 disaster struck. Don Gregorio was arrested and imprisoned after befriending a woman who had stolen a large quantity of lasts while on a sales trip. The incident proved costly as lawyers' fees and other expenses were required to secure the release of Don Gregorio. Then, in 1979 a client from Puerto Rico stole 2,000 pairs of shoes, leaving the family with debts of more than 600,000 pesos to the bank. The house was mortgaged along with another family property, workers were laid off and

---

[9] The peso was devalued from 12.50 to 22.00 pesos to the US dollar in 1977.

the workshop reverted to household production, unable to pay off the money owed to the bank.

Between 1979 and 1984 the debt grew enormously, the rate of interest was running at a monthly level of between eight and nine per cent, and there was a further devaluation of the peso in 1982. In mid-1984, peletero Enrique Luna offered to repay the bank debt. The González agreed, and by mid-1985 two and a half million pesos were still owed to him. The workshop was therefore bound to Enrique Luna, who also held documents for the two properties they owned. Production had been maintained, however, largely because the González had established contact with Japanese clients who placed regular orders. Thus rates of production remained fairly constant at around 780 pairs of sandals each week. The family was considering a further bank loan in order to repay Don Enrique and become independent once more.

5.6 Patronage and familiarity - the labour force

The household enterprise was operating under conditions of economic insecurity but wealth accumulation was occurring and the talleres had proved resilient in the face of severe debt problems. The emergence of these enterprises was in the first instance the result of the investment of capital derived from outside the workshop. Continued survival was in part attributable to the actions of the peleteros, who sustained talleres which ran into difficulty through the provision of credit and through the maquilaje arrangement. But of equal importance to the fortunes of the workshops was the way in which labour was organized and renumerated. Once the workshop had acquired sufficient capital resources to mechanize and employ workers, profitability was maintained through low wages and the flexible deployment of a largely unprotected labour force.

In a broader context of mercantile control and lack of state protection for the working population, employers had been able maintain wages at a level which would not threaten the profitability of the enterprise and the remuneration of workers in the household enterprise

comprised between 12 and 20 per cent of total weekly expenditure. As we have seen huaracheros in family workshops had striven to maintain their autonomy as producers - their control over the means of production. At the same time, the need for continued access to credit mitigated against explicitly political confrontation between producers and suppliers, and the terms of the credit-debt nexus were negotiated on the terrain of patronage and moral obligation.

This structure of patronage worked at the level of the household enterprise too, where low wages arose logically from a social construction of the workshop as a humble family affair, which precluded the establishment of contractual relations between owners and workers. Incorporation of labour into the family domain created the basis for moral obligations and forms of patron-clientage in which the labourer "helped" the family and was rewarded by "favours" in the form of work and other resources. Through these extra-economic relationships more generalized forms of assistance were negotiated, such as loans for the purchase of land or property. These relationships were asymmetrical and to some extent the debt relation bound the labourer temporarily to the taller; but in practice patronage was the only viable route towards productive autonomy and the formation of an independent workshop. Thus workers accepted exploitative conditions in part because they did not wish to be reduced to wage labourers, formally bound to indifferent employers. A vulnerable labour force sought not to "protect itself" - doubtless a fruitless exercise - but to establish productive autonomy.

The rate of production in all the talleres was subject to demand and labour was contracted and dispensed with on this basis alone. Market-sensitive productive activity within the enterprise was reflected in considerable variation in both length of the working day and labour intensity. The working week began on Tuesday and ran through to Friday, with half days on Saturdays and Mondays.[10] As in the household

---

[10] The local saying "el lunes ni los pollos ponen, ni los huaracheros comen", (on Mondays the hens don't lay and huaracheros don't eat) reflected on the customary acceptance of Monday as a day of rest

workshop, pressure to complete orders began to build up from the middle of the week and it was common practice for workers employed in the talleres to work late into Saturday night so as to have the shoes ready to be driven out of Sahuayo in the early hours of Sunday morning. On the other hand, in the event of slackening demand, production was decreased, labour laid off and wages within the family withheld. In 80 per cent of household enterprises adult family labour made up a significant proportion of the labour force. It was common practice for working family members to pay for their own clothes and shoes and in this way the household enterprise recouped some of the expense of wages. Under conditions of economic difficulty production was reduced to a minimum and performed by unpaid family members.

Adult male labourers, whether family members or not, were contracted to the enterprise through a variety of arrangements. Sometimes they worked a maquila, producing complete pairs of sandals and being paid por tarea, by batch of a dozen pairs of huaraches. The majority worked on the premises, were supplied with materials, organized and paid their own weavers and earned a net weekly income of 5,000 pesos (£12.50) at a minimum. Some of the more well-established enterprises also contracted work out to maquilas. Within the taller those who performed specialized tasks involving the operation of machinery frequently worked for a fixed weekly wage, of around 8,000 pesos (£20); or worked a destajo (piece rate) which generated more or less the same income. For men, the advantage of working in these enterprises over employment in the factories, where fixed wages were the norm, was that payment a maquila or a destajo contained the potential for much higher incomes when there were lots of orders for huarache. At any rate, factory wages varied between 5,500 (£13.75) and 7,000 pesos (£17), so that the lowest incomes in household enterprises were on a par with wage levels in the factories. Consequently the men who worked in the huarache sector almost universally preferred work in the talleres, eschewing

---

for huaracheros.

factory work whenever possible.[11]

The situation for women and child workers was somewhat different. Women or girls (over 14 years) were usually employed to work within the workshops as adornadoras, decorating the finished huarache. They were paid a fixed wage of around 2,500 (£6.25) to 3,000 (£7.50) pesos each week (just over half the minimum wage). Female labourers were more directly incorporated into the household. They frequently ate with the family twice a day and helped out with a variety of household chores such as washing and ironing. The obligations of patronage were less substantial with regard to female employees and were expressed in the form of presents of clothes or jewellery, or petty loans.

The assimilation of women's labour into the household acted to decommoditize their labour, which was defined as an extension of the natural female role. The local conception of machismo, which included a notion of men as sexually rampant and unconstrained, and the need for women to protect themselves from las críticas (public criticism) and vergüenza or shame, also had a bearing on women's access to the labour market. The female labourer in the household enterprise was under the protection of and subject to the authority of a respectable family. This served to prevent gossip or tales of immorality which periodically afflicted factory workers.[12] Nevertheless, for at least two reasons all the girls in workshops said they would have preferred factory employment. In the first place factory wages were much higher than workshop wages (between 3,500 and 6,000 pesos a week) and this was frequently true even if girls' labour in the talleres had been assigned a monetary value and paid accordingly. Second, and as important, factory

---

[11] The organization of labour within the factories is discussed in full in Chapter 6.

[12] The cultural construction of sexuality, and its significance in terms of the wider political and economic framework within which the huarache industry was embedded, are discussed in further detail in the concluding chapter of this thesis. For detailed discussion of female labour in various regions of the occidente, see Arias 1985, Calleja 1984, Escobar 1986, Wilson 1990.

labour allowed girls to function more autonomously and to control and dispose of their own income as they wished.

Zorras were employed in 90 per cent of the household enterprises to fetch and carry, run errands and carry out simple tasks. A 12 to 14-year-old boy was paid between 1,500 (£3.75) and 2,500 pesos (£6.75) each week. The boys generally attended school in the mornings and worked in the workshops from 3pm. Zorras belonging to the family were unpaid or received raya (pocket money). Child workers handed over their earnings to their mothers, although the latter usually returned a small sum to them. The zorra arrangement thus generated useful income for the households supplying the labour. As the length of the working day was flexible, zorras were sometimes required to work very long hours, perhaps from 3pm to 9 or 10pm on some days. Zorras were drawn from poor households which had been obliged to draw upon the labour of young family members in order to maintain consumption levels.[13]

The social organization of the labour force within the household enterprise, and the ways in which this acted to sustain profitability can be illustrated in further detail by reference to the organization of Guadalupe's workshop:

5.7 Guadalupe's *taller*

Guadalupe was 30 years old. Her father owned a spare parts business on the main road into Sahuayo and her family was comfortably off although not elite. In 1971 Guadalupe married Paco, son of peletero Jesús Trujillo. At this time Paco was working for his father, taking van-loads of huaraches for sale in market-places in Veracruz, Puebla and Mexico City. On the return journeys the van was filled with pineapple, watermelon and other fruits for sale in markets throughout the Ciénega region. In 1973 Paco established a huarache workshop with help from his father, and after about one year he began in addition to trade in

[13] Household organization and family labour are discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

staples such as maize, beans and sugar. After losing much of his savings in social pursuits, he again borrowed money from Don Jesús to buy livestock and began trading meat and leather. The taller had continued in the meantime and Paco began producing for Don Jesús as a maquilero. During the cold season they closed the workshop and Paco made two journeys a month to sell meat and leather.

In 1978 Guadalupe's husband was murdered for motives which have never been established. He had been involved in a business partnership with a family renowned for contraband trading (including drugs) and after his death Guadalupe was unable to retrieve any of the money they had saved. With encouragement from Don Jesús, Guadalupe decided to take over the workshop and began producing guajes for her father-in-law. The affinal connection was a key element in assuring a regular and plentiful supply of work and by dint of producing between 360 and 700 pairs of guajes each week, Guadalupe was able to save money and build up a stock of materials. In 1979 when demand slumped, she was able to continue producing sandals for sale in national markets.

Between 1979 and 1982 Guadalupe worked for herself, producing huaraches for women for sale in national markets, and this was her most successful period. Mexican retailers sought low prices above all, and were less concerned about the quality of the materials used to produce the sandals. Thus, cheaper leather, plastic heels, foam rubber soles were easily substituted for the expensive leather, crepe and other materials demanded by the US exporter. Profits from sales were used to buy machinery, a house and a plot of land. After the devaluation in 1982, Guadalupe returned to making shoes for Don Jesús and had continued to do so until 1985. Guadalupe said that profits had been as much as 100 per cent higher when she had produced sandals independently of her father-in-law, but that ultimately she had been forced back into a position of dependency by market conditions. Large stocks of women's sandals, stored all over Guadalupe's house and workshop, testified to the unpredictability of national markets.

Notwithstanding this relation of dependency, Guadalupe continued

to realize profit and this was attributable to two factors. First, her affinal connection to Don Jesús secured access to loans. These were either direct from her father-in-law and repaid by deductions from shoes produced; or from banks, where Don Jesús acted as guarantor. Guadalupe had acquired three properties since 1978 (which she let), as well as an electric suajeadora. The moral codes of Sahuayo meant that it would have been virtually unthinkable for Don Jesús to have disregarded the plight of his daughter-in-law. The maquilaje arrangement was thus fully reinforced and it ensured that Guadalupe's enterprise was unlikely to collapse in the face of adverse conditions.

There were seven workers in Guadalupe's taller. Two huaracheros received 1,000 pesos per dozen pairs of sandals. The huaracheros produced an average of 12 dozen pairs each week, earning 12,000 pesos (£30), from which 6,480 pesos (£16.20) were deducted for weaving.[14] Their net earnings were 5,520 pesos (£13.80). A third employee operated the sewing machine and was paid a destajo at ten pesos per pair. Guadalupe took in shoes from other workshops and in 1985 was sewing 700 pairs of huarache in addition to the 300 produced in her own taller. She charged 25 pesos per pair, paid the sewer 10,000 pesos (£25), used 5,000 pesos for needles, thread and so on and retained 10,000 pesos, a net profit of 40 per cent. Nevertheless, the 10,000 pesos paid to the sewing machine operator represented a reasonable wage in terms of the local economy.

In contrast, a fourth employee earned much less. He operated the suajeadora and received two pesos for each pair of suajes. Guadalupe cut a total of two or three thousand suajes each week, and charged four pesos per pair. The employee earned an average of 4,000 pesos (£10) and Guadalupe retained a further 4,000 pesos - a 100 per cent profit. Guadalupe had only just bought her suajeadora and had not yet

---

[14] Calculated as 144 pairs woven at a rate of 45 pesos per pair. In practice the majority of huaracheros working a maquila in this way subcontracted weaving to their own wives and in this way perhaps one or two thousand pesos were drawn back into their household budget.

established this aspect of her operations. As time went on it was expected that more producers would make use of this service and the wage of the operator would correspondingly increase. The logic of the piece rate determined the wage level, which was exceedingly low in this instance. At the same time the limited supply of work meant that after 4pm the machine operator was free to supplement his earnings by working elsewhere. The remaining three employees were girls, two working as adornadoras, the third "helping out" with domestic chores each morning. The girls were paid 2,500 pesos (£6.25) and 1,500 pesos (£3.75) respectively and were fully absorbed into the daily life of the household, ate with the family and were invited to some social occasions (weddings, birthday parties etc).

All the male workers Guadalupe's taller had established clientelistic bonds with her and these were expressed in a number of ways. Guadalupe was godmother to their children, as were her parents, and the compadrazgo defined an obligation to provide expensive gifts and clothes, as well as help with medical expenses. She had also made substantial loans to the two huaracheros and both had bought plots of land on which to build their own houses. With respect to the girls, assistance was less substantial. Guadalupe helped with dressmaking and haircuts, and gave motherly advice about boyfriends. She also loaned small amounts of money so the girls could buy clothes.

5.8 Conclusion

The household enterprise had increased production through the introduction of machinery and the employment of a small labour force, but in many respects it retained its household character and organization. Enterprises receiving larger pedidos (orders), simply drew more maquilas into their sphere of operations and after a certain point expansion ceased altogether. The household enterprise was economically fragile in a number of respects. The state afforded no protection from market fluctuation - either by regulating the price of materials such as leather, or by cushioning the workshops against the vicissitudes of the

market. For these reasons periodic debt was more or less inevitable. Unstable market conditions also limited the possibilities for the owners of these talleres to obtain credit with banks or other institutions, and crucially, the peleteros provided a substantive solution to the debt problem - the provision of work itself through the maquilaje arrangement. Thus, although debts were resolved through the peleteros, this mechanism acted to reinforce and sustain credit dependency. Ultimately the household enterprise relied, like the workshops, on the maintenance of effective credit relationships with the peleteros.

Nevertheless, the household enterprises had increased profits and this was evident in significantly higher levels of consumption in these households. The owners of these talleres were prosperous in the sense that they had acquired property, transport (sometimes more than one vehicle), and paid for their children to be educated at private schools to secondary and, occasionally, to university level. They had renovated and expanded the interiors of their dwellings, and had acquired refrigerators, stereos and other electrical appliances. They were well dressed (the social value of clothing in Sahuayo was high and an important indicator of status).[15] Profits were also expended on public social ceremony, lavish baptisms, birthday parties for quinceañeras (15-year-old girls), weddings and so on.

Ayata (1986), in a study of small enterprise in Turkey, separates petty commodity producers from small capitalist enterprise and argues for a distinction between wealth and capital accumulation. He notes that the owners of small capitalist enterprises may represent a new stratum of the bourgeoisie, which is nevertheless, more likely to use profits for personal consumption than for expanding the scale of production. This group is "wealthy" rather than "capitalist", has a much higher standard of living than the urban poor, and holds views that are largely hostile to workers and trade unions. In a different vein, Smith (1986), has suggested that the key characteristic of informal sector production

---

[15] It was not unusual for unmarried girls in these families to own as many as 25 or 30 smart dresses and half as many pairs of shoes.

(a form of petty commodity production associated with capitalist production), is that it operates outside the sphere of state and fiscal control, and that neither owners nor employees are protected by, or recipients of state benefits.[16] According to this definition household workshops and enterprises in Sahuayo would fall into the same analytic category.

Ayata's characterization of the small capitalist enterprise as a sub-class of the bourgeoisie, while at least partly accurate, fails to capture the fact that in Sahuayo the owners of such enterprise stood in a variety of contradictory relations with other groups and institutions, and that their actions reflected this ambiguity. The owners of household enterprise in Sahuayo did not perceive themselves as hostile to the urban poor as suggested by Ayata. Rather they defined themselves as _de los pobres_ (of the poor). Such families did not move out of the _barrio_ or build ostentatious dwellings. They attended the same churches, participated in the same recreational activities (for example sports at the nearby seminary), contributed to the same street fairs, religious festivals and so on. Socially they were integrated into the life of the _barrio_, used the same shops and gossiped about the same people. They were involved in the same practices of courtship and marriage and politically they expressed many of the same views and opinions. At the same time, the Sahuayan material suggested that to define lack of state protection as the distinguishing feature of informal sector production, as Smith has done, would obscure an important division between workshops producing huarache for the reproduction of the household; and those which opted to increase consumption rather than production because they _wished_ to remain outside the sphere of fiscal or welfare obligations. Capital or infrastructural investment (in the construction of workshop buildings for example) would have been tantamount to a public

---

[16] Smith has argued that informal sector production survives because it can maintain low prices in market despotic (that is, perfectly competitive) conditions. Capitalist production on the other hand is protected by state policies.

declaration of economic success and a bait for the attentions of fiscal and other state bodies.

A fully contextualized analysis of the household enterprise revealed that it could not be understood by reference to economic factors alone - such as for example the presence or absence of wage labour - or defined simply in terms of its relationship to the formal and institutional apparatus of the state. Rather, a complexity of political, social and cultural factors had to be taken into account and these went far beyond the confines of the household enterprise and indeed the huarache sector itself. The root causes of economic conditions within the sector lay in a much broader totality of political and social conditions, which defined the parameters of economic possibility and influenced the owners' rationale for their own economic practices. In this regard it was particularly illuminating to examine the relationship between actual economic behaviour and the ways in which owners represented their activities in the public domain. Thus, for example, the preference for increasing consumption rather than reinvesting in production had to be understood by reference to the political history of manufacture in the region - as a response to a memory of state intervention in local industry and as a way of avoiding state appropriation of a relatively autonomous realm of productive activity.

The economic organization of the enterprises could not be properly understood without a full analysis of the cultural practices and idioms through which this organization was enacted. Characterization of these workshops might more usefully take as its point of departure the social construction of the enterprise as a humble family affair. The owners of these talleres defined their relationship to the state, to entrepreneurs and to their own labour force in terms of a continually reinvented traditionalism, which was at once a strategic defence against state encroachment, and a reiteration of humility in the face of the asymmetries of the credit-debt nexus - an assurance that the role of the peleteros would remain unchallenged. With respect to the workers it

employed, reference to a romanticized social order - at the heart of which lay the family - acted to uphold relations of authority within the household and to enjoin the labour of family members. The traditionalist framework also played down the socio-economic or class differences between the households requiring labour and those that supplied it. At the same time, relations between workers and their employers were enacted within the idioms of patronage, allowing workers to negotiate various kinds of economic assistance and support and improve the terms of their employment.

6. Images of modernity - the huarache factories

From 1970 the development of export and tourist markets hungry for Mexican artesanías provided the impetus for the emergence of five huarache-producing "factories" (the local term) in Sahuayo. Almost without exception the factories were established by entrepreneurs with no history of involvement in the huarache sector but with considerable amounts of disposable capital. They sought to take advantage of emerging opportunities for foreign currency exchange under conditions of national recession.[1] The factories were distinct from the talleres in a number of important respects: They produced more than 1,000 pairs of huarache each week, almost entirely for export markets; they were housed in buildings specifically constructed for that purpose and were separate from family and household; factory owners played a managerial role and were not involved in productive work; and the factories boasted a substantial stock of machinery. All the factories had credit facilities in the banks and were able to obtain periodic loans for capital equipment from state bodies such as the Nacional Financiera (NAFINSA), and the Fomento de la industria pequeña y mediana (Fund for small and medium industries).

Equally important, in terms of distinguishing the factories from the talleres, was the way in which workers were organized and renumerated. Within the factory building there was a complex division of labour with workers performing specialized tasks. Hours of work were in principle fixed and stable and employees were entitled to paid holidays at Christmas. In some factories strict discipline was imposed on the workers, with fines levied for infringements. Finally, the factories were registered with the Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público (the Ministry of Finance), and at least some employees were registered with the Instituto Mexicano de Seguro Social (IMSS), the Mexican department of social security.

---

[1] In 1985 inflation was running at 67 per cent and there was a daily devaluation of 13 centavos against the American dollar.

Thus, superficially at least, the factory owners appeared to have set in motion a process of transformation toward a different kind of productive organization. Closer inspection, however, revealed that this image of incipient transformation was deceptive. In practice factory production in Sahuayo was underpinned by the same mercantilist logic which imbued all entrepreneurial activity in the locality. The objectives of factory owners remained identical to those engaged in the commercial sphere - namely, money profits calculated in terms of least cost. The rhythm of production was responsive to the ebb and flow of markets which were inherently unstable and the lion's share of the productive process continued to be carried out by subcontracted labour. The subcontracted sector remained invisible to social security and fiscal institutions and could be deployed or dispensed with according to the dictates of market forces. Even within the factory walls, the principle of regular rhythms of production and fixed working hours was in practice regularly contradicted, with workers periodically dismissed, or alternatively, required to work long hours.

The factory owners had seized upon opportunities which had arisen conjuncturally, through state promotion of demand for _artesanías_, alongside the emergence of tourist and export markets. But it was the specific character of this conjuncture which made it especially well-suited to the application of Sahuayan entrepreneurship; and which by the same token made it unlikely that a more fundamental transformation of production relations would occur. Despite entrepreneurial efforts to create images of the huarache as elegant and sophisticated, the new markets primarily sought a commodity which embodied exotic images of rural "Mexicanness". And successful trading depended upon the huarache expressing these qualities through its artisanal, hand-made character. At the same time these markets did impose certain standards of uniformity and finish. The Sahuayan combination, whereby artisanal labour-intensive aspects of production were carried out domestically or in _maquilas_; and a lesser, but critical portion of production was carried out within the regulated domain of the factory, ensured that

these dual and somewhat contradictory demands could be met.

Nevertheless, the need for factory labour which was regulated and subject to supervision had implications for the social and economic structure of the urban labour market. As we have seen in previous chapters, organized labour had achieved little in terms of the establishment of rights and entitlements in a context of entrenched mercantile control. The asymmetries of the relationship between entrepreneurs and workers were more effectively challenged on ethical rather than political grounds, through the creation of vertical bonds of moral obligation. In practice, the social and moral aspects of relations between workers and employers continued to structure the organization of factory labour, although as we shall see, factory owners were able to concede less and demand more of their employees, than was possible elsewhere within the huarache sector. For these reasons, working men were not particularly willing to perform factory labour and they tended to see factory production as a temporary measure, at the very best as a step on the road to independent production in a household _taller_.

The new entrepreneurs had therefore turned increasingly to a hitherto untapped source of labour - that of single girls - to meet their demands for workers. Because women in Sahuayo were subject to a set of restrictive moral constraints, their incorporation into the factory labour force seemed to hold the potential for important changes in their social and economic status. In the event such changes seemed unlikely to occur. The girls who were drawn into factory labour tended to come from more comfortably off households and to have reached secondary level in school. Their economic activities were fully embedded within broader cultural conceptions of what was appropriate for women to do, and factory work was socially acceptable insofar as it was something fitted in between school and marriage.

6.1 The birth of the factories

As we saw in the previous chapter, those who had managed to expand their _talleres_ were those who had been able to boost production through the

injection of capital derived from outside the huarache sector. This was also true of the factories, which had virtually without exception been established by entrepreneurs with no previous history of huarache production, but who were in possession of disposable capital. A hefty initial investment was used to construct a factory building and to mechanize parts of the productive process at the inception of the project (see Tables 4 and 5). The factories were thus differentiated, _at the point of entry_ into the huarache sector, from the myriad workshops and household enterprises in the town. This differential was subsequently reinforced because capital investment secured access to credit and international markets, access which was in large part denied to the majority of the household producers.

Table 4: Capital investment and level of production in the factories

Factory	Yr. of formation	Source initial capital	Weekly output	Market Export (per cent)	Market Other (per cent)
El Aguila	1971	Family shoe wholesale co.	2000	100	-
Cabrera	1978	Sale of land	1000	80	20
Herrera	1983	Credit, banks, _peleterías_	1500	20	80
La D'Caleta	1974	Branch of Guad. company	750	80	20
Santiago	1984	Family, local bourgeoisie	1200	80	20

The Martínez brothers, owners of the biggest factory, _El Aguila_, had originally been involved in sombrero production. Two of the brothers had been _mayordomos_ (foremen) in _La Guadalupana_ sombrero factory. When the factory closed in 1959 the foremen, who had remained politically loyal to the owners, were paid an _indemnización_ and the Martínez had

turned to wholesale trade in shoes, a business which prospered and expanded throughout the 1960s. From 1960 the Martínez had periodically filled orders for huarache requested by visiting clients. This was a sideline affair, however, and consisted largely in subcontracting to household workshops and taking a commission on the finished product. In the meantime the shoe business expanded considerably. In 1971 a US client promised regular orders for huarache, and the shoe business provided an initial investment of 200,000 pesos (around £11,000) for the construction of a large modern building to house the <u>taller</u>.

Table 5: Mechanization in the factories

	El Aguila	Cabrera	Herrera	La D'Caleta	Santiago
Suajeadora	6	3	3	-	4
Cosedora	7	6	3	2	3
Pespuntadora (sewing)	8	6	4	-	4
Rebajadora (thins leather hides)	2	1	1	-	1
Dobleadora (folds leather strips)	3	2	2	1	2
Banco de acabar (finishes edges)		4	4	3	4
Troqueladora (dying)	-	1	1	-	1
Pegadora (gluing)	1	1	2	-	1
Conveyer belt	1	1	-	1	-
Transport	3	2	4	1	2

Note: El Aguila possessed an office computer. *La D'Caleta* also worked with industrial stapling machinery which was not used by the other factories.

The Cabrera family provides another example. The Cabreras had been <u>rancheros</u>, raising livestock on private holdings in the upland region to the northwest of Sahuayo. After the death of Señor Cabrera in 1961 they moved to Sahuayo, sold their land and bought a house with a large plot in the heart of the <u>barrio de los huaracheros</u>. The family decided to

move into huarache production in 1979 and, using their property and land as collateral, obtained 500,000 pesos (£15,000) from NAFINSA. By 1981 the workshop was partially mechanized, with sewing and gluing machinery, and electrically-operated bancos de acabar. In 1984 a loan of a further ten million pesos (£40,000) was obtained for the acquisition of three suajeadoras.

The most recently established factory, the Huarachería Santiago, had been established in 1984 by a son of one of the oldest and most prosperous families of the Sahuayan commercial bourgeoisie. Using capital provided by his family, the owner formed a company along with a group of local businessmen and women (also members of the local bourgeoisie), who together provided an initial investment of two million pesos (approximately £11,000) for the conversion of a suitable building and the acquisition of machinery.

The two other factories were perhaps less easily distinguishable from the household enterprises in terms of the way in which initial capital had been secured. As we shall see, however, each possessed structural characteristics which did differentiate them from household enterprise, albeit in differing ways in each case. The first, La D'Caleta, was in effect a huarache-producing annex of a much larger shoe-producing and wholesaling company in Guadalajara. The factory had been established in Sahuayo in 1974 when possibilities for huarache export arose. Sewing, gluing and cutting machines had been introduced immediately and in 1985 La D'Caleta was producing 750 pairs of huarache each week, a figure usually associated with the scale of production in the household enterprise. In these two respects La D'Caleta thus bore a superficial resemblance to Don Gregorio's workshop, also created through capital drawn from a company in Guadalajara. However, La D'Caleta had not created a taller through a maquilaje arrangement with an existing producer, and it had continued to be directly responsible for the organization of production. As we shall see, this had direct implications for the ways in which labour was recruited and employed.

In marked contrast the Herrera taller had emerged from humble

roots. Don Herrera had begun to produce huarache as early as 1965, and by 1983 the workshop was producing 600 pairs of sandals each week under a maquilaje agreement with Jesús Trujillo. In an astonishing display of growth, output more than doubled during the following two years and by early 1985 the Herrera factory was producing 1500 pairs each week and functioning as an autonomous unit. The Herreras also owned four vehicles, more than any other factory in the survey. The factory was administrated and managed by Don Herrera's second eldest son, Davíd.[2] He attributed their success to maniobras financieras (financial manoeuvres) and the possibilities for playing various banking and credit sources against one another. He also noted that the peleterías offered less rigorous credit arrangements than the banks. He emphasized that modern management and planning techniques had been instrumental in the development of the Herrera taller and, like many Sahuayan industrialists, was inclined to attribute entrepreneurial success to the modernizing attitudes of its protagonists. Such explanations were not entirely satisfactory, and these points will be discussed in further detail below.

6.2 Factory production: the tip of an iceberg

The form of expansion within the huarache sector was fundamentally affected by the nature of its markets. The demand was for sandals which were sold as authentic artefacts of Mexican culture, but which nevertheless met certain standards of quality and finish. While factory organization resolved problems of quality control, the much more extensive, and labour-intensive work of preparing the lasts and weaving continued to be carried out outside the factory walls, in maquilas

---

[2] Davíd had been to university and qualified as a medical doctor in 1983, but turned to huarache production because "the medical profession is saturated and I always wanted to run a well organized business". In so doing David was following the example of numerous others. Indeed there was a pattern of professionally-qualified people turning to small business as a more profitable way of making a living throughout the region during the 1980s.

subcontracted by the factory owners and by female labourers working at home. Indeed factory labour represented only 12 to 22 per cent of the labour involved in the productive process (see Table 6).

The way in which production in El Aguila was organized provides a clear illustration of the relative importance of factory production within what was in fact an extensive and geographically dispersed productive operation. The largest of the factories, El Aguila produced 2,000 pairs of huarache each week and 80 per cent of these were exported to the USA, Japan, Germany, South Africa and China, through 350 clients. El Aguila was the most fully mechanized and efficiently organized enterprise in the town and it had the most factory-like appearance. The layout of the factory floor had been designed and planned by a business consultant specially employed for that purpose, and an upper floor boasted capacious offices.

Inside the factory productive operations were divided into three departments: the cutting and sewing of the cortes (pieces of leather); el acabado, the finishing process; and the organization and distribution of materials. Each department was supervised by a "department head". The total number of employees within the factory building was 60, and this figure included two drivers, 12 office employees and a supervisor of maquileros. There were 20 men and 40 women. Up to a point men and women were evenly distributed among the various departments and both operated all the machinery except for the heavy cosedoras. Women were never employed as drivers.

However, a further 250 people - more than four times as many as worked in the factory building - were employed by the owners of El Aguila and worked in maquilas or at home. There were 11 maquilas, with each maquilero employing an average of five people and in addition around 200 weavers. These figures varied according to season and volume of demand for production. In practice a core of subcontracted maquileros were assured of more or less continuous work and the labours of a more peripheral group of maquileros were regularly drawn upon, although this latter group faced periodic unemployment. The ratio of

factory workers to outworkers was the same for all the factories, with one important exception (see Table 6), the Huarachería Santiago, which had begun to employ weavers to work on the factory floor. The implications of this radical departure from customary practice will be discussed in further detail below.

Table 6: The labour force - factory, maquila and domestic labour

	Factory Blg.	Maquila		Weavers (at home)	Factory labour as % of total*
		Men	Women (weavers)		
El Aguila	60	40	20	150-200	22.2
Cabrera	28	10-15	-	130-150	16.6
Herrera	18	2	-	130-150	12.0
La D'Caleta	13	-	-	90	12.6
Santiago	70**	3	30	40	48.9

* Where numbers varied, the lowest figure was used in the calculation.
** Includes 40 weavers

The subcontracted sector of the labour force remained unregistered and invisible to the department of social security, although as we have seen, the way in which individual maquileros were treated by the factory owners depended upon the creation of a more personal, non-contractual relationship with the owners. At best, the maquilaje arrangement did entail various forms of assistance as well as being a step on the road to independent production. For example, Enrique, a maquilero who had worked continuously for El Aguila for some years observed that:

> "At Christmas they give us a weeks's pay. There's no social security but I'm not interested. If anyone in my family is ill they pay for it. There's a savings scheme too. I save 600 pesos every two weeks, and the factory increases it by 50 per cent".

6.3 The conditions of factory labour

Despite an appearance of formal organization, based on the principles of modern management, conditions of labour inside the factory walls revealed much about the underlying dynamic of huarache production and in a sense reflected the ambiguities implicit in factory production within a mercantilist world. The vicissitudes of the market dictated the rhythms and flows of production and for the workers this meant periodic lay-offs and irregular hours on occasion (see Table 7). To an extent, labour was recruited on the basis of extra-economic alliances and such alliances also served to privilege workers on the factory floor creating differentials between them. At the same time, under normal conditions factory workers were expected to work long hours with few breaks, and were subjected to strict discipline, with fines levied for infringements. Overall, only a small proportion of factory workers were registered with IMSS and those who were frequently family members (see Table 8).

In theory the factories worked fixed regular hours and all employees were entitled to the same benefits and perks; but in practice this was rarely if ever the case (see Tables 7 and 8).[3] Workers in La D'Caleta were alone in affirming that their hours of work were regular, their wages always paid and the benefits specified in their contracts did not fail to materialize.[4] All the workers in the factory were paid a fixed weekly wage of 6,020 pesos (£15), except for the driver, who was paid 7,132 pesos (£17). The workers were all registered with IMSS, entitled to paid holidays, a Christmas bonus and were included in a profit-sharing scheme. Hours of work were 7am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Production was continuous and there were no temporary redundancies.

---

[3] Fixed working hours in the factories were known popularly as la hora inglesa - the English timetable.

[4] In La D'Caleta the cutting out process (preparation of cortes and plantas,) was carried out in Guadalajara. There were no maquileros for La D'Caleta in Sahuayo and only 90 weavers working at home.

In contrast, girls working in *El Aguila* reported, for example, that after the beginning of 1985 a declining demand had resulted in their being temporarily dismissed, without pay, for one or two days at a time. At the same time, the two days leave which were granted over the Easter period in the same year were deducted from their holiday pay. A general sense of resentment toward factory owners was heightened in *El Aguila* by the imposition of strict rules. Employers were for example fined 100 pesos for talking during working hours. The tensions contained within the relationship between workers and owners were also apparent in the owners' strategy for the suppression of any conflict which may have arisen on the factory floor. In a clear demonstration of who held the reins of power within the workplace, two workers - known as *comodínes* - were held permanently on the payroll. In the event of trouble, the alleged ringleaders would have been instantly dismissed and the *comodínes* put to work in their place.

Table 7: Hours of work in the factories

Factory	Hours	Days
El Aguila	7.30-12pm/12.30-5pm	Monday-Friday periodic lay-offs
Cabrera	8-1pm/2-5.50 or 6pm occasional Saturdays late evenings	Monday-Friday, regular lay-offs
Herrera	8-2pm/3-6 or 7pm occasional Saturdays	Monday-Friday regular lay-offs periodic use of unpaid family labour
La D'Caleta	7-12pm/12.30-5pm	Monday-Friday
Santiago	7-12pm/12.30-5pm late evenings	Monday-Friday periodic lay-offs

In the Cabrera factory workers were also frequently laid off but were also expected to work on Saturday mornings, or late into the evenings toward the end of the week.[5] Conditions of work were also linked to the relationship between the Cabrera family and individual workers, with some workers more likely to receive a Christmas bonus or loans from the owners. Manuel, for example, worked for a fixed wage of 6,000 pesos (£15) cutting plantas (insoles). He did receive a bonus at Christmas and Easter but the sum paid was dependent upon the fortunes of the enterprise at the moment of payment. Another worker, Paco, enjoyed much better conditions. Brother-in-law to one of the Cabreras - himself a maquilero for the factory - Paco had joined the labour force and had worked in the factory as an acabador (finisher), cosedor (sewing machine operator) and so on. In 1985 he worked as a driver, earning around 7,500 pesos (£18.75) each week. But Paco also worked as a maquilero for the Cabreras between 6pm and 8pm every day, producing 80 pairs of guajes. These extra labours generated a further 5,000 pesos (£12.50), more than half his factory wage. Paco's affinal relationship with the Cabreras had served as the basis for better conditions of work and pay; and he fully expected to move into full-time production as a maquilero for the Cabreras in the near future.

Recruitment into the labour force of La D'Caleta was a much less personalized affair and workers were not drawn in any systematic way from households who had established historic or other socially defined links with the factory owners (which was impossible in this case), or with the huarache sector in the town. For example one worker, Ricardo, had no connection with or experience of the huarache or shoe-producing industries. Ricardo lived on the other side of town with his widowed mother and brother who was a loader in the market. Ricardo had got a job

---

[5] The Cabreras distributed their huarache among 30 traders in the tourist resorts of Acapulco, Cancún and along the Pacific coast, markets which were notoriously unstable. In the face of slack markets traders frequently paid with postdated cheques and as a result the Cabreras regularly experienced cash flow problems.

in La D'Caleta after hearing from a friend (who did not work in the factory) that work was available. But this apparently more equitable system of recruitment brought its own considerable disadvantages. While conditions of work within the factory were excellent by local standards (see below), men working in the more formal environment of La D'Caleta were unable to benefit from the *maquilaje* arrangement and could expect little in the way of progress toward independent production. Perception of the inadequacy of this system was perhaps indicated by the fact that none of the employees in La D'Caleta was over 25 years old.

Table 8: Prestaciones (benefits)

Factory	Social security	Other benefits
El Aguila	Registration with IMSS all factory labour	2 weeks' pay at Christmas Loan scheme and medical treatment for *maquileros*
Cabrera	1 or 2 family members registered with IMSS	Occasional bonus at Christmas, some loans
Herrera	1 or 2 family members registered with IMSS	None
La D'Caleta	Registration with IMSS all factory labour	2 weeks' pay at Christmas + profit share scheme
Santiago	IMSS all labour	Bonus at Christmas

But it was within the Herrera factory that a portrayal of the enterprise as dynamic and modern was most clearly contradicted by the way labour was recruited and deployed in practice. Within the factory building there were 26 workers, of whom 14 were men and seven were women. The remaining five were children - the Herrera factory was exceptional in this regard, being the only factory to have drawn children into the factory labour force. Five of the men and three of the

women were members of the Herrera family (see Table 9). Forty six per cent of the labour force (the 12 men) were paid at or above local average wage levels, with married family men earning the highest incomes. The remaining 54 per cent of the labour force were unmarried family members, women and children, all of whom were paid at well below the going rates for factory employment (see Tables 10 and 11). Only one or two family members were registered with the department of social security and workers were paid no extra sum at Christmas. When orders for sandals decreased, paid workers were laid off and production was carried out by unpaid family members. As Davīd Herrera himself pointed out, representation of the enterprise as modern and efficient had allowed him to effectively manipulate state credit institutions and to capitalize his workshop. Once this was achieved, the systematic use of cheap female and child labour within the workshop was an important element in sustaining profitability.

Table 9: The labour force in the Herrera factory

		Low-paid labour			
	Male labour paid at or above local wage levels	Male (low paid)	Female	Child	Total
Family	2	3	3	-	8
Other	9	-	4	5	18
Total	11	2	7	5	25

6.4 The politics of factory labour

Previous chapters have shown how structures of patronage and moral obligation had proved the most effective means by which the asymmetries of the relationship between entrepreneurs and members of the working population could be negotiated and the balance shifted in favour of working people. The idea that entrepreneurs were in some sense morally obliged to provide for ordinary people had also fundamentally affected

the way in which labour itself was perceived. Historically, the struggle for basic rights and conditions had been waged on moral rather than political terrain, and the value of labour construed in terms of the social identity and moral obligations of the bearer. Thus, as heads of families, men had a right and duty to provide for their wives and children; and their labour was at least in principle valued accordingly. Likewise, the labour of other members of the family was defined as contributing to the total family budget and such labour was paid at a lower level. Within this logic, women's labour was accorded the lowest value. The primary role of women was to care for their husbands and children and women's paid work was always defined as supplementary, something they did "in between" their real duties as mothers and wives.

Table 10: Family wages in the Herrera factory (and relationship to Davíd Herrera)

Workers	Wages at or above local levels	Low-paid labour
Father	-	7,000
brother (married)	12,000	-
brother (married)	12,000-15,000	-
2 brothers (single)	-	3,000
3 sisters (single)	-	3,000

Table 11: Wages for non-family labour in the Herrera factory

Workers	At local wage levels	Low-paid labour
Men	7,000-8,000	-
Women	-	3,500-4,000
Children	-	2,000-3,000

The social valuation of labour affected the structure of the labour force, the kinds of work men and women did and the incomes they

were able to command. As demonstrated by Table 12, men's incomes were above the minimum wage, in part a reflection of the relative conditions of prosperity within the urban economy.[6] Furthermore, although fluctuating, the incomes generated by independent producers and the self-employed were potentially much higher than those paid a fixed wage. Huaracheros producing in established workshops were among the highest earners. Self-employed construction workers were also able to command relatively high incomes, once attaining the status of maestro de albañil (master builder). In contrast, factory workers of all kinds earned relatively low wages, along with other employees such as nightwatchmen; agricultural workers, brickmakers and petty traders received the lowest pay of all.[7]

The particular social and economic structure of factory labour, and its low rates of pay, was the outcome of an historical process in which a collective battle for improved labour conditions had been lost to the entrepreneurial class. The sombrero strike had set a precedent for the future organization of the manufacturing sector and workers who sought to organize on the factory floor risked losing their jobs and possibly their chance of future employment. Moreover, entrepreneurial intractability had meant that on the whole factory wages were established at a low level and that factory labour offered virtually nothing other than a basic weekly payment to the individual worker (see Table 12).

---

[6] In 1985 the official minimum wage was 860 pesos a day. An individual working for six days would therefore earn 6,130 pesos or approximately £13.

[7] Households in which the family head was earning a low wage depended on the labour of other family members to meet their weekly budgets. In Sahuayo the huarache sector was frequently the source of this employment, and therefore played an important role in the functioning of the local economy. These questions will be fully discussed in Chapter 7.

Table 12: Men's weekly wage and income levels

Occupation	Pesos Minimum	Maximum	Pounds Minimum	Maximum
Huarachero in own taller	15,000	25,000	37.00	62.00
Albañil (self-employed construction worker)	6,000	14,000	25.00	35.00
Nightwatchman in shop or warehouse	6,000	8,000	15.00	20.00
Factory labour	6,000	8,000	15.00	20.00
Agricultural labour	5,000	7,000	12.50	17.50
Brickmaker	5,000	7,000	12.50	17.50
Minimum wage	5,160	-	13.00	-

Under these general conditions, the tendency was for the manufacturing sector to fragment, with men moving out of factory employment as they established their own households and families. Unmarried or newly married men saw factory work as a temporary measure and ideally as a stepping stone to the formation of a maquila and ultimately a household workshop. Older men who had been unable to move out of factory employment were among the lowest paid within that age group and in their households family labour bore the brunt of household reproduction costs.[8]

Unable and unwilling to draw men into the factories, entrepreneurs had turned increasingly to unmarried women - and by 1985 women made up the majority of the labour force in the huarache factories (see Table 13). The incorporation of women into the public domain of wage labour was an important departure from customary practice, which laid emphasis on idealized images of women wives and mothers, thus restricting women's

[8] Thirty seven factory workers were interviewed and only four were over 35 years old.

access to employment. Moreover, the strict moral codes which governed all aspects of female behaviour had made factory work relatively unacceptable. As we saw in the previous chapter, girls were able to work within household enterprise because in so doing they were incorporated into respectable family life, with all its connotations of vigilance and protection from loss of "respect". In a more impersonal environment, such vigilance could not be guaranteed and the risk of public shame was much greater. In general this had meant that women's economic activity was largely confined to the domestic domain - in the sale of antojitos (snacks), or cenas (suppers) from their doorsteps; as servants in the homes of the local bourgeoisie; and of course in weaving huarache. All these activities were on the whole poorly renumerated (see Table 14).

Table 13: The sex composition of the factory labour force

	Male employees (%)	Female employees (%)
El Aguila	30	70
Cabrera	50	50
Herrera	74	26*
La D'Caleta	50	50
Santiago	35	65

* The distinctive features of the Herrera factory were discussed briefly above.

Within this social and cultural framework, female labour was advantageous to the factory owners in a number of important respects. In the first place, the factory owners could afford to pay wages which were dramatically high by normal standards for women, but which nevertheless remained well below the levels established for men (compare Tables 12 and 14). In the second place, practically speaking it was unlikely that women with children would have the time or energy to work the nine-hour days required by the factory owners; and even if they did, it would have been virtually unthinkable for their husbands to have permitted them to do so. Consequently the women who worked in the factories were young and single. Many of these girls came from families known personally to the

owners and increasingly they were drawn from more comfortably-off families and had remained in school to secondary level. A significant proportion of the households supplying female labour to the factories (35 per cent) were also receiving regular remittances from the United States.

Table 14: Remuneration for women's work in Sahuayo (weekly incomes)

Occupation	Pesos Maximum	Pesos Minimum	Pounds Maximum	Pounds Minimum
Domestic service	2,500	1,750	6.25	4.40
Petty trade	4,000	1,500	10.00	3.75
Employment in huarache household enterprise	3,000	2,500	7.50	6.25
Weaving	4,000	1,500	10.00	3.75*
Factory labour	6,500	3,500	16.25	12.50

* Because women chose how many hours to spend weaving, it was more difficult to calculate the highest and lowest possible incomes. The figures provided above provide an indication of possible earnings rather than absolute amounts.

For example, María, who worked as a pespuntadora (operating the lighter sewing machines) in El Aquila, was the 19-year-old daughter of an employee in the local billiard hall. Two of her elder brothers had worked regularly in the United States and their earnings had increased the family's income substantially. A new dwelling had been built and María had been able to complete secondary school before entering El Aquila. In the Gutierrez family, Don José had been a sombrerero in La Guadalupana and was friendly with the Martínez. On the basis of this recomendación, three of his daughters, Lupita, Rosa and Concha, had worked as machine operators in El Aquila. On the strength of the family's reputation for skill and diligence, Rosa and Concha (and one of their brothers) had subsequently been personally recruited to work in

the newly-established Huarachería Santiago.

These women were under pressure to marry and become respectable wives and mothers, perhaps even to demonstrate that their social status did not oblige them to work full-time. Factory work was thus seen as legitimate only insofar as it was a means to save money between leaving school and getting married. Many of the girls used their earnings to save for their weddings, or for the households they would establish after marriage.[9] Female factory labour was by definition both transitional - and thus contained no future potential burden of patronage or maquilaje - and "supplementary" in the sense that it did not bear the breadwinning burden carried by its male counterpart. Finally and for all these reasons, the factory girls were unlikely to pose any serious political threat to the stability of the enterprise, through demands for better conditions or higher wages. In short, from an entrepreneurial point of view, the labour of unmarried women provided an excellent solution to the problems which had afflicted factory production in the past.

The emerging tendency to employ factory labour from a particular social stratum, a tendency which was particularly marked in the El Aguila and Santiago factories, did not apply to girls alone. At least some members of the male workforce were also carefully chosen and groomed for promotion. In El Aguila, male members of the same household were often recruited from households known to the Martínez; frequently the father of those drawn into the factory workforce had worked in the sombrero factory and had become acquainted with the owners there.[10] In another household, that of the Garcías, Don Jesús had worked for many years as a sombrerero. His long years of service, and his political

---

[9] One factory owner succinctly expressed local attitudes to women's factory work when he said: "here in Sahuayo, women work above all to buy their pretty clothes".

[10] Interviews with members of eight households supplying labour to El Aguila, revealed that in four the family head had been employed within the sombrero industry.

loyalty in the face of conflict, had served as a recomendación to the Martínez and two of his sons worked in El Aguila. Both Raúl and Eduardo had worked in other shoe or huarache workshops in Sahuayo and were skilled in the operation of machinery upon arrival at the factory. By early 1985 Raúl had been promoted to a supervisory position and his salary increased to 8,000 pesos (£20) each week.

There was a further and important element which underpinned this selective recruitment of factory labour. The image of modernity cultivated by the factory owners had facilitated access to credit and clients. The further development of these enterprises, and the capture of new and profitable markets for the more carefully finished slipper-like models of huarache, depended in part upon the creation of a labour force which would identify with a set of impersonal secular values such as loyalty and commitment to the enterprise itself. Objectively speaking, operating the factory machines did not require any particular qualifications; but education was important insofar as it signified a slightly elevated social position and was associated with attributes such as discipline and conscientiousness. Villa Lever (1986) has observed a similar pattern within the industrial sector of Los Altos de Jalisco. She notes that:

> "although higher levels of education are well regarded within the enterprise - and according to entrepreneurs correspond to higher levels of qualification...the selection of employees is determined more by ideological and cultural conceptions than by an objective evaluation of the workers' skills".

The organizational model developed by the owner of the Huarachería Santiago went much further than this in combining radically new labour practices with a shrewd application of tried and tested forms of patronage. Established in 1984 by the son of a wealthy bourgeois family, much time and attention had been devoted to the creation of new and more delicate models of huarache with a view to capturing a more lucrative stratum of the export market. Indeed, the owners were at pains to

explain that their sandals bore no resemblance to those produced by other manufacturers, observing that they remained unmistakeably rustic, despite the high quality of the raw materials or the care with which the sandals had been finished.

With respect to the treatment of workers there were several important innovations. In the first place, in mid-1985 the newly-born factory had yet to establish regular clients and it was not possible to maintain a continuous cycle of production. Despite these conditions of uncertainty, machine operators in the factory were paid a fixed minimum wage of 8,500 pesos (£21.25) even when there was little or no work available. At the same time, these workers were paid _a destajo_ when orders did increase. The incomes of machine operators were thus linked to the fortunes of the enterprise itself.[11] Second, some thirty weavers worked inside the factory alongside the 45 machine operators and other workers. Third, and this was a major innovation, the _entire_ labour force, including the weavers, three _maquileros_ and their workers, were registered with the IMSS. Not surprisingly, all those who worked for Santiago were delighted with the conditions of their employment.

Nevertheless, the tensions inherent in a model which sought to sustain benefits regardless of changes in the market were evident during the latter months of 1985. Production had been reduced to a minimum over a period of several months and while a few employees were being paid a retaining wage, many others had simply been laid off. Furthermore, the owner of Santiago reported having "difficulties" with the women workers. He said he had been unable to find women who were prepared to work responsibly and diligently and that the weavers had begun to "act as though their social status was higher than it was". When pressed to be more specific he said that some of the girls had begun to lodge complaints about their conditions of work and employment, implying that as poor girls from humble families, they should have "known better" than to enter into dispute with their employers. By September 1985, the owner

---

[11] Male workers in Santiago reported earning as much as 12,000 pesos (£30) a week and women, as much as 9,000 pesos (£22.50).

was considering a return to customary practice, with weaving carried out by women working at home.[12]

6.5 Conclusion

The new entrepreneurs were at pains to attribute success to a dynamic approach to production, efficient management and planning systems and a professional approach to quality control and productive organization. They had reinvented the huarache as a fashionable, sophisticated commodity and did not wish to be associated with production of home-made artefacts of rural Mexican culture, with all its connotations of artisanal production in primitive household workshops. Such explanations were only partially true. As we have seen, the Mexican state had a political interest in the promotion of artisanal production - and the creation of employment - in rural areas. Under these circumstances, those with capital to dispose of had much to gain from representation of the factories in a modernizing light and in effect the factory owners had obtained considerable assistance from state institutions. This had included access to loans and favourable terms of credit, as well as advice about promotion including, crucially, introductions to foreign clients.

While visibility brought its own rewards in terms of a package of financial and promotional assistance, in practice the value of this visibility was weighed against the political and economic costs entailed by the incorporation of the entire productive process into the domain of factory production. As we have seen, the major part of the productive process was carried out by subcontracted labour. Moreover, the factory owners had pragmatically observed that export markets, based on the whims of fashion, were themselves inherently unstable and might possibly disappear altogether at some moment in the future. Under these conditions, the expansion of factory production would have been

---

[12] Information about subsequent developments within the Huarachería Santiago would obviously be illuminating. Unfortunately it has proved impossible to obtain such information in writing.

irrational. All the factory owners said they did not envisage any further expansion, not least because huarache production was frequently only one aspect of a much broader and diversified set of economic activities.[13]

With respect to the labour force, the factory owners had developed an ethos of discipline and professionalism, which was on the face of it quite different from the familialism which permeated labour relations within the family _talleres_. At the same time the factories were born into a social world which emphasized vertical bonds of patronage-clientage, and laid stress on _reciprocal_ bonds of loyalty and respect. The new entrepreneurs were of necessity forced to confront the tension between the impersonal requirements of factory production on the one hand; and long-established modes of practice on the other. Ultimately, relations between factory owners and their workers bore the unmistakeable imprint of Sahuayan models of entrepreneurship. A discourse of loyalty and efficiency was not in itself sufficient to guarantee the standards required for successful production. In effect new forms of patron-clientage were emerging, in which the loyalties of at least some workers were secured through the provision of continuous employment, as well as through certain kinds of benefits and privileges in the workplace. The women workers, who increasingly made up the factory workforce, benefited from the new patronage in a limited way, although in the long term this was unlikely to become established practice. Women were drawn into factory work because their labour was cheaper; because it did not bear the breadwinning burden assigned to male family heads; and because young unmarried women were unlikely to pose a political threat to the stability of factory production. For the same reasons the labour of women could be much more easily deployed or dispensed with as required.

---

[13] The Martínez, for example were engaged in a range of commercial activity - which included ownership of most of the major commercial properties in Sahuayo. Beside this _El Aguila_ paled into relative insignificance.

7. Household, labour and income

Previous chapters have examined the history of the huarache sector and the various ways in which production was organized and controlled. Particular attention has been paid to the relationship between entrepreneurs (whether merchants or producers), and those dependent upon them - either as producers in household workshops or as workers in the more prosperous talleres and the factories. The possibilities for members of the working population to negotiate credit for production, or to improve the terms and conditions of their employment, were shown to have been profoundly linked to notions of patronage and moral obligation. Likewise, the value of labour was seen to have been socially construed and defined, ideally in terms of the rights and duties of the bearer of that labour. Thus the labour of married men with a family to support was more highly valued than that of women, whose wages were seen as "supplementary". The huarache sector had survived and flourished in part because its diverse labour requirements and modes of organization were compatible with the social world in which it was embedded.

Such conclusions inevitably raised questions about the individuals who laboured within the industry and about the households in which they lived. A full understanding of huarache production required knowledge of its importance for the survival and reproduction of households in the locality. It was also important to identify which households were supplying the various kinds of labour - whether male, female or child - and to see whether there was any systematic link between particular household structures and the way in which their members were drawn into the huarache sector. Likewise, an investigation of huarache production in itself revealed little about its role and significance within the local economy, or how it compared with other forms of economic activity engaged in by the local population. Finally, it was important to examine the nature of inequalities between households, and to look at how and in what ways participation in huarache or other economic activity affected the fortunes of households and their individual members.

The conceptualization of the household, as an empirical entity and as a relevant unit of analysis, has been the subject of much discussion in the literature (see Jelin 1991, for a recent compilation). At the most basic level the need for analysis of the household grouping, however defined, is undeniable in situations where income generated by a number of people in that grouping is necessary for household survival. Definitional problems arise on several fronts, however. While it cannot be taken for granted that the nuclear family is a natural form, or that the domestic unit is coterminous with the family, a purely materialistic characterization fails to capture the reality of family or kinship relationships as the basis for cohesion in most households. Harris (1981) has pointed to the dangers of reifying the household - or residential unit - thus excluding economic activity which may be essential for household reproduction, but is not confined within it. Households which depend upon remittances from migrants would fall into this category. Many researchers have also questioned assumptions of the household as a collective unit into which resources are pooled and distributed evenly. Studies of relations of power and authority within the household have revealed the important impact these have on the possibilities for income generation and the way in which money is distributed and used by different household members.

In recent years, researchers have focused on the way in which households interact with labour markets, deploying different kinds of labour in different ways on the basis of what is available to the household at various points in its history. Such studies emerged in response to theories of economic dualism, which assumed that the urban economies of developing countries were comprised of two distinct and autonomous sectors, each with its own dynamic and potential for growth (Weeks 1975). The dualist thesis saw the labour force as segmented, with one sector supplying labour to industrialized, capital-intensive industry, and with a separate sector working informally in petty trade, household workshops and so on. Marxists have also tended to posit a segmented working class, albeit for different reasons (see Escobar

1988). They have argued that the development of the labour process - arising historically from the struggle between labour and capital - influences the type of labour force and the structure of the labour market; and this in turn determines divisions within the working class.

These positions were challenged by Connolly (1985) on the basis of research conducted in Mexico City. She suggested that the domestic life cycle may be the most important determinant of what employment opportunities are taken up by household members. In the reproductive stage families are usually nuclear, with increased dependence on the male family heads, the majority of whom work in waged employment in the fully industrialized sector. These men earn more than the average wage in the city, but at the cost of a longer working day. As the cycle advances and the financial burden of children decreases, individual incomes may likewise decrease, though not necessarily that of the household. Labour is redistributed throughout the family and female wage labour incorporated into it. For Connolly it is at this stage that the highest incidence of underemployment and informal activity occurs. She identifies a process of informalization of the family economy involving the abandonment of wage labour and the search for independent employment.

The findings were supported by González de la Rocha (1988), who conducted research in Guadalajara in 1982. She found that working class households made up a homogeneous group rather than a segmented class, and that the occupation of male heads of households was not systematically linked to a set of discrete segments of the labour market. Rather, the occupational structure of the households was heterogeneous, with members moving in and out of different kinds of employment at different moments of the cycle. More important perhaps, the research found that the different phases in the domestic cycle were the key to understanding variations in economic welfare and differences between households in the city. González de la Rocha identifies three phases within the cycle: the expansion stage, which begins when the couple gets together and ends when the woman is 40 years old; the

consolidation phase, during which more family members are incorporated into the labour force and their incomes compensate for a decline in the man's earnings as he gets older; and the dispersal phase, during which children leave home to form their own households.

This chapter contains an examination of material gathered during a survey of 66 households in Sahuayo. The households were primarily located in the streets which lay at the periphery of the barrio de los huaracheros. They were chosen because they contained a lower concentration of household workshops and because many of them were supplying cheap female and child labour to the huarache sector. A small number of households located within the heartland of the barrio de los huaracheros were also included for comparative purposes. Finally, half a dozen households located both within and outside the barrio were selected because they were known to be supplying workers for the huarache factories. The survey was designed to collect information about: the composition of the households and the relationships between residents; the labour histories and contemporary employment of household members; the wages or incomes earned by the various household members; and the way in which this money was disposed of. The survey also sought information about patterns of consumption and standard of living, through questions about diet, the condition of the dwelling and whether the household had managed to acquire items such as a television, radio or refrigerator.

Although recognition of the role of the domestic cycle was an advance, the Sahuayan data revealed that application of this model alone failed to capture important elements of differentiation between households. As we shall see, the movement of the domestic life cycle was an important variable and it did affect the economic status of the household at any particular moment in its history; but it was not the only element influencing the economic position of households. Some families in the expansion phase were generating relatively high incomes, while some consolidated households were poor by local standards. A number of other factors were significant in the determination of a

household's capacity to generate income, and these were sometimes but not always linked to the domestic cycle.

Among the most significant of these was the presence or absence of social connections which secured access to credit, loans or well-paid employment - either in Sahuayo or in the United States. Such relationships were generally based on patronage, kin, compadrazgo or friendship and, importantly, they were independent of the household life cycle. In households which had been unable to establish effective social connections, the male head was likely to be employed in low-paid work, such as agricultural labour or brickmaking. Women and girls in these households also tended to be located in low-paid branches of production, usually as cheap labour for the huarache sector. Likewise, young boys were employed as zorras in household workshops. Thus poor households often contained numerous workers, all working in badly renumerated jobs. As a consequence they were less likely retain the labour of young adults and movement into the consolidation phase did not necessarily bring an attendant increase in household income.

Furthermore, an examination of the relationship between what was earned by household members, and what was available to spend in the purchase of basic items like food and clothes, revealed that intra-household relationships were frequently an important, sometimes the most important determinant, of economic status. Some households were therefore impoverished despite the fact that the male head earned a high income. In a similar vein, the ability of households to retain the labour and incomes of adult men underpinned the improved economic position of some consolidated households. Finally, variation in intra-household relationships - and the effect of such variation on household incomes - was not explicable solely in terms of the domestic life cycle or by consideration of household employment structure. Local cultural conceptions about the essential nature of men and women, and the ways in which these conceptions were reflected in actual behaviour were highly significant determinants of the economic status and well-being of the households.

7.1 Household structure and the domestic life cycle

In the first instance the households were divided according to levels of weekly income. Into Group 1 fell 31 households whose average weekly income per person was less than 1,000 pesos (less than (£2.50); Group 2 contained 20 households within which average weekly income per person was between 1,000 and 1,599 pesos per person (£2.50 to £4); and Group 3 consisted of 15 households where average weekly income per person was 1,600 pesos or more (over £4).[1] To meet basic consumption needs households needed a minimum weekly income of 1,000 pesos for each member. Households like those in Group 1 who were unable to generate this amount were thus obliged to borrow small amounts of money to buy food and were chronically in debt. Such families frequently relied on other forms of assistance, such as regular gifts of maize or beans from relatives. Group 2 households were able to meet consumption needs and to eat a more varied and abundant diet, but risked periodic debt. At the level of the third group, more significant changes began to be discernible. Consumption levels were consistently higher and higher incomes were reflected in the condition of the dwelling itself, such as in the construction of a new roof, the installation of tiled floors and so on.

Households in Groups 1 and 2 - the majority - were poor in the most general sense and the fortunes of these families varied at different moments in their history, corroborating the notion of a homogenous, rather than segmented working class in which shifts in incomes were related to the movement of the domestic cycle. By the same token, the higher incomes of the Group 3 households did not necessarily indicate a fundamental transformation, with these households moving upward to a different social class. Rather, the activities of members of Group 3 households served to illustrate what kinds of households were able to increase levels of income and consumption, what kinds of work

---

[1] In May 1985 there were approximately 400 pesos to the £ sterling. The minimum daily wage was $860, and a six-day week would generate 5,160 pesos, or £13.00.

they did, and what other factors had influenced their ability to improve their economic position. The differences between the three groups did not therefore define distinct economic categories but were used heuristically, to identify the elements affecting the economic welfare of different kinds of households.

The households were then organized into groups according to the phase of the domestic cycle they had reached (see Table 15). Three phases were identified: emergent households were those formed between 1980 and 1985; expanding households had been formed between 1960 and 1979; and consolidated households before 1959.[2] Expanding households made up the majority of all households (59 per cent), and well over half of the expanding households were concentrated within the poorest Group 1 (see Table 15). As predicted by the domestic cycle model, in such households there were large number of young children who were either too young to work or were engaged in low paying activities, such as weaving and running errands as zorras de huarache. Doña Teresa's expanding household, which fell into Group 1, provides one such example:

Teresa's household

Doña Teresa and her husband Federīco were married in 1961 and lived for five years with Federīco's parents before moving to a separate dwelling inherited from them in 1966. Teresa and Federīco had 11 children. Two of

---

[2] Initially a "dispersion" phase was defined for households formed before 1939. However, there were only two such households in the survey and their characteristics were identical to those of the consolidated households, so they were assimilated into this group. In general, the date of marriage was used to define phase of the domestic cycle, although this did not necessarily coincide with formation of a separate household. Date of marriage also defined phase of the cycle where: a) a couple lived with an older relative, such as a mother-in-law; or b) where the household had become female-headed after the husband had left home. Where unmarried women headed households, the date of formation was defined as the moment when the woman took over the running of the household budget (usually after her parents had died). For extended households, phase in the cycle was defined by the marriage date of the couple who played the central role in organizing and managing the household.

them - both male - had left home and were living in Los Angeles and an elder daughter lived with her husband in Sahuayo. Of the remaining eight children the eldest was 16 and the youngest eight months.

Federíco had worked in sombrero workshops since 1960 and in 1985 was earning just over 6,000 pesos (£15) each week. He contributed 1,500 (£3.75) pesos to the household kitty.[3] Doña Teresa had learned how to weave huarache after marriage and had continued to work as an <u>encorrelladora</u> ever since then, weaving sandals for her brother-in-law. In 1985 she contributed 2,500 pesos (£6.25) to the household budget. Two other daughters, a 16-year-old and a 13-year-old, wove huarache and earned between 1,000 (£2.50) and 2,000 (£5) pesos a week. They made no contribution to the household budget but were responsible for buying their own clothes and shoes. Rosendo, aged 15, worked six days a week for a couple of hours a day loading and unloading goods into warehouses. He earned 500 (£1.25) pesos for each day worked and generally gave all of this to his mother. Two other sons, aged 12 and ten, contributed 100 pesos (25p) each from money earned while "helping out" with agricultural labour for two or three hours on Saturdays.

The total weekly income for household expenses was approximately 4,700 pesos (£11.75) and the family was among the poorest in the survey. Their two-roomed house was built of brick, with a tiled roof and cement floors. Water had only recently been piped into the house and it was one of three in the survey which had no proper lavatory. The family ate meat once a week, and consumed one kilo of eggs each week (approximately 14 eggs between 10 people). Doña Teresa almost always owed money to shopkeepers and food sellers. Seven people were working, of whom three were women engaged in weaving and Doña Teresa's contribution to the household income was a vital one. Despite a high number of workers, the total income generated was low. Most of Teresa's children were too young to work, or were working in poorly remunerated jobs. The family had only

---

[3] Differences in levels of contributions by male household heads, and the implications this had for household welfare, will be discussed more fully below.

once received US$50 from a son in Los Angeles but he had subsequently fallen ill. Doña Teresa expected that he would begin to send money again occasionally when he started to work again.

Table 15: Households divided by levels of income and phase in the domestic life cycle

	Emergent 1980-1985	Expanding 1960-1979	Consolidated 1940-1959	Total
Group 1	-	23	8	31
(%)		(34.8)	(12.1)	(47.0)
Group 2	5	9	6	20
(%)	(7.5)	(13.6)	(9.0)	(30.3)
Group 3	4	7	4	15
(%)	(6.0)	(10.6)	(6.0)	(22.7)
Total	9	39	18	66
	(13.5)	(59.0)	(27.1)	(100.0)

As households moved through the life cycle and into the consolidation stage, the full-time labour of a greater number of family members could be incorporated and this in itself ensured increased income levels for some households. In some cases the households extended as married offspring brought their spouses to live in their parents' home, creating further possibilities for pooling incomes. In addition, because young adults were able to work full time, in labour which was more highly renumerated that of children, the potential for an increase in household income during the consolidation phase arose. The incorporation of adult labour often also coincided with women ceasing to work as weavers. Doña Graciela's consolidated household, which fell into Group 2, illustrates how this worked in practice:

Graciela's household

Graciela and her husband Santiago married in 1955 and in 1985 were renting a house in the Calzada Amezcua at the edge of the barrio de los huaracheros. They had seven children, of whom one daughter had married and gone to live with her husband elsewhere in Sahuayo. Of those living at home the eldest was 24 years old and the youngest 11 years. Two of Graciela's sons had also married and they had brought their wives to live in Graciela and Santiago's home.

Don Santiago had worked as a huarachero all his life, without managing to set up his own taller. In 1985 he was working in a household enterprise making sandals por tarea and earning between 8,000 and 9,000 pesos (£20 to £22.50) each week, of which he contributed 3,000 pesos (£7.50) to the family budget. His son Manuel worked in the same enterprise, earning approximately the same wages and contributing 1,200 pesos (£3). Household income was significantly increased by the 4,000-peso contribution from a third son, Juan, who worked in El Aguila as a highly paid sacador de corrella (cutting strips of leather) and earning between 10,000 and 12,000 pesos each week (£25 to £30). Both Graciela's daughters in-law, and two teenaged daughters worked as weavers and the daughters-in-law contributed some 3,000 pesos to the household budget. The daughters did not make a weekly contribution but were responsible for buying their own clothes and shoes. Total weekly income was therefore around 11,200 pesos, almost three times as high as that generated by the workers in Doña Teresa's household, and this had largely been achieved through the progressive incorporation of family labour.

The emergent households were treated as a separate category because their incomes were proportionately higher than those of the expanding households and this was in part a consequence of household size. At this stage of the domestic cycle married couples had few children to support and there was a little more money available to spend on items of basic consumption. There were a total of nine emergent households, of which five fell into Group 2 and the remaining four in

the richer Group 3 (see Table 15). Francisco's was one such household:

Francisco's household

Francisco had married in 1980 and lived with his wife and two young children in a rented two-room brick house. Francisco had worked in a household enterprise until he married, when he had set up a huarache taller in his own home. He gave his wife 6,000 pesos (£15) each week for food and other necessities, a relatively high weekly income of 1,500 pesos (£3.75) per person. Household income was likely to decrease as Francisco's family expanded and there were more young children to support. If Francisco's huarache-producing activities did not expand as the family grew, the household would become increasingly dependent upon family labour to sustain consumption levels.

Workers in emergent households were overwhelmingly concentrated within the huarache sector. Of the nine emergent households, eight household heads were producers in household workshops or employees in the factories or larger talleres.[4] Nor was it necessarily the case that the income of such households decreased in any substantial way as they moved into the expansion phase. As we shall see, some huaracheros were easily able to sustain levels of consumption despite greater numbers of non-working children.

Further examination of the data indicated that the domestic cycle model was able to account for some but by no means all the differences between households. For example the slightly better off households in Group 2 were fairly evenly distributed across the phases of the domestic cycle (see Table 15) suggesting that other factors may have had a role to play in the determination of incomes. Furthermore, despite the fact that consolidated households in Group 1 had a significantly higher ratio

---

[4] In the ninth household, in which a man and wife lived with their baby, the male head was a vaquero, or cowman. He earned a low wage of 6,000 pesos (£15), of which he gave 5,000 pesos (£12.50) to his wife. He also received five litres of milk daily. His wife sold three litres for 80 pesos, thus increasing household income by approximately 1,500 pesos (£3.75) each week.

of economically active members to non-workers, such households had remained poor (see Table 16). In contrast for Group 2, the number of economically active members to non-workers was only slightly higher in the consolidated than in the expanding households (see Table 16). One of the most striking features of the more comfortably-off Group 3 households was that they virtually all contained few residents and a high proportion of workers to non-workers, suggesting that small households were better off, regardless of phase of the life cycle.

Table 16: Average household size and economically active members by economic group and phase in the domestic life cycle

	Emergent		Expanding		Consolidated	
	No.	Econ. active	No.	Econ. active	No.	Econ. active
Group 1	-	-	9.6	4.4	7.6	4.0
Group 2	5.4	2.6	6.0	2.8	8.0	4.5
Group 3	4.2	1.5	4.5	2.4	6.0	4.2

7.2 Family organization in the *barrio de los huaracheros*

Among the urban community of Sahuayo, and particularly in the older and more established neighbourhoods, the nuclear family was by far the commonest residential unit and locus of day to day organization, making up nearly 70 per cent of the total (see Table 17). There were powerful historical factors underpinning and reinforcing the nuclear family structure within local society. The violence and banditry which had characterized the years of the revolution and its aftermath remained a recent memory. The rancho communities, from which urban centres like Sahuayo had emerged, had been vulnerable in a region poorly served by road or rail until the 1950s. The isolated communities had protected themselves against violent marauders through an emphasis on patriarchal authority, obedience within the family and mistrust of those who fell

outside its domain (De la Peña 1981, Wilson 1990). While it was true that Sahuayans had lived for some thirty years in relative tranquillity, a tacit suspicion of those who were not kin or affine was deeply rooted; despite an outward appearance of conviviality, most Sahuayans were truly comfortable only when at home, or in the presence of their relatives.

Table 17: Family structure according to economic group

	Nuclear	Extended	Female-headed	Total
Group 1	20	10	1	31
Group 2	15	2	3	20
Group 3	11	1	3	15
Total	**46**	**13**	**7**	**66**

In a more general sense, households which depended upon the provision of money, food or other assistance from non-residents, almost without exception relied upon their kin or affinal relations for such assistance, and evidence of the exchange of favours or mutual aid between friends and neighbours was the exception rather than the norm. While numerous Latin American specialists have observed that under some circumstances the formation of extended households, and the pooling of resources and incomes, becomes a useful and effective strategy, this was not the case in Sahuayo.[5] The abiding strength of patriarchal authority had particular implications for women, who remained wholly subject to male authority - in the figure of their fathers and husbands - throughout their lives. Men tended to disapprove of any female activity which bypassed their authority and the possibilities for women to establish female networks, or to cooperate with neighbours under these circumstances were highly restricted. Indeed it was not unusual for

[5] See Lomnitz 1977, Gonzãlez de la Rocha 1988, Chant 1991, and cf. Willis 1993.

married women living in the same household to manage their budgets and prepare food separately from each other.

From an economic perspective there were good reasons why the nuclear family continued to prevail. Access to credit, to employment and to a whole range of economic and other assistance depended on patron-clientage between entrepreneurs and ordinary people. The vital importance of these connections acted to promote economic individualism on the part of men with families to support, and a tendency for the household to concentrate its resources inward, rather than to engage in more collective forms of organization.[6] This tendency was further reinforced by the constant possibility of temporary migration to the United States. Migration served as a solution to debt or other financial difficulties; at the same time it avoided the dangers implicit in collective organization, or a more confrontational, political approach to economic hardship.

Indeed, most of the 13 extended family households were in fact nuclear family units within which one or two other kin or affines were living. By far the most common reason for such arrangements was the accommodation of widowed or unmarried women, who were unable or

---

[6] There were apparently important exceptions to this general rule. As we saw in Chapter 3, individual huaracheros did establish bonds with others whose socioeconomic status was equal to their own and pooled resources, for example, in the distribution of their sandals. But it must be borne in mind that such relationships were usually developed between kin or affines, or between people who had established relations of mutual trust through some other social ritual, such as compadrazgo. Despite an egalitarian veneer, such relationships were inherently asymmetrical. One member of the partnership usually assumed the role of patron and stood to gain economically from the arrangements made. If anything, these relationships upheld rather than undermined the basic nuclear household structure, since they were frequently aimed at establishing individual producers in family workshops. Evidence of a potential break from this mould was, however, revealed in huaracheros efforts to form a producers' cooperative and this will be discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

unwilling to live alone.[7] In four such households these individuals were elderly mothers-in-law, or unmarried sisters of the wife. In four other households daughters and their children had returned to their parents home after their husbands had died or they had separated; and in a further two, unmarried daughters with children were living with their parents. There was only one household in which two sons had brought their wives to live with their parents in order to save money and to share the cost of household expenses. Ten of the extended family households fell into the poorest Group 1 and all but three were expanding or consolidated (see Table 18).

Table 18: Extended households according to economic group and phase in the domestic life cycle

	Emergent	Expanding	Consolidated
Group 1	-	6	4
Group 2	1	-	1
Group 3	1	-	-
Total	2	6	5

Two of the extended family households were distinct from the others insofar as the extended structure was directly linked to the economic activities of its members. Both were emergent households containing huarache talleres and a high number of adult workers. In both, workshop space and tools and machinery could be shared, materials were brought in larger quantities, thus cutting costs and so on. One of these was the Carranza household, in which two related families lived

[7] The seven-female headed households will be discussed separately. Despite many women's reluctance to live in households not headed by a man, female-headed households tended to enjoy higher levels of consumption.

side by side, sharing workshop space. One of the men was a maquilero and the other sewed soles onto sandals, using his own sewing machine. Food and bills were shared in these households and the two families were planning to establish an independent workshop together.[8]

The other extended household of this kind was headed by a member of the factory-owning Cabrera family, Roberto. The household was unusual in a number of respects, not least because it had was relatively newly formed (in 1980) but had drawn other members of a more extended network into its domain. The household contained Roberto, his wife, Araceli and their three children. Living with them were Araceli's widowed mother, one of her brothers and a widowed sister and her five children. In terms of income the household fell into the upper range of Group 2. Household members were easily able to meet daily and weekly expenses and ate meat nearly every day. Despite its location on the Calzada Amezcua, where drainage and plumbing were rudimentary, the household had a proper water supply and a hot water boiler. Exceptionally, the household possessed three refrigerators.

Araceli's sister worked as a weaver and domestic servant and her two working teenage sons gave all their wages to their mother. Taken together their total income was 9,000 pesos (£22.50). Roberto gave his wife as much as 10,000 pesos (£25) each week and while her brother, Paco, made no regular contribution he frequently brought the household's supply of meat. Thus, the total weekly income per person was around 1,500 pesos (£3.75). In this case, the extended family structure functioned in a number of ways to improve the economic position of the household. There was a relatively high number of working adults contributing to the household budget. Each of the women managed the money handed over by her husband or children, and each bought basic foodstuffs separately. In practice, however, there was a good deal of cooperation and all the working members shared the cost of monthly bills.

---

[8] The Carranza household was discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

In the longer term, however, the significance of the sharing arrangements lay in the household's connection with the Cabrera family. Roberto was a maquilero for his brother, and as a member of the family received a continuous supply of the best paid work. Likewise Paco was assured of wage labour within the Cabrera factory and was also able to use the household taller in the evenings as a maquilero. As time went on Roberto and Paco planned to expand their huarache-producing activities and to incorporate the labour of the young adults living in the house.

These two households were exceptional for Sahuayo and it was perhaps noteworthy that both had been formed by young families, whose attitude to cohabitation was more relaxed and expansive than that of the elder generation. Nevertheless, in 1985 conditions within huarache sector were relatively favourable. This meant that, for example, Roberto could sustain the pooling of certain resources with Paco. Likewise, in the Carranza household, there were possibilities for shared usage of the sewing machine with all its potential for extra earnings. In the event of a serious decline in demand for huarache - and the consequent risk of debt - it seemed likely that members of these extended households would retrench, reverting to production for the sustenance of the immediate family, or seeking other solutions such as wage labour migration.

7.3 Household labour and the huarache sector

Employment of one kind or another within the huarache sector was highly significant for the households in the survey, involving 70 per cent of economically active household members (see Table 19).[9] The distribution of this labour was also an important indicator of economic differences between households. Group 1 households were supplying 56 per cent of all household labour, but most of this labour was poorly renumerated and carried out by women working as weavers and children employed as zorras in huarache talleres. Weavers comprised 34 per cent of all family labour

---

[9] This total does not include male household heads, who will be discussed separately.

Table 19: Household labour - employment in the huarache sector compared with other forms of employment (%)

	Adult labour						Children		Total
	Huarache *taller*	Employee huarache sector (m)	(f)	Weavers	Other Employment (m)	(f)	*Zorras*	Other	
Group 1	-	3.9	0.6	25.1	3.3	4.6	11.2	7.9	56.6
Group 2	-	5.2	4.6	5.6	4.6	2.3	5.2	-	27.5
Group 3	1.3	3.3	1.3	3.3	2.6	1.9	-	1.3	15.0
Total	1.3	12.4	6.5	34.0	10.5	8.8	16.4	9.2	99.1

and 25 per cent of all working household members were weavers from the poorest households within Group I (see Table 19). Likewise, child labour made up 25 per cent of family labour, most of which (19 per cent) was drawn from Group 1 households. The majority of child workers were zorras in huarache workshops, with 11 per cent of all family labour made up of zorras belonging to the poorest Group 1 households (see Table 19).

Twenty seven per cent of all household labour was drawn from Group 2 households and the larger part of this labour (20 per cent of the total) was deployed within the huarache sector.[10] The labour of members of Group 2 was, however, more evenly distributed than in the poorer households, with a more or less equal number of weavers and others who worked in the more prosperous talleres or the factories (see Table 19). The richer Group 3 households supplied only 15 per cent of the total labour in the survey, but over half the economically active members of Group 3 households worked in the huarache sector (nine per cent of the total). Only just over one per cent of all household labour was drawn from children in Group 3.

These figures did provide an indication of the overall importance of huarache production within the locality but there were certain points which required further more substantive investigation. It was clear that the poorest households, the majority of which were in the expanding phase, were supplying cheap female and child labour to the huarache sector, and that young adults in more comfortably off consolidated households were more likely to be working in better paid jobs inside the factories or larger talleres. On the face of it, these findings were consistent with the domestic cycle model.

Turning now to the occupational structure of male household heads, the situation was somewhat more complicated. Twenty three household heads (38 per cent of the total) worked in the huarache sector; the remaining 36 male heads (61 per cent) were employed in a range of other activities, including agricultural labour, brickmaking, construction

---

[10] Members of Group 2 households employed in other spheres of activity made up only 16 per cent of all household labour.

work and so on (see Table 20). Twenty three of the 35 who were _not_ employed in huarache production were quite strikingly concentrated among the poorer Group 1 households (42 per cent of all household heads). In contrast, approximately half the household heads in Groups 2 and 3 were employed in some capacity in the huarache industry (see Table 20).

Table 20: Economic activity - male heads of households

Occupation		Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Huarache:	own _taller_	5	3	2
	employee	2	7	3
	trader	-	-	1
Sombrero		3	-	2
Brickmaker/agriculture		6	-	2
Construction		2	-	-
Self-employed services		2	-	-
Petty Trade		2	-	-
Trader		3	1	-
Employee:	Commercial	2	5	-
	State	1	-	-
	Ejidatario	-	-	1
Unemployed		2	1	-
Total		30	18	11

There did therefore seem to be a link between poor households and male heads working outside the huarache sector and it was not immediately clear whether this link was attributable to the domestic cycle. Moreover, although relatively few heads were producers in household workshops (10, or just under 17 per cent of the total), the _talleres_ were distributed more or less evenly across the sample (see Table 20). Since household production was generally associated with higher incomes this indicated the need for a more detailed examination, and in particular, of the households which had remained poor despite ownership of a household _taller_. Furthermore, a significantly higher number of household heads in Groups 2 and 3 were employed within the huarache sector (11.8 and five per cent respectively), than in Group 1

(only 3 per cent of the total) (see Table 21). This did suggest a link between higher incomes and employment within the huarache sector. But as we have seen in previous chapters, factory labour and wage labour within household enterprise were on the whole badly paid and unattractive to male heads of households. An examination of the structure and organization of these households would therefore reveal what, if any, were the circumstances which had led to their slightly higher incomes.

Table 21: Male household heads - employment in the huarache sector compared with other activity

	Total (%)	Own huarache workshop/ trader (%)	Employee in huarache sector (%)	Other (%)	Unemployed (%)
Group 1	50.9	8.5	3.4	35.6	3.4
Group 2	28.7	5.1	11.8	10.1	1.7
Group 3	18.5	5.0	5.0	8.5	-
Total	**98.1**	**18.6**	**20.2**	**54.2**	**5.1**

Total - huarache sector (%) 38.8
Total - other activity (%) 54.2

7.4 Social connection, patronage and economic activity

The occupational structure of households did vary over time as the labour of different residents became available for paid work, but these cyclical effects did not in themselves determine household income. One of the most significant elements for the determination of household income was the presence or absence of extra-household relationships of patronage, friendship, or compadrazgo. As Gledhill (1991) has remarked, the Mexican labour market seldom functions impersonally and this was nowhere truer than in Sahuayo. Social connections were frequently a

vital means of securing access to employment and the occupational structure of the urban economy was in part determined by social relationships which were independent of the internal structure of the household. The future prosperity of the emergent households, was for example partly dependent on ability to secure capital and credit and this can be illustrated by reference to Jesús' emergent household, which fell into Group 2:

Jesús' household

Jesús lived with his wife Lourdes and two young children in a rented one-room brick dwelling with a tile roof. There was no water or drainage in their *vecindad* or courtyard, and Lourdes daily brought buckets from a tap in a nearby street. Nevertheless, the family lived reasonably well and were able to eat meat once or twice a week and milk every day.

Jesús was 24 and had married in 1982. He had begun working in 1970 as a *zorra*. By 1980 he was working as a *huarachero* and in 1985 worked in Guadalupe Andrade's household enterprise. He was paid *por tarea*, a fixed price of 1,000 pesos (£2.50) per dozen pairs of sandals, from which he paid his own weavers. At a minimum he produced 10 dozen pairs of huarache, and earned a net income of 5,320 pesos (£13). When demand increased he might earn half as much again. Jesús' wife worked an eight-hour day, weaving sandals for her husband. Jesús was one of the few *huaracheros* who paid his wife the going rate and Lourdes earned approximately 1,500 pesos (£3.75) although this money was absorbed into the household budget. Jesús contributed a further 3,500 pesos (£8.75) earnings. Total weekly income was thus 5,000 pesos or 1,250 pesos per person.

If Jesús continued to work as an employee in a huarache enterprise, his earnings would not increase and the household would have to rely on the labour of family members to sustain levels of consumption. But if on the other hand Jesús was successful in forging social alliances which would serve as a source of patronage and credit, he would be able to set up his own *taller* and become an independent

producer. As we have seen in the case of Roberto Gálvez, such producers managed to sustain income levels during the expansion phase. The signs were that such an alliance was emerging. Guadalupe Andrade had already lent Jesús 100,000 pesos (£250) to buy a plot of land and Jesús was repaying the debt each week. In particular, the mutual dependency between Guadalupe and Jesús guaranteed a continuous supply of work.

In other families, incomes did increase as different kinds of labour became available at different moments of the domestic cycle, but a full explanation of the increased incomes had to take into account extra-household social relationships, which provided opportunities for that labour to be profitably deployed. In fact the critical determinant of increased income was frequently the mobilization of extra-household connections which secured access to the better paying forms of employment for available adult labour. Doña Josefina's consolidated Group 2 household provides an illustration:

Josefina's household

Doña Josefina was born in the nearby Rincón de San Andrés and had settled in Sahuayo when she married in 1947. Her household was therefore in the consolidation phase. There were ten children of whom four had left home. Three lived with their spouses in Sahuayo and a fourth lived in Chicago in the United States. The family lived in a four-roomed house with a refrigerator and ate meat three times a week. They were comfortably off by local standards and had no difficulties in meeting the costs of food and other necessities each week.

Josefina worked with her eldest daughter preparing and selling tortillas and chilli sauce for birria (goat stew) and selling cenas (suppers) from home. Between them they provided 4,000 pesos (£10) to the weekly household budget, although this was variable. Another daughter worked as a domestic servant. She earned 2,000 pesos (£5) each week and she paid for her own clothes and shoes. Three of Josefina's sons, aged 22, 20 and 18, were employed in the El Aquila factory, earning fixed wages. Between them they contributed 4,750 pesos (£11.80) to the

household kitty each week. Total weekly income in this household was therefore 8,750 pesos (£21.80) of which nearly half was contributed by adult men employed in a huarache factory. Thus, the age structure of the household was important in determining the level of income in Josefina's household. The youngest member of the household was 15 years old, which in practice meant that Josefina and her elder daughters were free to work. Likewise, there was plenty of adult labour available for paid work in outside the home.

But there was a further element, which had been equally significant in determining the fortunes of Josefina's household, and this was entirely independent of the domestic life cycle. Josefina's husband, Don Salvador, had been a *sombrerero* in *La Guadalupana* and had chosen not to join the sombrero workers' union or participate in the workers' strike of 1959. After the factory closed its owner Alberto Chávez had opened smaller factory in Santanita, on the outskirts of Guadalajara and Don Salvador had worked there for two years until this factory closed down. Since then Salvador had worked in sombrero workshops owned by various members of the Chávez family until 1974 when he fell ill. In the longer term, political loyalty to the Chávez had brought its rewards. Don Salvador had associated with the owners' camp and had lived through the dispute in *La Guadalupana* alongside the Martinéz and the other *mayordomos*. Such loyalty was later repaid in kind, with the recruitment of his three sons into the *El Aguila* factory.

Clearly the availability of adult family labour was a factor determining the economic status of a household. But some consolidated households were unable to retain either the labour or the income of adult men and consequently their incomes were much lower. In practice there was an important linkage between the labour history of male household heads, the kin or social connections they had established and the economic activities of other family members. In the poorer households lack of security and high mobility of household heads were linked to the head's inability to establish effective social connections. This had an impact on the employment possibilities for the

rest of the family, making it more difficult for other members to find reasonably well paying jobs. This in turn affected patterns of consumption and the disposition of cash. Households which had established connections leading to well paid employment, including in the United States, were much more likely to function corporately, with family members pooling and investing their resources for the benefit of the household as whole. The organization of Don Mario's consolidated household, which fell into the richest Group 3, illustrates these points in more detail:

Don Mario's household

Don Mario and his wife married and set up home in 1954. They had 15 children of whom three lived in the United States. Don Mario had worked as a campesino and sombrerero and in 1985 was employed in a sombrero workshop, earning a low weekly wage of 7,000 pesos (£17.50), of which he contributed 3,600 pesos (£9) to the household kitty. The sombrero connection had again proved valuable and one of Mario's daughters worked as a machine operator in El Aguila. Two other girls worked, one as a secretary and the other as an assistant in a clothes shop. The three contributed 4,800 pesos (£12) to the family budget each week, as well as paying for their own clothes and shoes. Three boys, aged 17, 15 and 14, also worked, one selling pork snacks in the street and the other two in a carpentry workshop. They handed over the lion's share of their earnings, a total of 4,000 pesos (£10) to their mother each week.

The total weekly income here then was 8,800 pesos or 733 pesos per person. However, this relatively low income was hugely increased by regular remittances from the three elder sons, who sent between US$500 and US$1,000 to their parents in Sahuayo each month. Patterns of consumption had been transformed, with the family able to eat milk, eggs, and meat every day, the latter "sometimes twice a day". The dwelling itself had been renovated and was one of half a dozen in the survey to possess a hot water boiler. The family had also bought their own house and acquired two other plots on which they planned to build

further dwellings as their children married and left home.

The economic position of Don Mario's household was above all a consequence of a secure connection with relatives in the United States. Don Mario's parents had emigrated to the United States during the 1950s and had settled permanently in Los Angeles. They had served as an anchor for Mario's sons, providing accommodation and access to employment there. But the existence of social channels, providing access to well paid employment had further ramifications, creating further possibilities for household members to find better paid jobs. For example, the increased income from remittances from the United States permitted families to maintain their children in school up to secondary level. As we saw in the previous chapter the owners of huarache factories increasingly preferred to employ young people who had at least some secondary education.

In practice, social connections which extended beyond the confines of the <u>municipio</u> frequently underpinned the economic fortunes of the richer households as was the case in Doña Margarita's household, which also fell into the richer Group 3:

Margarita's household

Doña Margarita was born in Mexico City. She and her husband Gerardo, a native of Sahuayo, married in 1955. In 1985 Gerardo was working in <u>El Aguila</u> where he was paid the minimum wage of 5,120 pesos (£13). Margarita's eldest son had left home and lived with his wife in Sahuayo. Her youngest, a 14-year-old boy, worked part-time in his uncle's corner shop and was studying commerce at a local college. During the latter half of the 1970s there had been a fashion for huaraches decorated with painted flowers and Doña Margarita had worked with her daughter painting hundreds of pairs of sandals for some four years. She had subsequently re-established contact with friends in Mexico City who supplied her with clothes smuggled in from the United States. Margarita frequently earned as much as 20,000 pesos (£50) a week, easily as much as a huarache producer in a household workshop, although trade obviously varied. Her

daughter, Ana, also sold fayuca (smuggled goods) and was an agent for "tupperware" and "Avon" goods supplied by the same contact in Mexico City. Ana's income was more variable as she did not work regularly, but she said that it was not unusual for her to earn 5,000 pesos (£12.50) in one day.

Margarita's household was in the consolidation phase and all those living with her were working. Nevertheless, the family had remained small and the high level of household income had not resulted from the labours of a adult offspring as the family progressed through its life cycle. Indeed, Margarita's household provided a clear illustration of the ways in which extra-household political or social factors were in some cases the most important factors in defining the status of the household. Margarita's high income trading had been made possible through her connections with friends in Mexico City, and were quite independent of the domestic cycle. It should also be noted that the low wage earned by Gerardo was a consequence of his political support for the sombrero workers' union during the 1950s. After the factory was closed he had been unable to find a job and had left Sahuayo for Mexico City, where he worked for several years. Upon his return he had worked in various sombrero workshops, before joining El Aguila in 1977. But his relationship with the Martínez was not a close one, and he was afforded none of the benefits enjoyed by sombrero workers who had opposed the union and sided with the factory owner and his managers during the strike. In this respect Gerardo's work experience contrasted strongly with that of Salvador, husband of Josefina, whose labour history was discussed above.

7.5 *Machismo*, obligation and household income

The internal organization of households, and the distribution of cash also proved to be one of the most important determinants of the income available for general consumption, such as for the purchase of food and other basic items. In some households male heads were engaged in high earning activities, but their contribution to the family budget was

negligible. Likewise, in some households adult sons who had migrated to the United States did not send money home on a regular basis. Women in charge of such households therefore had difficulties in making ends meet, or were obliged to borrow small sums of money in order to buy daily rations of tortillas, beans, milk or other basic foodstuffs.

To understand intra-household relations, and in particular the relationships between husband and wives, it was necessary to look at broader cultural notions of male and female identity and the differing rights and obligations which these roles entailed. In Sahuayo, and in the whole of the occidental region, women's identity was fundamentally bound to their role as mothers and providers for their children. Their sense of self-worth was affirmed by their ability to provide nutritious food and to ensure that their children were properly clothed and generally well cared for. Ideally, women were expected not to work, and women were in practice wholly responsible for the preparation of food, housework and looking after their children. As we have seen, however, financial constraints frequently obliged women to work and at times their income was the most vital in the fulfilment of daily consumption needs. This was true despite the fact that women's earning power was low, and their work virtually always had to be organized around the tasks of housework and childcare.

Definitions of manhood were more complex and contradictory; and to some extent local notions of machismo (manliness) were in conflict with notions of responsible fatherhood. According to one definition, padres de familia (heads of families) were the primary breadwinners and had a duty and a responsibility to provide for their families. This conception of the male role was upheld and reinforced by the church and historically it had been the ideological cornerstone of the struggle to improve the terms and conditions of labour in the locality.[11] At the

---

[11] The idea that moral and religious principles were the driving force behind changes in economic was the inspiration for the emergence of a huarache producer's cooperative in 1982. The cooperative is discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

same time men frequently defied this responsibility, insisting on freedom to andar en el vicio - to drink and to gamble their wages away. Such behaviour was accepted as natural masculine behaviour and, for some men, was an expression of manliness in the face of humiliating and difficult circumstances.[12]

The amount of the diario (the husband's daily contribution to the household budget) was thus highly variable. In most households male heads contributed a portion of their earnings to the household budget each week, retaining a share for their own use, although husbands did generally pay the monthly bills and for other major expenses. Nevertheless some households were more likely than others to suffer from difficulties arising from income being withheld by the male family heads. The material gathered in the survey suggested that there was a link between the economic activities of male household heads and the amount and regularity of their contributions to the household budget.

A significant number of all the household heads in Group 1 (20 per cent of the total sample) were engaged in semi-autonomous forms of economic activity which were irregular or seasonal (see Table 20). These included huarache production, brickmaking, petty trade, agricultural labour, building and services such as plumbing and baking. Some of these jobs, such as brickmaking, for example were particularly badly renumerated, with brickmakers earning around 6,000 pesos a week (£15). The work was seasonal and brickmakers were obliged to find other employment during the rainy season (July to October). Likewise petty traders, who sold snacks, or drinks such as pulque on the streets generated low and variable incomes. In these households the male

---

[12] Wilson (1990), who conducted research in a neighbouring town, Santiago Tangamandapio, has discussed in fascinating detail historical and contemporary aspects of relations between husbands and wives. Of particular relevance is her suggestion that the more negative expressions of machismo, such as male family head's withholding of money from the household kitty, were in part the historical outcome of the humiliations suffered by men who migrated to the United States. She notes also that men often started to drink and gamble after they had returned from the US.

household head had often also moved frequently from one job to another, and made short visits to work in the United States but without gaining a secure foothold there.

Furthermore, in households where the male head had not established a secure source of income, or where for one reason or other the man chose not to make a regular contribution to the family budget, the tendency was for a pattern of low contributions to become entrenched and for other men in the household to spend their earnings without regard for the family. Household members tended to disperse rather than to function corporately and adult men who went to work in the United States frequently did not send money back to their parents in Sahuayo. Thus movement into the consolidation phase did not result in an increase in household incomes unless the household had been able to retain the labour and income of adult offspring. Doña Herlinda's consolidated household, which fell into the poorest Group 1, provides one such example:

Herlinda's household

Herlinda had married and set up her home in 1958, so the household was in the consolidation phase. The couple had 11 children, of whom three sons were living in the United States and a fourth with his wife in Sahuayo. Of those remaining at home the eldest was 18 years and the youngest seven years old.

Herlinda's husband, Ignacio, had worked as an agricultural labour, as a fruit trader in the market and as a trader in haberdashery. He had been to the United States three times, for one year in 1960 and 1970, and for a further two years between 1979 and 1982. In 1985 he was working as a brickmaker from October to June and as a sharecropper working for an ejidatario during the rainy season. He was able to earn between 7,000 and 8,000 pesos each week (£17.50 to £20), although at times his earnings dropped to half this amount. Ignacio contributed irregularly to the household, perhaps giving nothing to Herlinda for one or two weeks, then handing over 3,000 pesos (£7.50).

Herlinda had worked as an toquillera de sombrero and as an encorrelladora. In 1985 she was earning 1,500 pesos (£3.75) each week, weaving for an elderly huarachero in a nearby workshop and all her income went into the family budget. Herlinda's eldest daughter (aged 14) worked as a weaver and paid for her own shoes and clothes, although she occasionally gave some money to her mother. The same was true of Herlinda's 17 and 18-year-old sons. Those who were living in the United States were themselves working irregularly, often in badly paid jobs. They occasionally sent US$50 or US$100, but they could not be relied upon to provide financial support on a regular basis. The weekly budget was made up by the three or four-hundred peso contributions from Herlinda's four youngest sons, who helped out with their father after school. Income was thus very low in this household and in practice Doña Herlinda relied on regular gifts of maize, supplied by one of her married sons, as well as other gifts of food from her mother and a neighbour who had no children.

In summary, in Herlinda's household numerous family members were working, but either they were working in badly paid jobs, or they did not make a regular contribution to the family budget. But it was by no means always the case that the household heads in the poorest families generated low incomes. On the contrary, of the 31 households in Group 1, 13 male heads generated incomes of between 10,000 (£25) and 15,000 pesos (37.50) each week. Maestros de albañil (master builders) for example, were able to earn up to 14,000 pesos (£35) a week, although work could not always be guaranteed. Huarache producers in household workshops also fell into this category, earning between 12,000 and 15,000 pesos each week. What was striking about the Group 1 households was the low level of the husband's contribution relative to income.[13] An assessment of household income based upon the money available for basic consumption

[13] In Group 1 households male heads contributed an average of 4,500 pesos (£11.25); in group 2, they gave an average of 5,500 (£13.75) pesos a week; and in Group 3 male heads contributed an average of 6,700 (£16.75) pesos to the household kitty.

was therefore rather deceptive. It acted to obscure important differences between households where the income generating capacity was genuinely low - as in Doña Herlinda's household - or where it was high, with low levels of consumption arising from the way in which cash was distributed. Alfredo's huarache-producing household, which had one of the lowest incomes in the survey, provides an example:

Alfredo's household

Alfredo married his wife, Soledad, in 1963 and they had thirteen children, of whom one married daughter lived with her husband and parents-in-law. The household was therefore in the expansion phase. Of those living with Soledad, Pepe the eldest was 20 years old and the youngest child was a baby of nine months. The family lived in a crumbling inherited house on the Calzada Amezcua. The house was built of adobe with a tile roof and only part of the floor had been covered with cement and ceramic tiles. A water supply had recently been piped into the house, but the lavatory did not work. The family rarely ate meat or drank milk and bought eggs only twice a week.[14] The poverty of the family's everyday life stood in contrast to the relative wealth of Alfredo's eldest son, Pepe, who had bought a television for the family to use, and who was the only person in the survey to own a car.

Alfredo's father had been petty trader, selling fruit in the streets and Alfredo began producing children's huarache at home when he was 14 years old. He had worked for Jesús Trujillo producing huarache for export during the 1960s, before forming a workshop with his five brothers. The workshop folded in 1969 after one of Alfredo's brothers was accused by the police of committing a theft. The family used all the money in the _taller_ to bail him out of prison and pay lawyers' fees. Alfredo subsequently went again three times to the United States, staying for around three months each time. With money he earned and

---

[14] Soledad said "we spend what we have, if there's money we buy some meat, if not - nothing but beans".

saved he established his own workshop upon his return.

Pepe had worked in a furniture factory and as an agricultural labourer. He had also learned to make huarache with his father. He recounted that:

> "I was working on a farm, with pigs and cows. When I was about 16 I left the farm and started making huarache - my father was teaching me. I had no money but I had a dog. A friend said to me 'I like your dog, will you sell it to me?' and he gave me half a sack of leather scraps and that's what I started with, making cheap children's sandals".

In 1985 Alfredo and Pepe worked side by side in their _taller_, which was located at the end of a long _corral_. Each worked for himself, however, producing three to four dozen pairs of heavy-duty _campesino_ huaraches for sale in regional markets. Each earned between 8,000 (£20) and 15,000 pesos (£37.50) each week. In terms of the household kitty, Pepe made the highest single contribution, handing his mother between 3,000 (£7.50) and 4,000 pesos (£10) each week. Alfredo's contribution was erratic, varying between 6,000 (£15) and 9,000 (£22.50) pesos each week and Soledad said that on some days he gave her nothing. Three of the younger boys (their ages ranged from 14 to 12 years) worked as _zorras_ in neighbouring workshops, handing over their wages of between 500 and 1,000 pesos to their mother. Soledad worked as an unpaid _encorrelladoras_ for her husband. Total weekly household income ranged between 10,000 (£25) and 15,000 pesos (£37.50), or between 735 (£1.80) and 1,000 (£2.50) pesos per person.

Alfredo and Pepe belonged to a wider family in which the men placed a high value upon their independence, and they worked separately even within the household _taller_. To some extent they remained outside the _huarachero_ community and were not bound into a network of _compadrazgo_, or clientelistic relations with the _peleteros_. They had turned down opportunities to work regularly for clients in tourist resorts, preferring to retain full control over their own labour. Both also wished to be free to travel to the United States, to Tijuana (where they had relatives) or to Mexico City as and when they chose. This emphasis on male autonomy and liberty had in practice meant that despite

high earning potential, Soledad's family was poor by local standards. While it was possible that household income would increase as the younger boys grew older and began to work full time, this would depend on the extent to which they chose to support the household budget.

Alfredo's case was perhaps exceptional, but the data suggested that the incomes generated by household producers were in general higher than those generated by other forms of economic activity and that this potentially affected the economic status of the households, including those which were expanding. Roberto Gālvez' household, for example, fell into Group 1.[15] Roberto had married in 1972 and had six children all under the age of 12 years. With the help of affines and compadres he had established his own workshop in 1982 and in 1985 was earning between 12,000 (£30) and 15,000 pesos (£37.50) each week. The children worked as zorras and weavers for their father after returning from school, receiving raya in return. Roberto thus supplied the entire family budget of 7,000 pesos (£17.50), around half his total earnings, each week. While the amount of money put aside for basic consumption was a low one, at 875 pesos (£2.20) per person, the family ate out at stalls in the market, or in the plaza on Sundays and frequently on other days too; and Roberto was always ready to provide a few hundred pesos if needed for extra food. The higher standard of living enjoyed by this family occurred despite the fact that the household was expanding and Roberto was the sole contributor to the budget.

Among the households in Group 2 there was a somewhat different pattern. None of the household heads were involved in semi-autonomous, economic activities such as agricultural labour, brickmaking or petty trading (see Table 20). Seven male heads were employees in huarache-producing enterprises, and the majority of these were emergent households like that of Francisco's described above. A further five worked in commercial establishments located around the central plaza and owned by wealthy members of the local bourgeoisie (see Table 20). Men

---

[15] Roberto Gālvez' household workshop is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

working in the latter jobs were paid low wages - around 7,000 to 8,000 pesos (£17.50 to £20.25) but were assured of much more stable employment and this in turn tended to guarantee regular contributions to the family budget, even when the jobs themselves were not especially well paid.

In Group 2 households, household heads contributed proportionately more of their wages to the household budget although average earnings were lower. Of the 16 households where household head's income was known, eight earned between $7,000 and $9,000 each week. Five earned less than $7,000, one was unemployed and two households were female headed. Only three earned $10,000 or more a week. This again suggests that security of employment was a factor influencing the size of the household head's cash contribution. The distribution of cash in Doña Laura's expanding household, which fell into Group 2, illustrates this point in more detail:

Laura's household

Doña Laura married her husband Refugio in 1960 and the family moved to Sahuayo from Los Pelleros, Jalisco, in 1964. Laura and Refugio lived with five children, the eldest of whom was 18, the youngest 10. A further four children had married and were living elsewhere in the town. Don Refugio had worked as a campesino on rented plots, as a bricklayer, a loader in the market and as a street vendor selling fruit. However, in 1969 he had found work as a night watchman for the local water bottling company and had worked there ever since. In 1985 he was earning 7,000 pesos a week (£17.50).[16]

Don Refugio always contributed 5,000 pesos (£12.50) to the weekly household budget. This was supplemented by the earnings of a 16-year old son, who worked for a fixed salary of 6,000 pesos in the Cabrera factory and contributed 3,000 pesos (£7.50). An 18-year-old daughter worked as an encorrelladora and a 12-year-old son worked in the afternoons as a

[16] Don Refugio worked from 8pm until 6am, every day of the week. He was entitled to a two-week paid holiday each year, was registered with IMSS and was paid a 13th month each year.

zorra in a household workshop. All three working offspring took responsibility for buying their own shoes and clothes and helped to support the two younger children who were not yet working. The total income for food and other basics was therefore just over 1,000 pesos per person each week, and although the family lived modestly, there was less anxiety surrounding issues of money than in some of the poorer households in Group 1.

7.6 Female-headed households - a collective option?

As we have seen, women were subject to the authorities of their fathers and husbands and this had concrete implications for the ways in which household money was disposed of. Most Sahuayan women had only limited control over the family food budget, being responsible for items which could be bought daily such as tortillas, eggs, milk and chilli. Many were accompanied by their husbands to the market each week and the men supervised the buying of meat, beans and other goods. Nevertheless, despite ideological conceptions of female work as supplementary, many women were obliged to work, either because the incomes of their husbands and children were low, or because of difficulties in negotiating a fair and regular diario with their husbands. Poor women's primary allegiance was to their children and in general women's income was more closely tied to the household than that of their husbands and their earnings were usually absorbed into the collective kitty.

The importance of intra-household relations for the determination of patterns of household consumption was nowhere more clearly demonstrated than in the female-headed households. There were relatively few such households (seven out of a total of 66). but it appeared that consumption levels were higher when women were in charge of the household budget. In the female-headed households there was no clear-cut division between household and individual needs and the households were more collectively managed and organized. Women living without men also avoided a continuous cycle of child-bearing, which greatly increased

their freedom to manage their time and to undertake paid work.[17] All the female households were small by local standards, with an average number of 5.1 people per household, of whom an average of 2.6 were economically active.[18] Likewise, because Sahuayan women's social experience was home-centred and female behaviour constrained by strict moral codes, women were unlikely to engage in social activities involving lavish displays of wealth, or the consumption of alcohol. Consequently, these households ate a more nutritious diet and money had frequently been invested to improve the condition of the dwellings, for example to instal tiled floors, and in the acquisition of ornaments and other decorative items.

There were seven female-headed households in a total sample of 66 households. One fell into Group 1 and three into each of Groups 2 and 3. Three household heads were widows, two were unmarried and in two households women had been left to fend for themselves when their husbands had gone to live in the United States. Of the widows two elderly women did not work and were supported by their children. The third was Guadalupe Andrade, owner of a household enterprise. Of the four working household heads two were in domestic service, one was a weaver and the third combined both these activities (see Table 22). Of a total of 15 economically active members (excluding the women heading the households) 13 were involved in huarache production (see Table 23).

---

[17] The question of fertility was extremely complex. For many Sahuayan men, their wives' pregnancies were both a manifestation of their own virility and an expression of their "domination" of their womenfolk. Women frequently reported that their husbands had refused permission for their wives to use contraceptives. The issue of childbearing was also fundamental to women's sense of their own worth and identity and Sahuayan women often said they did not "feel right" when they were not pregnant. On a different but equally important tack, for many couples the labour of children was seen as vital for household reproduction and a guarantee of financial support in old age.

[18] Average household size across the whole survey was 6.4 people (see Table 16).

Table 22: Economic activity - female heads of households

Occupation		Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Huarache:	own <u>taller</u>	-	-	1
	weaver	-	0.5	1
Domestic service		1	1.5	-
Unemployed		-	1	1
Totals		1	3	3

Table 23: Female-headed households - occupational structure of household members

	Total	Own workshop	Employee in huarache sector	Weavers	Other
Group 1	3	-	-	2	1
Group 2	7	-	5	2	-
Group 3	5	-	2	2	1
Total	15	-	7	6	2

Raquel's household

Doña Raquel had never married. Her parents had died in 1965 and she had inherited the parental home. She lived with a single daughter aged 19, a bachelor son aged 32 and the 36-year-old daughter of a dead sister. Raquel's brother, Gerardo, was a relative of David Herrera, owner of one of the huarache factories. The three women were all <u>encorrelladoras</u> for Gerardo and they earned 12,000 pesos (£30) between them each week. Raquel's son Ramón worked in the factory and earned between 5,000 (£12.50) and 7,000 pesos (£17.50) each week. Raquel said they spent about 7,000 pesos each week on food, of which Ramón contributed between 2,500 (£6.25) and 3,000 (£7.50) pesos. Dona Raquel's house was "humble"

- of adobe with a tiled roof - but in good condition, with newly tiled and polished floors. The household fell into the richest Group 3 and was one of 16 in the survey which had a refrigerator. Household members ate plenty of eggs and milk, plus meat on Sundays. Each household member was responsible for buying his or her own clothes and shoes.

Concepción's household

In another household Doña Concepción lived with two daughters, Teresa, aged 22 and María Elena, aged 8, plus Teresa's three young children. Doña Concepción had always worked as a domestic servant, including for two years in Mexico City where she had worked for a relative of the _peletero_ family, the Lunas. In 1985 she was working for Enrique Luna and his unmarried sisters - they lived virtually next door - and until 1983 she had also taken in ironing. Concepción worked from 2pm to 7pm every day and earned 7,000 pesos (£17.50) a month.

Teresa worked as an _encorrelladora_ for the high-paying _Huarachería_ Santiago. She earned approximately 5,700 pesos (£14.25) each week by working a nine or ten-hour day five days a week. Her 10-year-old son-looked after her baby daughter. Work had run out a couple of months previously and she was currently weaving for the Herrera factory and earning approximately the same amount. Doña Concepción's eldest son Javier, aged 17, had just left for the United States and had already sent US$50. The women expected that he would send regular remittances in the future.

The two fathers of Doña Concepción's children provided no financial support, although one lived in Sahuayo and had worked as a public employee. The father of Teresa's children gave her 2,000 to 2,500 pesos (£5 to £6.25) every two weeks. Total household income was therefore approximately 8,450 pesos (£21) (although we can assume that Teresa kept some money back). Teresa's income was effectively the means of supporting Doña Concepción's 8-year-old daughter. The family, which fell into Group 2, lived in a tiny but reasonably well-appointed brick

dwelling with a modern roof and tiled floor. They had hot water and were able to eat meat more than once a week.

Female-headed households were found to be rather better off than those headed by men, at least in terms of daily consumption patterns. These findings were partially corroborated by recent studies of household organization in Mexican cities. Chant (1991), for example found that female-headed houses in Guadalajara, Puerto Vallarta and Querétaro were better off than those headed by men. She suggested this was because women from female-headed households were impelled by necessity to find more remunerative work and were able to do so because they were not constrained by their husbands. In the Sahuayan case, while it was true that marriage imposed constraints - many women were forbidden by their husbands from working and took up weaving or other work a las escondidas (in secret) - higher levels of household income in female-headed households absolutely did not arise from women's employment in more well paid work. Most of the women earned their money from working long hours in low-paid work such as weaving or domestic service. Higher household income resulted from women's having more control over their labour time, from their freedom to organize childcare between themselves, and from control over the management of the money itself.

González de la Rocha's (1988) findings, which appear at first glance to contradict the Sahuayan data, may in fact bear a closer resemblance. She found that female-headed households were more vulnerable to poverty because of the low valuation of female labour. While members in female-headed households in Sahuayo enjoyed higher levels of consumption under conditions of relative economic stability (such as prevailed in 1985), there was little to protect such households in the event of a deterioration in general conditions and an attendant decrease in the availability of paid work. While female-headed households were able to increase their incomes, they faced little prospect of real economic progress or the accumulation of wealth which could be invested, for example in property or machinery. Opportunities

for productive investment of this kind were heavily dependent on ability to secure access to credit and it was virtually impossible for women to enter into the purely male domain of credit negotiation.[19]

7.7 Conclusion

Family size and age structure were important determinants of the income generated by any particular household. Emergent households, with few children to support were under some circumstances able to generate relatively high incomes. As the families grew in size and the number of young children increased, overall household income tended to decrease and these families were the most likely to have difficulties in meeting consumption needs. These difficulties were in some households resolved as children grew up and were able to find full-time wage labour. Nevertheless, the domestic life cycle was not the key determinant of household income. In effect a series of different elements combined to determine the fortunes of any individual household. Some of these other factors interacted with the domestic cycle but others existed independently of it.

Most important, the better-off households were frequently integrated into social networks which provided access to a range of resources. These included in particular: forms of patronage or connections with entrepreneurs who might provide credit for productive activity, the acquisition of property or regular employment; and solid connections with relatives or others in the United States, who could provide accommodation and access to well-paid employment there. The existence of these extra-household connections had further ramifications

---

[19] Guadalupe Andrade, whose household enterprise was discussed in Chapter 5), had acquired property and invested in machinery. However, hers was a highly exceptional case. Development of the _taller_ had occurred with the help of her father-in-law, the town's wealthiest _peletero_.

for family members. The mobilization of contacts who could provide access to employment encouraged adult offspring to remain within the orbit of the household and, in return for such assistance, to contribute to its upkeep. Moreover, the increased income afforded to such households meant that children could remain in school for longer periods, thus increasing their chances of finding better paid jobs in huarache or other factories in Sahuayo. Households of this kind were therefore more likely to retain adult family labour and the increased income of some consolidated households was frequently attributable to the existence of social networks which transcended the boundaries of the household, rather than a simple effect of the incorporation of family labour.

In contrast, male household heads who had not established such connections tended to be engaged in insecure or seasonal economic activity such as brickmaking or agricultural labour.[20] Moreover, male heads engaged in activities with low levels of remuneration tended to have had little success in establishing effective networks of patronage, or other contacts which might have been mobilized in order to find well-paying employment for their children. Consequently these households relied on the incorporation of low-paid family labour, and in particular, supplied cheap female and child labour to the huarache sector. But the low income of some households was not always attributable to the poor renumeration of the male household head. In a significant number of households the male heads were engaged in activities with the potential for generating relatively high incomes, such as huarache production or construction work. In these households low income was a consequence of the men withholding cash from the family budget. While it was true that men engaged in risky, independent activity tended to hold cash for investment in the event of unexpected opportunity (for example, for the purchase of materials in the case of a

---

[20] Men who sowing maize on rented plots on the non-irrigated land to the north and northwest of the town were among the most poorly renumerated in the survey.

sudden order for huarache), the withholding of cash from the household kitty was only partially explicable in these terms. Local notions of male identity included the idea that contempt for material necessity was a expression of machismo (manliness). Men who were marginalized from, or who had chosen to remain outside the asymmetries of the patronage system and the humiliations of wage labour, were also those most likely to place a high value on their own personal freedom, and to defy the burden of family responsibility.

At all events in households where cash was withheld by the male head - through failure to establish relevant social connections, or refusal to bear the burden of family responsibility - the tendency was for a pattern of low contributions to become entrenched, with all male members of the household disposing of their earnings autonomously. This pattern stood in contrast to those wherein the male heads had obtained stable employment in well-established commercial establishments in the town. Despite relatively low wages, these men contributed nearly all their wages to the household kitty each week. Their children were not necessarily particularly well paid, but they too made regular contributions, with the result that levels of consumption in these households were consistently higher.

The significance of intra-household relations in determining the amount of money available for food and other basic items, was most clearly demonstrated by the organization of the seven female-headed households included in the survey. Despite low individual incomes, female households tended to function collectively, with incomes being pooled on a more equitable basis. Increased household income was frequently reflected in the condition of the dwellings and in the fact that female-headed households ate a more varied and nutritious diet.

Huarache production was the most important source of employment for household members (see Table 19). But different kinds of households were supplying different kinds of labour to the industry. The poorest households were supplying cheap female and child labour, with few members employed in the huarache factories. In the richer households in

Groups 2 and 3 connections with huarache entrepreneurs were a vital means to securing access to the better-paying jobs within this sector and young adults in these households had frequently gained entry to the factories on the basis of some contact their fathers had established with the owners. Likewise, the majority of the male household heads in the emergent households were employees in the factories or household enterprises. Their future economic fortunes depended upon the possibilities for securing patronage, with all that that entailed in terms of the provision of credit, materials and loans. _Huaracheros_ who had been successful in establishing a household _taller_ were frequently able to sustain a reasonably high income throughout the expansion phase of the household.

Broadly speaking the households in the survey were poor. Nevertheless, there were important variations in levels of income and these differences were not necessarily discernible by application of the domestic life cycle model. In reality, movement through the domestic life cycle probably functioned as the key determinant of household welfare among the poorest households alone. In such households family labour was the major, if not the only, resource and in the absence of effective social connections this labour was likely to be poorly renumerated. The progressive incorporation of family labour was the only route to sustained or slightly increased income levels. Thus it was only in these households that the alleviation of debt and other problems in meeting daily consumption needs arose purely as a consequence of consolidation within the domestic life cycle.

With respect to the huarache sector, there was no doubt that those engaged in independent or semi-independent household production were comfortably off in terms of local standards and, given the fulfilment of certain other conditions, this was true regardless of stage in the domestic cycle. Informalization, in the sense of a movement toward independent household production, did not therefore entail a decrease in individual incomes, or necessarily require the incorporation of family labour to sustain household income. In the final analysis, however, the

possibilities for increasing household income were fundamentally linked to the existence of extra-household social alliances. Households which had successfully established such alliances were able to _deploy_ available labour in an optimally profitable manner, but the availability of labour in itself was not a guarantee of significantly increased income.

8. The San José cooperative

In 1982 a group of huaracheros formed a cooperative union in Sahuayo. The primary stated objective of the union was "cooperation in the production and distribution of huarache and other leather articles".[1] But underlying this was a more fundamental desire to establish control over the acquisition and distribution of the raw materials necessary for huarache production. As we have seen in previous chapters, the peleteros had established a near total monopoly over the sale of leather and other materials in the town. While the peleteros had done much to promote huarache production in Sahuayo - and in the absence of a continuous credit supply the sector would undoubtedly not have flourished in the way that it had - household producers with little capital at their disposal were of necessity bound into a recurring cycle of credit and debt. The peleteros were free to set prices and to define the terms and conditions of credit arrangements. In practice the substance of the relationship between peleteros and individual huaracheros was variable and was frequently enacted within a framework of patron-clientage. The possibilities for producers to exert pressure to improve the terms of trade were often dependent on the peleteros's recognition and acceptance of a moral obligation toward the producer.[2]

---

[1] The Acta y bases constitutivas (statute) of the cooperative described its aims as follows: a) To work together in the production of huarache and articles of natural leather, and to sell them to commercial establishments or to the general public in national or international markets; b) To obtain in common all goods and services necessary for this purpose, such as raw materials, parts, fuel, maintenance services for machinery, packing materials and means of transport, equipment and other goods including necessary credits for the maximal development of the enterprise; c) To obtain together goods and services necessary for the members and their families; d) To fulfil obligations with respect to contracts and with fiscal and other institutions with which it has dealings, and to ensure the smooth functioning of the cooperative; e) The establishment of a loans and savings section by and for the members of the cooperative.

[2] As one producer put it "the compadres of Jesús (Trujillo) get the best prices".

Inevitably this situation invoked mixed sentiments among the huaracheros. Many emphasized the benefits and security afforded by credit arrangements and the loan of tools. Such producers often observed, for example that Don Jesús (Trujillo) "siempre ha sido muy noble con nosotros" (is a fine person who has always treated us well). Perhaps as frequently though, resentment emerged over the profound inequalities of the relationship between peletero and producer. For example one huarachero recounted that despite having worked for Don Jesús for many years as a maquilero, the latter had on occasion refused even small amounts of credit. He went on to observe that "they don't pay us properly for our work and when the orders run out they let us drop like a handful of flies". The cooperative was born of this resentment. Significantly, however, those who joined did not define their actions in political terms, although the dismantling of monopolistic control over raw materials would of course have changed aspects of the existing socioeconomic order. Rather, the unifying ethos which initially bound the socios together was construed in terms of social justice and equality before God. In this respect collective action represented a moral challenge to the profiteering activities of the peleteros.

The producers' attempts to break the cycle of debt dependency were from the outset compounded by the politically-motivated interventions of the state government, which had an interest in resolving - or appearing to resolve - a potentially explosive problem of rural unemployment in the region. Shortly after formal registration of the cooperative, various state bodies became involved in providing services and, to a lesser degree, funding. The entrance of state players into the local arena had one especially important, and partially contradictory, effect upon the internal organization of the cooperative and the way in which socios and their leaders perceived, and acted to achieve, their goals. State intervention held the promise, however uncertain, of investment on a large scale which could be used in the creation and capitalization of an independent enterprise with sufficient economic muscle to by-pass local suppliers. In effect, a more opportunistic, pragmatic approach to

the cooperative endeavour co-existed alongside the collectivist unifying ethos. According to this view, the cooperative was above all a mechanism by which capital could be secured from extra-local sources. One *cooperativista* succinctly expressed this view when he remarked that: "many *socios* will leave. The few who stay will buy their shares and the cooperative will become a capitalist enterprise". From early 1985 various projects for collective production failed in the face of a chronic shortage of credit or cash and, in the absence of any real economic state support, the majority of *socios* had by September reverted to producing for their own clients.

During these months a series of conflicts emerged among the *socios* and these were partly expressed in a division between the two leaders, each of whom were supported by a faction of the membership. The conflict revealed much about the inherent limitations of collective action within a political and economic framework which offered no real alternative to a structure of debt dependency, with entrepreneurs at the local level defining the terms of trade with individual producers. It also revealed an important disjuncture between the collectivist discourse which had impelled mobilization, and the material constraints which had to be confronted if the cooperative endeavour was to succeed.

This chapter describes the history of the cooperative, the way in which it emerged and the political and social background of its leaders. It looks at the various forms of state intervention, the ways in which these affected the objectives of the *cooperativistas* and the strategies adopted to achieve these objectives. It examines the cause and significance of conflicts which afflicted the brief history of the cooperative; and looks at the actions and reactions of the *socios* in the face of such conflict.

8.1 The challenge to profiteers

The San José cooperative was formally registered on 25 November 1982 when 50 huaracheros put their signatures to the statute.[3] The union was born of resistance to the inherent asymmetries of the structure of patron-clientage and the arbitrary nature of the power it conferred upon the peleteros, particularly with respect to prices. As one of the founder members remarked:

> "we formed the cooperative because of problems with prices...constant increases in the cost of leather and other materials...Jesús was the profiteer, he is the cacique[4] here in Sahuayo. Once he bet on a baseball game and lost - the following Monday prices went up in the peletería".

What required explanation was not so much the motive for collective action - there was little doubt that the peleteros lined their pockets from buying cheap and selling dear to the producers - but that the huaracheros did unite despite the fact that the existing economic structure strongly mitigated against collective action. Indeed, in taking such action the risk of damaging carefully constructed relations of patron-clientage - with all that this implied in terms of access to

---

[3] Initially the socios attempted to formalize the cooperative under the auspices of the Confederación regional obrera campesina (CROC), a government sponsored union. In the end the huaracheros refused this option because registration was conditional upon a declaration of political affiliation with one or other of the national parties. The legal status of the cooperative was eventually established after a permit was obtained from the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) which gave the group the right to form a cooperative under the General Law of Cooperative Societies. This was important because income derived from sales within cooperative societies were exempt from taxation. Upon entering the cooperative all members received a certificado de aportación after paying 2,000 pesos (£4). They paid a further 15,000 pesos (£37.50) for "admission". Each member subsequently contributed 28,000 pesos (£70) for the purchase of a plot of land upon which it was planned to build a tannery.

[4] In everyday usage, the work cacique was often used to describe economically powerful figures in the locality, particularly those who controlled resources and therefore wielded power over people's livelihoods. Used in this sense the term did not necessarily denote political power.

credit - was not inconsiderable. Furthermore, the huaracheros perceived themselves as humilde (humble) and singularly lacking in the skills and education needed for the formation of any kind of organization.

The huaracheros were mobilized by leaders who were perceived to possess the political experience and administrative skills they felt they were so singularly lacking. More important, the leaders created a vision with which the socios could identify, offered in a language which emphasized transcendent principles of Christian justice and equality before God, rather than political or class struggle. It was no accident that the leaders of the cooperative were active members of a religious movement which emphasized self-examination and prayer as a route to greater religious insight and a more Christian way of life.[5] For many socios (members), the cooperative represented a search for honest economic exchange, for collectivism and mutual aid, a challenge to the profiteering activities of the peleteros as both immoral and un-Christian. Thus, the socios frequently said they had entered the cooperative in order to work together "with conscience" to improve their economic situation.

Two huaracheros, Amador Valdovinos and Alfonso Gudiño, provided the inspiration for the cooperative and continued to be the driving force behind it. Compadres and active vivencistas, each nevertheless had a different history and political style and brought different knowledge and skill to the cooperative. Perhaps most significantly, Don Amador was exceptional among huaracheros in that he had travelled widely throughout Mexico. He had been a leader of political campaigns to defend the rights of travelling salesmen and had built up a network of contacts and experience to which he could refer if necessary. Don Amador was approximately 65 years old, a native of Sahuayo whose father had been

---

[5] Both were active members of the vivencista or cursillista movement, which existed within the Roman Catholic church. Participants in the movement took part in two or three-day vivencias (living experiences) or cursillos (short courses), where they were guided in these aims by priests and monks. The idea of the cooperative had emerged during one such cursillo.

murdered when he was a young boy. The family had relatives in Mexico City and at the age of 18 he had gone to the capital in search of work. After a period of hardship and unemployment, with the help of relatives he began selling jackets on street stalls, an activity which proved profitable enough for him to send for the rest of his family to join him in the city. Amador and his three brothers continued to sell jackets, eventually travelling as far afield as Acapulco, Aguascalientes and other cities.

Don Amador's first brush with politics occurred in Veracruz in the late 1940s. The police had begun to crack down upon street sellers, moving them on from their stalls. Through a fellow trader, Amador made contact with a local politician who supported the street sellers in the formation of a union of traders.[6] In the following years he continued to be an active campaigner for street sellers in various cities, including in Puebla and Tehuacan, where he settled and became well known as a political activist after 1952. Despite a progressive descent into alcoholism during the mid 1950s, Amador continued to mix with PRIistas and other political figures in the region and he was eventually invited by the Chiapas director of the Confederación regional obrera campesina (CROC), a government-sponsored union, to establish a union of street sellers under its auspices. The director, who later became Amador's friend and mentor, was subsequently killed and Amador returned to Mexico City in 1962 and to Sahuayo in 1969. He continued to sell jackets, travelling to the capital periodically, but also established himself as a huarachero with his own workshop. By the late 1970s he had descended once more into alcoholism, and it was not until he became seriously ill that he took a decision to stop drinking permanently. He recounted that it was at this time that he entered a cursillo which helped him to "become more centred and to understand people better".

---

[6] Don Amador recounted that he told the politician he was a native of Sahuayo. The politician replied: "near to the birthplace of Lázaro Cárdenas" and this had seemed to create a bond of trust between them.

Alfonso Gudiño was a much younger man (aged 32 years in 1985) and had a very different past. Also a native of Sahuayo he was born into a poor family. His father had been a sewing machine operator for Jesús Trujillo, but was alcoholic and frequently unable to work. To help support their family Alfonso and his brother began working part-time at the age of eight or nine. Alfonso for a time attended a local seminary, where he was received free of charge because his family was poor. In the end, however, he had to leave and work full-time because of the family's economic difficulties. He entered a household enterprise and eventually, because he was literate, was able to fulfil a number of administrative tasks the owner was unable to carry out. The owner subsequently rewarded him with materials and credit and Alfonso established his own taller. By 1970 Alfonso was producing huarache for Don Jesús Trujillo and by 1975 he became independent, producing painted huarache for sale on national markets. Despite his humble origins Alfonso had prospered, he employed only one or two workers in his taller but his wife did not work and he owned a two-story house and a truck. Economic success was in part attributable to a close compadrazgo relation which bound him to Jesús Trujillo.[7] Don Jesús had extended many favours to Alfonso, including favourable terms for loans with which he had bought and renovated his house. Alfonso himself set great store by his education, his willingness to manage his economic affairs and to judge when and when not to take risks.

8.2 Collective production and organization

By the end of 1984 some 30 of the original members remained within San José and a further two dozen or so had joined. Around 20 of the founder socios had left.[8] Between 1982 and late 1984 San José functioned

---

[7] The history of the Gudiño brothers was discussed in Chapter 4.

[8] The majority of those who left were owners of partially mechanized household enterprises, with their own transport and a regular clientele. This group had capital to dispose of and had expected the cooperative to function as a kind of business association securing

primarily as a supplier of raw materials to individual members who continued to produce huarache in their own talleres. The cooperative was based in a spacious rented warehouse on the outskirts of the town, which also contained a small office.[9] It had received a degree of support from local politicians, including a plot of land sold to the cooperative by the municipal president.[10]

In the early days of its development, the actions of the Fideicomiso de la pequeña industria, a government body established to promote small industry and the production and distribution of artesanías were particularly important. Although in the long term the Fideicomiso proved to be rather ineffectual, it was instrumental in creating the conditions which permitted the cooperative to become a functioning enterprise. In 1984 the Fideicomiso lent the cooperative 11,000,000 pesos (worth approximately £27,000 in 1985).[11] The loan was used to buy a second-hand truck and large quantities of rubber tyre from which to cut soles for the huarache. In accordance with its policy, the Fideicomiso had arranged for part of the loan to be repaid through the "purchase" of huarache produced by the cooperative. The sandals were distributed by the trust in state-owned retail outlets throughout the republic. In the end, however, the Fideicomiso was unable and unwilling to provide sustained material aid, acting instead as a kind of agent for the cooperative and attempting to promote its interests among other

---

access to credit from banks and government institutions in order to expand productive activity within their own talleres.

[9] Interestingly, the warehouse was owned by Jesús Trujillo, who rented it to the cooperative.

[10] The socios planned to build a larger factory space with its own tannery on the plot. The price of the land was fixed at 1,400,000 (£,500), but the cooperative was given a year to pay.

[11] Interest on repayments was set at 45 per cent per annum.

state institutions.[12]

In October 1984 collective production on a relatively large scale had begun for the first time. The cooperative began producing sandals for a Texan entrepreneur who had been exporting his own design of women's sandals from Brazil to the United States. Transport between the two countries had proved costly and he had decided to transfer production to Mexico, forming a partnership with an entrepreneur from Guadalajara. The sandals were unlike conventional huaraches in that they were woven onto a flat template rather than around a moulded last. The leather was pre-dyed and the soles pre-fabricated in Guadalajara. The sandals were marketed as fashionable shoes, aimed at 18 to 30 year olds and distributed in large retail outlets in Texas and California. Initially, the cooperative had agreed to produce 10,000 pairs of sandals each month but this had been re-negotiated to 5,400 pairs. The entrepreneur had placed great emphasis on the need for quality control as the shoes would be competing with industrially produced footwear in the United States. Each individual _socio_ decided how many pairs of uppers he could produce each week in his own _taller_, go to the warehouse and buy the necessary leather on credit. The _huaracheros_ cut the leather strips or _correllas_ and arranged for the weaving to be carried out. Once done, the _guajes_ were taken off their templates, and returned to the warehouse to be checked for defects before being mounted onto the soles. The cooperative was being managed by Don Amador, Alfonso and three other

---

[12] This process was unreliable and did not necessarily guarantee the kind of support the _cooperativistas_ required. For example, the _Fondo de Descuentos para Sociedades Cooperativas_ (FOSOC), a central government loan fund for cooperative societies had agreed to lend the cooperative 8,000,000 pesos (£20,000), but the credit had not actually been released by the end of 1985. FOSOC representatives had put the cooperative in touch with representatives of a Dutch development programme, who had authorized a grant of 100,000 pesos (£250) for raw materials and a further 600,000 pesos (£1,500) to buy vats for tanning.

socios, all of whom were paid a weekly wage.[13] The work in the warehouse was supervised by on of the socios and carried out by about 20 girls from Sahuayo and Jiquilpan.[14]

The socios did not necessarily commit themselves full-time to cooperative production - the majority continued producing huarache in their own talleres and selling them to their own clients. In this important respect the huaracheros retained a degree of economic independence and in the long term this had a significant impact on the potential for cooperative development. In practice the amount of work each socio was prepared to contribute depended upon a number of factors, such as the season, demand for their own huarache, the size of their families and so on. By early 1985 two groups had emerged, which reflected some of these differing considerations:

Los de abajo (those from below), lived in the heart of the barrio de los huaracheros. This was the most important group, making up 70 per cent of socios. They were owners of established talleres generating a regular income and tended to have four or more children, some of whom were attending independent fee-paying schools. The majority of this group (63 per cent of those interviewed) owned their own homes. In contrast los de arriba (those from above) lived in the newer colonia on the hillside on the western outskirts of the town. They made up a smaller group of younger socios, perhaps in their late 20s and with one to three young children. The majority were producing huarache in their own talleres, but these were recently formed and a regular clientele had

---

[13] Don Amador, president of the mesa directiva (executive committee), was paid a weekly salary of 10,000 pesos (£25); Alfonso, who was secretary of the cooperative, carried out administrative and managerial tasks and, along with the treasurer, received a wage of 20,000 pesos (£50). One other socio managed the shop floor and earned a weekly wage of 12,000 pesos (£30).

[14] The girls worked a 48-hour week and were paid the minimum daily wage. Their wages were paid with money from the Fideicomiso loan and with income paid after each batch of sandals was delivered to the Texan client.

not been established. Some also worked from time to time in larger workshops or as maquileros. Eighty three per cent of this group did not own any property.

In general los de abajo were unwilling to make any material commitment to collective production unless proper and prompt payment could be guaranteed. Nor were they prepared to invest time and resources in the production of sandals if this were likely to undermine their other productive activities. As one of these huaracheros observed:

> "I entered the cooperative in 1982, more or less at the beginning. They were saying great things and also we wanted to stop buying material from these people who control everything. I joined because I hoped things would get better (economically). What I earn pays the bills, but I wanted to make a little more, so we could enjoy ourselves from time to time".

By contrast los de arriba had no accumulated capital and when collective production began they dedicated themselves entirely to this activity. Precisely because they had no regular clients, they saw production of sandals for the cooperative in much more positive terms, as a potentially secure source of income. As one socio put it:

> "I was never sure of working. I heard about the cooperative from my father-in-law. They promised wonderful things and spoke of fabulous projects...the cooperative is my hope, all my hopes are there".

In the end, however, the actions of the majority los de abajo carried the most weight. Their reluctance to supply regular labour meant that problems soon arose with production of the sandals. Deliveries failed to materialize and the cooperative began to accumulate a backlog of unfilled orders. These difficulties were largely attributable to lack of credit and cash flow problems. The Texan client had refused to pay for the sandals in advance, claiming that packaging and transport costs rendered this impossible, and local banks continued to refuse credit to the cooperative. The lack of cash meant that pre-fabricated soles could not be paid for, leading to a bottleneck in early 1985, with many pairs of woven guajes ready for mounting, but without the soles necessary to complete the sandals.

Moreover, because the sandals differed from ordinary huarache they could not be produced as quickly and easily as the classic models and the *huaracheros* disliked making them. It was also difficult to find weavers prepared to learn how to weave onto a template rather than around a moulded last and many Sahuayan girls lost interest, complaining that the work was too time-consuming and not well-paid enough. Many *socios* were therefore obliged to find and train weavers in outlying villages, which also took time and was inconvenient. On top of this, cash flow problems meant that the *socios* could not be paid regularly or promptly, causing considerable discontent. Many began to withdraw their labour, returning to production for their own clients, thus increasing delays with deliveries. The American client complained persistently about the quality of the sandals which were delivered and by the end of April 1985 had taken his custom elsewhere in the town, leaving the cooperative with a pile of unfinished sandals and many finished pairs. Production ground to a halt and the *Fideicomiso* began to distribute the shoes through government-controlled outlets on the national market.

8.3 State policy, *artesanías* and San José

By early 1985 the cooperative was in a state of relative disarray. Collective production had ground to a halt, the cooperative's main client had withdrawn his orders and cash flow problems had resulted in an accumulation of unfinished sandals. The majority of *socios* were unhappy with the way the cooperative was being managed and many had stopped producing for San José altogether. Furthermore, as time went on the fundamental shortcomings of state intervention became increasingly apparent. The loan from *Fideicomiso* had been useful and necessary, but it did not resolve a more fundamental problem of credit and cash shortages, or tackle the banks' refusal to provide an adequate credit supply for the emergent enterprise.

The political motivation for state development of craft or artisanal production, and its inadequacies, have been noted by a number of authors. Littlefield (1978 to 1979) for example has argued that the

promotion of craft production for sale in lucrative tourist and export markets arose in the face of widespread agricultural unemployment and an unequal distribution of wealth. Novelo (1976) has observed that in practice the state has failed to provide sustained material support, focusing instead on the provision of technical advice and insignificant amounts of credit. The political rather than economic function of state policy has remained paramount and rather than developing in the structural sense, craft production functions as a safety valve, maintaining producers in the countryside. The authorization of credit and the extension of markets through promotional strategies sustain rather than develop craft production, which because it is labour-intensive, serves to regulate the rural exodus and to allay political discontent.

The political character of state policy with respect to production of _artesanías_ was certainly reflected in the way in which governmental bodies became involved with San José. A representative of the _Fideicomiso_ who visited the town observed, for example, that the trust's activities in Sahuayo were among the most significant within the state, with the potential for attracting further and more substantial interventions from other state bodies. Furthermore, the _Fideicomiso_ was directly accountable to Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, then state governor, and he had expressed a personal interest in the development of the cooperative during his term of office.[15] More revealing perhaps, were the actions of another governmental body, the _Instituto mexicano de comercio exterior_ (IMCE), the Mexican institute of foreign trade, which appeared on the scene in March.

The IMCE was founded in 1971 to stimulate and promote production for international markets, including the production of artesanías. Novelo (op.cit.) notes that one of the primary objectives of IMCE was to

---

[15] There were rumours that Cárdenas would buy a plot of land for the cooperative or present them with sufficient funds to do so themselves. The _socios_ had also heard from the _Fideicomiso_ that Cárdenas was to visit them personally in Sahuayo. By the end of 1985 the gift of money or land had not arrived; nor had Cárdenas been to Sahuayo.

establish a state monopoly over the marketing of artisanal products. Thus in 1973 IMCE was instrumental in the creation of a national commission for the export of artisanal products (CONARTEX). The formation of a centralized coordinating body was ostensibly to encourage foreign exporters who were obliged to deal with numerous and dispersed traders, but it also explicitly aimed to eliminate such traders, who would "no longer be able to compete with the government".[16]
In the Sahuayan case, it seemed that it was precisely this entrepreneurial function which prevailed. Indeed, rather than providing the kind of material assistance the socios required, the IMCE representative was concerned to use the labour and other resources of the huaracheros in the development of products, which would be marketed and distributed under the auspices and control of IMCE itself.

A meeting of the cooperative was attended by an IMCE representative in March. He proposed that socios who owned property should apply to NAFINSA for individual loans, mortgaging their property as security. Poorer socios were to "get together" with their richer compadres and arrange to cooperate in repayment of the loan. The individual loans would be pooled and invested in the cooperative, administration of the funds would be the cooperative's responsibility as would repayment of the debt to NAFINSA. The proposal generated a good deal of discussion - and discomfort - among the socios. At the meeting many agreed in principle to the proposal, but afterwards approached Alfonso saying for example "I can't mortgage my house because it isn't mine, it belongs to my wife...".[17] It soon became clear that the

---

[16] Novelo notes in addition that IMCE's definition of artisanal production included industrially manufactured articles (such as, for example, huaraches produced under factory-like conditions). In practice IMCE support has gone largely to those who already had some capital, or were already exporting their produce.

[17] It was true that in Sahuayo property was often held in the name of a man's wife and this did permit women to gain some control over the economic affairs of the household. It was also interesting that the wives of the cooperativistas without exception poured scorn on the IMCE proposal, declaring: "how can they imagine we will give them our house,

members were entirely unwilling to take up the proposal and a sense of dissatisfaction continued to prevail.

8.4 Division and manoeuvre

As problems with the production of sandals increased, and the prospect of receiving government funds receded into the distance, latent divisions within the cooperative became more clearly visible. The _socios_ became increasingly disgruntled at what they perceived as the leadership's failure to achieve results or to manage the cooperative's affairs efficiently. Their dissatisfactions arose in part from revelations about the illegitimate activities of the leadership (particularly those of Alfonso), and in part from a sense that they were being manipulated in order to serve the political and economic interests of both the leaders and representatives of state organizations. As we have seen, in the absence of capital the success of the cooperative depended upon the _socios_' continuing to contribute their labour (and ideally their property as well), and agreeing to defer payments until collective production was well established. In effect, the leaders and the state bodies sought to harness the labour of the _socios_ in order to set in motion a process of accumulation, which would in its turn attract more substantial support from governmental and other financial institutions.

The leaders were pursuing their own personal and political objectives and this affected the way in which various issues were represented at the cooperative meetings. From the _socios_ point of view the question of whether or not to produce for the cooperative was

---

which is all we've got, and we bought it after so much sacrifice ...anyway, it isn't ours, it belongs to our children, so they will have something...". There was perhaps some tacit resentment of the fact that they were completely denied access to the cooperative, despite its possible impact on their economic welfare. But at all events, it was clear that a pragmatic and realistic approach to economic activity made it impossible for them to contemplate investment in a project whose outcome was uncertain.

determined by material considerations. Those with regular clients were unlikely to take on production of large quantities of sandals for the union but some of the younger socios who had not established a clientele agreed to work full-time for the cooperative. These practical constraints were never addressed at meetings, which focused upon ideological questions and all too frequently consisted of nothing more than monologues where Don Amador harangued the assembled party, urging them to make more sacrifices and to commit their labour wholeheartedly to the advancement of the union. Difficulties faced by the cooperative were attributed by the leaders to the ignorance or moral failings of individual members, who were already acutely conscious of their own "lack of education". Both leaders sought to create images of themselves as much more than managers or political leaders, insisting upon their role as pioneers in the cause of moral improvement. Don Amador observed, for example that:

> "These people (the huaracheros) are very thoughtless...they are not educated. They don't want to think of the future that's why they have money problems...they tell you they don't have a penny but go for supper every night in the plaza...I wanted this cooperative because I saw how they were treated by the peleteros...before they got drunk every Monday, and now they don't because we have meetings, that's why I've always wanted the meetings to be on Mondays...and they're better now, they don't drink so much".

While Don Amador's concern was genuine, and in part motivated by his own history of alcoholism, a focus upon the moral and educational failings of the socios in practice served to reinforce their sense of inadequacy with respect to organizational matters, and simultaneously to reaffirm the position of the leaders at the centre of the union. It also permitted the leadership to control the flow of information about economic or legal matters (for example those relating to state interventions) and to preclude open discussion of more substantive questions affecting the cooperative.

The mystification of information about the legal and economic status of the cooperative allowed the leadership to refer to the content of various documents in order to gain legitimacy for particular

manoeuvres or proposals. The majority of the socios were unclear about the content of the statutes of the cooperative for example, which many could not read and which had not been circulated. Thus, Alfonso told a meeting of socios in June that: "by law those who haven't produced any sandals should be out of the cooperative, but as me and my compadre don't wish to ruin anybody..." In fact such advice was highly selective. The statutes did require each member to work at one of the activities defined as the work of the cooperative; and required them to do so regularly. The statutes also stated that those who worked for the cooperative should be socios. Certain exceptions to this rule were provided, but they specified that employees should be treated as socios for the duration of their employment. In fact San José had employed girls as wage labourers continuously between October 1984 and June 1985. This practice was never questioned by representatives of the various organizations, or by any member of the cooperative, indicating that in fact legal stipulations could be easily disregarded.

The leadership and the various state bodies had a common interest in securing the labour of the socios. Keeping them in the dark, and maintaining control over the flow of information, allowed the leaders to join forces with state representatives and to develop joint tactics for achieving their objectives. Thus the leaders frequently referred to "legal advice" offered by the representatives in order to legitimate a particular manoeuvre. When the IMCE representative proposed that individual socios should obtain loans, he also told the assembled members that those who owed money to the cooperative or who were not providing labour should resign or be asked to leave. He stated that "those who don't work should not gain anything, they do not have a right to a share of the 20 per cent of profits to be distributed among members...the law says that a cooperative is a productive entity and it would be better if they resigned".[18]

---

[18] Despite regularly attending cooperative meetings, Alfonso refused to let me enter a meeting in May 1985. He told the cooperative that the Secretaría de fomento de sociedades cooperativas (Department

As we have seen, the two leaders had presented images of themselves which were quite distinct from each other and as tensions heightened they were expressed in a rift between those who supported Don Amador and those who supported Alfonso. While Don Amador strove to create an image of himself as a humble man, whose status was equal to those of the other cooperativistas, he was in practice volatile and his speeches were frequently offensive and humiliating. Many turned instead to Alfonso, setting store by his dynamism and efficiency. Alfonso's perceived qualifications attracted a number of socios and to an extent the support he garnered was based on a realistic assessment of what was necessary for the successful functioning of the cooperative. Despite evidence of personal enrichment at the expense of the cooperative - for example Alfonso bought a new car in early 1985 - some socios continued to set store by Alfonso and to believe he was the only person capable of representing their interests effectively.

This support was nevertheless considerably undermined as knowledge of Alfonso's activities began to come to light in mid-1985. In January Alfonso had asked the cooperative to pay him a weekly wage of 50,000 pesos (£125). He claimed that because he had become so fully involved in running the cooperative he had lost income from his taller. He also said that his van, which he had used a great deal for cooperative business, was now worthless and that he wished to buy another.[19] The socios failed to agree to this proposal but at the following meeting Don Amador explained that the executive committee had agreed to pay Alfonso a weekly salary of 20,000 pesos (£50), and to lend him a further 30,000

---

for the promotion of cooperative societies) had "specified" that no-one who was not a member should be allowed to attend meetings.

[19] It was probably true that Alfonso shouldered the burden of responsibility for the cooperative. As he put it: "there are many problems I have to deal with as secretary, I am in charge of everything, I make all the phone calls, some of the machinery in the warehouse belongs to me, I lent them to the cooperative, but they've never thanked me...If there is no money to pay the salaries, I ask for loans at the bank and secure them with my own house...I have also travelled a lot in my van, none of them bother to come with me....".

pesos (£75) a week for a period of three months. It subsequently transpired that the committee had in fact agreed to treat the 30,000 pesos as "advance payments" for anticipated administration costs. Thus, without the knowledge of the *socios*, 30,000 pesos were paid to Alfonso each week between January and the beginning of May.[20]

During the latter half of 1985 Alfonso disappeared from the scene and Don Amador worked hard to distance himself from his *compadre* and to enlist support from members who were critical of his activities. Eventually, he turned to the various state institutions and sought their support for his continued control of the *mesa directiva*. By informing the authorities of Alfonso's financial activities he was able to mobilize their support, and to retain a position of control. As he put it: "All the authorities want Alfonso, (and those in his camp) to leave the cooperative, they are insisting that we elect a new *mesa directiva*".[21] Knowledge of these payments did not emerge until the cooperative's annual meeting in July, when reports were presented by the various committee members and new members of the *mesa directiva* elected. There was some discussion and when voting took place Alfonso was not re-elected to any position within the management structure of the cooperative. By September 1985 around fifty per cent of the *socios* had ceased to be active participants within the cooperative. Many were simply waiting for the cooperative to refund their initial investment before leaving altogether.

---

[20] In a private discussion Alfonso informed me of the agreement to pay him 50,000 pesos. Following this discussion Alfonso refused me entry to a meeting of the cooperative at the beginning of May. I had previously regularly attended such meetings as an observer. I was permitted to enter the July annual meeting on condition that I did not speak.

[21] Don Amador also sought to enlist my support. In early June I received a message to go and speak to Gregorio, another *compadre* of Amador and a fellow *vivencista*. Gregorio had won the lottery some years previously and had on two occasions lent the cooperative one million pesos. During the meeting Gregorio was at pains to defend the honour of Don Amador and to assure me that Alfonso had not exploited the cooperative, or colluded with Alfonso to do so.

8.5. Conclusion

The cooperative project was an expression of the tensions inherent in the existing structure of patron-clientage and the arbitrary nature of entrepreneurial power in the locality. The union had been founded primarily by two local producers, huaracheros with skill and political connections who had provided both the practical impetus and the ideological basis for collective action. As possibilities for state investment emerged, so too did opportunities for the creation of new structures of patron-clientage. The leaders or the cooperative became increasingly bound up in the mediation of relations between the socios and state institutions, and were themselves attempting to secure a niche for themselves within a potentially new configuration of political and economic power. The leaders identified themselves with the humilde status of the sandal producers, but at the same time adopted a paternalistic and demagogic style, with an emphasis on moral exhortation and visions of self-improvement through collective action. The basis for their legitimacy as leaders therefore rested upon their being socially and culturally the same as the socios, but also having the ability to extend outwards beyond the locality and the values of the local culture which they themselves embodied.[22]

In practical terms the collectivist discourse increasingly functioned as a means by which the continued participation of the socios could be assured. Whether political power or personal enrichment was the goal, the leaders were dependent upon the continued participation of the socios for the survival of the enterprise. For their part the socios were cautious; they recognized that the price of entanglement with the state might be too high - and result in decreased rather than increased autonomy. The huaracheros were loathe to risk what they did possess - for example property or means of production - and their participation was contingent upon the leaders' capacity to deliver the economic fruits

---

[22] See Lomnitz-Adler (1992) for a discussion of precisely this kind of caciquismo.

of negotiation with the government.

Novelo (op.cit.) has noted that state intervention in craft or artisanal production in Mexico has been characterized by two opposing tendencies. Despite a political commitment to "helping the poorest" a number of state institutions have in practice directed their efforts to assisting enterprises which have already accumulated some capital and, in some cases, were already successfully marketing their own products on national and international markets. The huarache factories discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis fall into this category. On the other hand, politically-motivated "promotion" of <u>artesanías</u> has in other regions resulted in insignificant amounts of credit being extended to village craft producers who, in the absence of alternative sources of employment or credit, quickly become dependent upon this assistance to reproduce their households. This kind of state intervention serves to maintain producers in rural areas but effectively impedes developments which might afford security of income and employment in the longer term. The <u>huaracheros</u>' encounter with state institutions differed in at least one important respect from the above and this difference fundamentally affected the way in which local producers acted and reacted during the course of the cooperative's short history. The state bodies which became involved in the Sahuayan cooperative were primarily seeking an entrepreneurial role, in which they would assume control of <u>marketing</u> - promoting sales, securing clients and taking a share of the profits. Their objective was to secure the <u>labour</u> of the <u>socios</u> in order to set in motion a process of accumulation which would ultimately carry sufficient weight to obtain credit from the banks and capital investment by the state itself.

In the end San José failed to take off because neither the state nor the local leadership were able to provide a viable alternative to the existing structure of productive organization. Huarache production had a long history of development in Sahuayo. It had provided a niche for a substantial section of the urban population and had to an extent preempted crises of unemployment. The 1940s boom in the huarache sector

occurred independently of agricultural developments in the region. Most important perhaps, while local systems of credit ensured that profits went to those who controlled raw materials, they were effective in terms of sustaining the huarache sector as a whole. While household producers were vulnerable to debt, huarache production was reasonably stable and it generated incomes which were relatively high in local terms. In effect, Sahuayan producers were less susceptible to forms of cooptation or to specious offers of aid and assistance than craft producers in rural areas. To an important degree they were able to define the terms of their own participation within any collective endeavour. The majority were well-established household producers with their own talleres. When state funding failed to materialize, the socios withdrew their support for the cooperative and reverted to tried and tested forms of production.

9. The politics of tradition

An examination of the forces and events which have shaped the socioeconomic and political history of Sahuayo must contend with the ways in which that history has been represented in the public domain. Like García Urbizu (see below), the purveyors of regional history have generally been connected to some branch of its bourgeoisie. The images they have constructed perhaps express experiential truths, or describe aspects of cultural and social reality, but they do not necessarily tell the whole story. Despite its elliptical nature, existing historiography was doubtless acceptable to the Sahuayan bourgeoisie and was consonant with its basic assumptions and perspectives.[1] But there was a sense in which the residents of Sahuayo subscribed to political, cultural and moral philosophies which apparently cut across class and other social divisions, despite the fact that these mythologized representations served to uphold mechanisms of social control and structures of inequality. This chapter examines the ways in which this hegemonic vision was perpetuated and the reasons why it was subscribed to by various social groups in the town.

> "Sahuayo is a town of great vitality. Its thriving industries produce sombrero and huarache, both of which are sold throughout the republic...The message conveyed by Sahuayo is one of morality, Christian faith, hospitality; it is a message of honour and of labour. At first sight Sahuayo appears countrified, unworldly...but upon closer inspection one discovers that it...conserves its traditions, retains the purity of its customs...is aware of its rights and defends them with firm resolve and a spirit of civic conscience." (García Urbizu 1963)

The quotation cited above succinctly captures the elements of which Sahuayo's popular image was composed. To the virtues of morality, Christianity and industriousness were added local pride and

---

[1] See Muria (1982) for an interesting and salient discussion of the political motivations underlying the regional historiography of Jalisco.

traditionalism - a determination to uphold local customs. According to local mythologies, the economic fortunes of the Sahuayan people had arisen naturally from the vigorous application of the above-mentioned qualities at every possible opportunity. Members of the Sahuayan bourgeoisie with a penchant for local history placed much emphasis on the benevolence and patronage of local elites in forging progress.[2] The working population affirmed the value of hard work and dedication to economic affairs, but was less disposed to attribute success to the actions of the rich. Despite these differences a vision had prevailed of a quintessentially Mexican pueblo, wherein local industry and enterprise provided wealth and employment for the people of the town and its surrounding villages. According to this vision, the huarache and sombrero industries - artisan-based, producers of essential articles for everyday consumption - had achieved almost archetypal status, symbolizing the kind of industry which will indeed flourish when benevolent patronage acts to harness the virtues of a conscientious working population.

Thus for example González wrote in 1978 that "although at first sight Sahuayo appears to be a town full of traders, only 16 per cent of its economically active population are of a mercantile cast". The author goes on to cite the assertion of a local dignitary and politician that "one third of the families in the municipality work in the fabrication of shoes for the 18 or so shoe producers mentioned in the industrial directory", a figure which excluded those engaged in the production of plastic sandals and leather huaraches. Superficially, this view was confirmed by censal materials which, in 1980, showed 18 per cent of the working population to be engaged in each of the three major sectors -

---

[2] Members of the local elite frequently affirmed that because of their wealth, the rich had "no political or economic interests"; they simply wished to see the community progress.

agriculture, commerce and industry.[3] Such approaches, which dwell upon the numbers involved in the various branches of the local economy, have left unexplained important dynamic processes which have structured and organized industrial production in the town.

While commercial activity did not provide a great deal of employment, it was the key mechanism for processes of capital formation and accumulation in the town. Even at the municipal level (which did not of course account for a vast range of economic activity occurring beyond the confines of its boundaries) a disparity in terms of the capital involved in each sector was revealed by the 1985 registers of the Chamber of Commerce (the Cámara de Comercio) and the Canacintra (Chamber of Industry). The Chamber of Commerce listed over 300 members excluding market stall-holders dealing in fruit and vegetables, an important area of activity. Among the traders, some 20 per cent were engaged in highly profitable activity including trade in animal fodder and fertilizer, vehicle sales, distribution and spare parts, beer distributors (franchised by national companies), wholesale groceries, hardware and general goods (department stores). A further 50 per cent were owners of some 15 furniture stores, 26 clothes stores, 25 pharmacies, 25 shoe stores, 14 hardware stores, nine paint and decoration stores, some seven jewellers, five peleterías, five fabric stores and four bathroom outfitters. These stores varied in size but a good proportion of them were extremely prosperous. A further 20 per cent was made up of smaller shops selling a range of goods including sportswear, toys, stationery, photographic equipment, gifts and so on. The majority of the remaining ten per cent were household enterprises selling bread, ice-cream, sweets etc.

---

[3] The labours of a further 23 per cent of the economically active population (EAP) were "insufficiently specified" by the census. The Censo nacional (1970) showed a rather different distribution of labour. Thirty one per cent of the EAP were involved in agricultural activity, 19 per cent in commerce and 24 per cent in artisanal activity. Government censal materials were, however, notoriously inaccurate and much unpaid family labour had doubtless escaped the attention of the census recorders.

In contrast, the Canacintra register listed approximately 225 industrial establishments, but the category of "industry" was used to designate a wide range of productive activities, including household workshops employing family labour. Among the 50 "factories" the largest included a crankshaft repair workshop, a producer of bathroom cabinets, a ceramic tile producer, two timberyards, a fruit packer (ejidal), two milk skimming plants, a cold meat packing plant, two clothes factories, four sombrero factories, three shoe factories and ten huarache factories. Only 25 per cent of the total registered had capital assets of over 5 million pesos (£10,000). The rest were overwhelmingly repair and service workshops (bicycles, domestic appliances, plumbers, tailors, locksmiths and so on), with a smattering of bakeries, ice-cream factories and tortillerías. Both the repair workshops and the food-producing businesses were household affairs, owned by members of the working population and staffed by family members. The Chairman of the Canacintra estimated that only 50 per cent of enterprises falling within the broad definition of industry had registered with the association, but that those registered included the most successful establishments in the town. The remaining 50 per cent then, was made up of a plethora of household workshops with low levels of technology and capital producing huarache, shoes (leather and plastic), sombreros, bread, ice, ice-cream and so on. In reality, at least 75 per cent of non-agricultural production in the town was occurring in household workshops of one kind or another.[4]

Furthermore, as we have seen, the fortunes of the local bourgeoisie owed much to the readiness of its protagonists to extend economic activity beyond the confines of the municipality or the region, but to have done so in a fashion which left the appearance of a locally-bounded economy intact. The Sahuayan entrepreneur above all eschewed

---

[4] Business magazine (1986), a US publication, quoted figures from the Chambers of Commerce and Industry indicating that the disparity between the commercial and manufacturing spheres was increasing. At that time 500 commercial and 269 productive establishments were registered with their respective associations.

public scrutiny of his or her affairs and sought to forge informal alliances with political figures in order to guarantee protection from state intervention. These protective mechanisms permitted the creation of an entrepreneurial strategy which, during the latter half of the twentieth century, focused on economic diversification and the geographic dispersal of investments. Members of the local bourgeoisie, including those involved in manufacture, invested in a range of activities outside the municipio, including commerce of all kinds, land, urban property, agricultural production and, more recently, trade in a variety of contraband goods. Images of a rural municipality, where economic activity was geared to the fulfilment of regional consumption needs, were thus ideologically constructed and had themselves served to protect the economic activity of the bourgeoisie from scrutiny by the state and its institutions. Representations of Sahuayo as a municipal capital supplying regional markets were, at least in part, the historiographical expression of the subtle and penetrating logic of concealment with which entrepreneurial strategy was imbued.

Nevertheless, it was undeniably the case that Sahuayo was a pueblo trabajador (a hard-working town). The sombreros and huaraches manufactured in Sahuayo were famous throughout Mexico, yet the political and socioeconomic significance of these industries, and of a range of non-agricultural productive activity in the town, has never been fully analyzed or understood. Sahuayo has been pictured as a cosy rural town, within which two comparable sectors - that of commercial enterprise and artisanal production - coexisted and provided employment for the working population. The purveyors of local history had produced an idealized history of the urban economy, within which a benevolent "aristocracy" (the local term) had worked to promote commerce, to provide employment for local working people and goods for the peasant population of the region. In so doing much more important processes of capital accumulation by the Sahuayan bourgeoisie - processes which went far beyond the confines of the region - were obscured. The fiction contained in local historiography lay not so much in its emphasis on manufacture,

but in its representation of it as the form of economic activity which most accurately portrayed the dynamism and financial prosperity afforded to the residents of Sahuayo.

9.1 The role and significance of rural manufacture

A substantial number of the working population were engaged in productive or manufacturing activities of one kind or another and the huarache sector in particular was an important source of income for working people in the town and surrounding villages. "Industrial" production, and in particular huarache production, was not the key to understanding processes of capital accumulation in the town, but it did provide employment and income for hundreds, perhaps thousands of people in Sahuayo and the surrounding villages. As we have seen huarache production generated incomes which were high relative to those derived from other forms of activity. The labour of women and children in the huarache industry, was also an important source of income for households where the (male) head of the family worked in agricultural production, construction or was employed in the service sector. The huarache industry was one of the most enduring features of the urban scene in Sahuayo and in 1985 was a flourishing and diversified sector. Thousands of pairs of sandals left the town each week, for distribution throughout Mexico, in the United States, in Europe and Japan. The fundamental difference between the sombrero and huarache industries lay in the former's failure to resist state encroachment; the huarache sector had prevailed because it _had_ done so and because, for a complexity of reasons, entrepreneurs and producers alike chose to retain structures and forms of organization which were less amenable to state control or a more fully capitalist transformation.

Merchants controlling huarache production had completely avoided the creation of a working class, which might have been mobilized against them by the _cardenistas_. And in practice it was clearly beneficial for entrepreneurs to deal directly with individual household producers. The potential for labour organization was contained and the economic cost of

maintaining a full-time labour force avoided. Expansion via the proliferation of household workshops avoided fiscal and social security obligations, dispersed and concealed the extent of productive activity from state scrutiny. Moreover, in retaining the household structure, entrepreneurs had acted to retain monopoly control and to prevent competitive growth. Production was organized around a network of social, rather than contractual relationships. Those seeking credit for production depended upon knowing and being known by other workshop owners and by entrepreneurs. The vast majority of huaracheros came from families which had lived for many years in the town and were firmly ensconced in a network of huarache-producing families. As important, huarache production depended on various forms of cheap "unfree" labour, in particular family labour and that of women and children, which was valued according to moral and ideological, rather than objective criteria. In maintaining a closed system, which repelled competitive growth and the introduction of more fully commoditized labour, both entrepreneurs and producers were able to ensure continued profitability.

From the perspective of the huaracheros the advantages of retaining control over the means of production, and the possibilities for producing and selling huarache independently of entrepreneurial control, were preferable to absorption into a fully capitalist - or worse - state-controlled industry. In Sahuayo the key to relative economic security lay in becoming an independent producer. The diversity and size of the market for huaraches meant that producers in household workshops found opportunities to produce and sell their sandals independently and occasionally to make reasonable profits. The possibilities for migration to the United States reinforced the tendency for huaracheros to act individually and to resolve debt or other crises by wage labour north of the border.

Moreover, while the credit-debt nexus created dependency it also contained the possibility for more positive forms of assistance, such as the provision of work when orders were scarce, or loans for the purchase of land or property. In contrast, factory labour was badly paid, and the

more impersonal relationships between factory owners and labourers precluded the forging of important patron-client alliances. Long experience had proved that the terms of credit and working conditions were more effectively negotiated on moral rather than political terrain. Thus whenever possible huaracheros mobilized links of compadrazgo, kinship and amistad with peleteros or others upon whom they depended for supplies or orders. The enduring strength of these relations of patronage and moral obligation had been most recently and clearly demonstrated by the huaracheros' attempt to form a cooperative union in 1982. The existence of the cooperative was an expression the tensions and contradictions inherent in the structure of patron-clientage. The extent of such tension was revealed by the fact that members of the union had sought the assistance of state institutions despite a long history of anti-statism and a general suspicion of government in all its forms. Nevertheless, the cooperative had foundered in the face of the state's failure to deliver the kind of assistance which might have offered a real alternative to the local structure of productive organization.

Existing historiography had provided an ideologically constructed and idealized picture of the urban economy of Sahuayo. Yet as we have seen manufacturing activity, and in particular huarache production, did provide employment and income for a good proportion of the working population of the town. But the continued success of huarache manufacture was not a consequence of a happy combination of benevolent entrepreneurship and a conscientious work force. Rather, it had flourished and endured because both culturally and economically its modes of organization and practice were consonant with the prevailing class structure and culture of social relations in Sahuayo. Within the sector there were also important possibilities for producers to contest or negotiate the terms of trade with those who controlled production, but to do so in a way which did not jeopardize the entire structure of credit and debt upon which they depended for their survival.

There were thus solid material and pragmatic reasons underpinning working people's conformity with a set of economic structures and relationships which, while unequal and exploitative, were preferable to existing alternatives. Nevertheless, the continued dominance of local elites could not be explained in terms of practicalities alone. In what follows I will make some exploratory comments about the discursive and ideological mechanisms which acted to reinforce the vision propagated by Sahuayan elites and to reproduce a hegemonic structure which served to legitimate and uphold the position of the local elite class.

9.2 Hegemony, resistance and the culture of social relations

In recent years theoretical discussion of power relations has been concerned with the question of how power is accomplished and reproduced and, in particular, how power can be challenged or resisted by subordinated groups. The literature has been influenced by Gramsci's (1971) notion of the state as "political society plus civil society, in other words, hegemony protected by the armour of coercion". Thus, the exercise of power derives not only from the repressive apparatus of the state, but is productive of meaning and truths about social and political life. And, as Alonso (1988) has argued, if hegemony is viewed in historical and processual terms, then the attempt to impose a "discursive" regime" on the whole of society can be seen as subject to contestation and never fully achieved. Investigation of various forms of resistance have examined the ways in which subordinated social groups have sought to contest the forces of capitalist expansion, or the power of politically and economically dominant classes, through forms of resistance which are not expressed through formal political organization.[5] Gledhill (1991) has remarked that these "unromantic forms of social action" may only be discerned in the "less visible history of the practice of daily life". In a similar vein, Alonso

---

[5] See also Laclau and Mouffe (1982), Nugent (1988), Ong (1987), Taussig (1980).

(op.cit.) has argued that the voices of protest "need not be articulated in a rational, post-enlightenment idiom to be political" and that forms of resistance often dispute and redefine the ways in which power is invested in social identities.

In a comprehensive analysis of class relations within different Mexican regions, Lomnitz-Adler (1992) has developed a series of concepts for the study of power relations and hegemony within regional culture, which he defines as the "internally differentiated and segmented culture produced by human interaction within a regional political economy". He defines hegemony as a "shared sense of reality diffusely constructed out of class domination" and argues that it is a fundamental concept for the study of regional culture. As a way of examining how hegemony actually works in practice he proposes a set of concepts which describe how culture is produced and negotiated between different cultural groups within a culture region. Thus "intimate cultures" are the real, regionally differentiated manifestations of class culture - the culture of a class in a specific kind of regional setting. The forms of interaction between intimate cultures constitute the culture of social relations and provide the means by which hegemony can be specified - "as an idea that implies structures of class domination in which cultural, political and social forces interlock".

While the culture of social relations tends to favour the point of view of the dominant regional class - the class which controls the frames of interaction for the production of the culture itself - there is also space within these frames of interaction for contesting meanings and truths. Thus, for example, in the culture of social relations of Morelos, a "peasant" intimate culture exists alongside that of a middle class bureaucracy. One of the frames of interaction between these two intimate cultures is the ideology of Zapatismo as a regionalist movement. Indeed, the state bureaucracy has appropriated or "stolen" Zapatismo, and commemoration of Zapata's birth and death ritually legitimate the cultural social relations that characterize the Morelos region. Peasants from the region generally perceive Zapata as a

regionalist and a Morelense, and as a morally superior being and in this sense they subscribe to and legitimate the culture of social relations. But at the same time, the martyrdom of Zapata is interpreted by peasants as proof that no truly honest politician can survive in the corrupt world of Mexican politics. Thus Zapatismo may simultaneously become a weapon with which to challenge the position of the bureaucratic elite with the very myth that sustains it.

Lomnitz-Adler provides an exposition of two separate Mexican cultures of social relations - that of Morelos and that of the Huasteca Potosina region. The main features of each of these regional cultures are summarized here as they provide useful points of comparison with the culture of social relations in Sahuayo which will be discussed in more detail below.

In the case of Morelos, its proximity to Mexico City had fettered the development of a regional economic and political elite in the state capital, Cuernavaca. During the _porfiriato_, the axis of the Morelos economy and government were the haciendas, without exception owned by members of the national Porfirian elite who resided in Mexico City. Regional elites were essentially local landholders with moderate-sized ranches, who also monopolized local commerce. The weakness of the autochthonous elite was demonstrated by the Zapatista uprising which, in contrast with other regions, was characterized by a _lack of_ leadership by local elites. After the revolution there was a process of "peasantification" in terms of land tenure and a reorganization of agro-industry around federal investment, as well as the expansion of tourism in the region. All three processes, which were under the political and economic control of the national state, mitigated against the re-establishment of local bourgeois or elite control. After 1950, there was an intense thrust of industrialization, expansion of commercialized agriculture and vast urban expansion. During this period national presidents began imposing state governors from outside the region and, on the economic front, industry was owned and usually managed by Mexico City entrepreneurs or transnational capital. Thus, after 1960 the local

upper classes fragmented into two intimate cultures: that of the middle bureaucracy which functioned in a role of brokerage through control of the state political apparatus; and that of a local bourgeoisie, whose importance stemmed from commercial wealth. It is in this sense that Morelos was weak as a hegemonic region. In terms of cultural production, the social whole could not be understood by reference to the city of Cuernavaca. Thus Lomnitz-Adler writes:

> "The petite bourgeoisie does not negotiate its social and cultural position through symbolic production in the context of regional social relations of production: it negotiates its position through its capacity to obtain - through its local sources of accumulation - goods and a lifestyle that places it in a specific position within a national ideology of class."

The regional core (Cuernavaca) had been consistently dependent upon a shifting, external source of power - the federal government - and on a managerial class which was paid by non-local firms. This had provoked a regional culture which Lomnitz-Adler calls "baroque" because it was stratified and pluralistic yet the positions of the social hierarchy were not created or controlled by the local elite. It also represented a flight from the construction of a locally-bounded identity insofar as the elite defined its place in terms of that assigned to them by a *national* culture of social relations.

The second region studied by Lomnitz-Adler was the Huasteca Potosina region, which covers parts of the states of Veracruz, Hidalgo and San Luis Potosí, but also portions of Puebla, Querétaro and Tamaulipas. Here the dominant *ranchero* class was characterized by a remarkable degree of social cohesion. The *ranchero* elite had created and attempted to maintain its own intimate culture and patterned forms of cultural relations between the classes and ethnic groups of the region. This articulation of the Huasteca as an economic, political and cultural region had been accomplished because, unlike the Morelos elite, the *ranchero* class depended upon all the major features of the regional economy to sustain its position. Its primary wealth was derived from land, and commercial wealth was also gained through the exploitation of

Indian peasant production in the region. Finally, control over land and commerce was upheld by control over local governments. Thus arenas that were crucially important for the reproduction of the *ranchero* class involved the central aspects of the economic and political life of the entire region. This was the case to the extent that a bourgeois class of merchants and professionals, which had established themselves in the region since the 1950s, had been unable to achieve political power or influence because their wealth and capital ultimately depended upon their being favoured by the dominant *ranchero* families.

Ranchero families within the Huasteca displayed high levels of intermarriage and networks for inter-familial and inter-regional communications, including, for example the rotating, periodic municipal fairs, which were principally sponsored by *ranchero* families. In addition management of the ranches themselves did not require a great deal of time or resources. Consequently *rancheros* had plenty of time for long afternoons in bars and at social events, such as cockfights. In sum there were plenty of opportunities for the consolidation of a social class which had "great potential for political mobilization, economic agreement and concerted action". According to Lomnitz-Adler a key ideological concept of *ranchero* hegemony lay in the idea of knowledge of the region. *Rancheros* were expected to understand the country, its ways and its people and to be competent in certain realms of cultural knowledge which were important to all classes. For example men were expected to know how to defend themselves, how to shoot a gun and ride a horse. The superiority of the *ranchero* class over the *mestizo* population of the region was in part based on an ideology of equality, which attributed the prosperity of some to their being "better, more distilled" versions of the same thing. Class domination was thus explained in terms of individual prowess and hereditary family traits. Urban wives, on the other hand did not always cultivate *ranchero* culture, but represented their links to civilization and (national) high society, through the consumption of high status goods imported from the outside. In contrast, Indians were defined as a different, racially

inferior kind of being; nor did rancheros cultivate Indian attributes in they way they did skills and knowledge of cowboy culture. Indeed, they were remarkably, perhaps wilfully, ignorant of Indian culture and practices.

Lomnitz-Adler's detailed examination of the class cultures within particular regions of Mexico, shows how various historical, political and social forces combine to produce distinctive patterns of class and cultural relations. A brief description of the culture of class relations in Sahuayo will show that, while it differed fundamentally from the culture which characterized Morelos, it did bear some important similarities to the cultural and ideological features of the Huasteca Potosina region.

9.3 Intimate cultures in Sahuayo

Sahuayo was a mestizo town and the Indian population of the community was negligible. The Sahuayan culture of social relations was made up of three main "intimate cultures". First, that of the local elite families, whose activities were predominantly commercial, although investment in land and real estate was widespread and significant. Second, that of the established working population, made up of artisans (including shoe and sombrero makers), builders, bakers, long-term employees in commercial establishments, domestic servants, peasants, agricultural labourers and so on. This grouping was concentrated in the older barrios clustered around the centre of the town.[6] And third, a more transient population, which had moved into the outer settlements or colonias. This group engaged in casual wage labour in garages, beer distributors, fodder warehouses, restaurants, in the market, or was employed in the

---

[6] I do not wish to imply that the established working class was primarily self-employed or artisanal, it also included a significant portion of agricultural and other wage-labourers. The point is that this group had lived for more than one generation in Sahuayo and was more intricately bound up in relations of patronage with the elite than those who had drifted in in more recent years.

agricultural sphere.[7]

The Sahuayan elite was a strikingly homogenous group. In contrast to the elites of Cuernavaca, the Sahuayan elite was not divided between a petite bourgeoisie and a bureaucratic grouping whose power derived from its position within the institutions of the state government. While various sub-fractions of the local elite class vied for temporary control over the municipal presidency, and worked to establish alliances with politicians at the level of the state government, the actual differences between these sub-groupings were minimal and political power was treated primarily as a means by which to smooth and facilitate economic activities. Indeed affiliation with the PRI or the PAN, and attendance at meetings or other events, functioned in much the same way as involvement with local business associations such as El Club de Leones and Los Caballeros de Colon (which were kind of social clubs belonged to by members of the PRI and the PAN respectively) - as a means by which information about prices, markets and other economic matters of immediate concern could be exchanged between friends. Shared economic activity itself served to cement loyalties and alliances between members of the local elite and these smaller groupings were often simultaneously involved in political activity in one or other of the PRI or the PAN. Thus for example, one informal local consorcio, made up of half a dozen members of various Sahuayan bourgeois families, together owned one of Sahuayo's two luxury hotels, plus numerous other valuable properties and also controlled the town's water supply.[8] Members of this group effectively controlled the PRI at the local level and had repeatedly occupied the municipal presidency. The same group organized much of the

---

[7] It was not possible to investigate the intimate culture of this latter group and the following discussion is therefore confined to a description and analysis of the established working class. Clearly, research into the newer group of the urban population would provide a useful and illuminating contribution to future discussion of the urban economy and political culture of Sahuayo.

[8] The water, which was piped into the town by the company, came from natural springs.

activity of the Club de Leones in the town.

The rich of Sahuayo lived within a tightly-knit community and were closely bound together by kin and affinal relationships. Gossip was rife and the social activities and personal relationships of members of elite families were the subject of endless and detailed conversation. The Catholic church was the focus of much social activity although women were the principal and most active participants in the religious rituals of everyday life. Thus in many of the (extended) families at least one of the women over the age of forty attended mass every day. All women went regularly to confession and Sunday mass was obligatory for everybody. All male members of the Sahuayan bourgeoisie expressed adherence to the tenets and principles of Catholic faith and anyone who did not do so would have been unwelcome in Sahuayan society. Likewise, local elites placed much emphasis on the observance of moral and "proper" Christian behaviour and they saw themselves as the guardians of the morals of the town. It is worth noting that public dances had been prohibited in Sahuayo until 1962, and even in 1985 some influential Sahuayan priests remained strongly opposed to the existence of the two discotheques in the town.[9] Moral codes were most stringent and elaborate around the question of female sexuality and purity. Thus, as we shall see below, women's movements and activities were the subject of strict controls. However, these moralistic and controlling attitudes toward religious belief and sexuality coexisted with an ethos of festivity and enjoyment. Individual families spent time, energy and money in the preparation of sumptuous feasts in celebration of baptisms, weddings and the like. At such occasions alcohol was consumed in large quantities (although generally not by the women), and there was much

---

[9] There were three churches in the town. The parish church, known as the parroquia stood near the square; the Sagrado Corazón, which served the northern part of the town; and the Santuario de Guadalupe which stood above the barrio de los huaracheros. The parroquia was the church used by the "high society" of Sahuayo. The 1pm Sunday mass was attended by many of the local aristocracy, with the women in particular decked out in fine and expensive clothing. The incumbent priest of this church wielded much power and influence.

dancing and jollity.

The notion of the bourgeoisie as "civilized" was integral to elite conceptions of its own superiority. As with the Huasteca, economic prosperity was explained in terms of individual prowess and hereditary attributes. Thus members of elite families were thought to be cleverer and to have whiter skin, or purer (more Spanish) blood than the working poor, who were defined as being closer to the Indian end of the spectrum.[10] There were four important ways in which the civilized character of the Sahuayan elites was symbolically expressed. First, through the display of wealth and the consumption of high status, preferably imported goods. Thus elite families built ostentatious dwellings decorated with gold fittings and furnished with expensive European textiles and china. Social gatherings such as baptisms and weddings were characterized by an abundance of food and expensive brands of cognac, whisky and so on. Clothing was an important marker of social status and elite women possessed huge wardrobes, many buying their clothes during trips to Europe or the United States. Likewise, these women wore expensive perfumes and jewellery. Second, by active and conspicuous participation in the religious life of the community.[11] Third, elite women were expected to conform to an idealized image of femininity which embodied qualities of purity and modesty, but also of refinement and elegance. Finally, elite families defined themselves in opposition to the Indian population of the sierras and that which was

---

[10] In a phrase which captures this attitude perfectly, one of Lomnitz-Adler's elite informants described the rancheros as "más rico, más blanco y más inteligente" (richer, whiter and more intelligent) than the mestizo working population of the region.

[11] Thus wealth and religiosity were associated and both signified "culture". Carlos Fuentes (1986) brilliantly describes a similar, although not identical attitude, among the post-revolutionary elite in Guanajuato in his novel The Good Conscience. He writes: "Like all bourgeois Catholics, Balcárcel was really a Protestant. If in the first instance the wide world was divided into good beings who thought as he did and sinners who thought otherwise, in the second, the local world of Guanajuato was divided into decent folk who possessed wealth and evil beggars who did not."

Indian was undervalued and perceived as antithetical to the cultured world of the "white" Sahuayan elites. Thus wealth was in itself a sign or marker of civilization and it was equated with hereditary superiority.

The established working poor in Sahuayo also comprised a solid and cohesive group and a sense of community was continually reaffirmed through collective participation in a whole range of social activities, by far the most important of which were religious festivals. The long-established and oft-repeated rituals which characterized these festivals thus served as a way of affirming a uniquely Sahuayan identity. Thus, during the festival of the Virgen de Guadalupe, which took place from 1 to 12 December each year, each of the 12 days was devoted to one the various gremios in Sahuayo, for example the huaracheros, or the community of Sahuayans in Mexico City. On the designated day that grouping processed from the centre of the town to the Santuario de Guadalupe, bearing banners and gifts for the Virgin. Throughout the festival, large numbers of the working poor rose at 6am to attend las mañanitas, to congregate in front of the Santuario and to listen to the music of mariachis (traditional Mexican musicians), some of whom were nationally famous and brought in from Mexico City. At the mañanitas, participants wore traditional sarapes or ponchos, garments which were never worn in everyday life and which would have normally been looked down upon as countrified. Sahuayo's other big festival was that of its Patron Saint, Santiago (Saint James). During the festival a wooden statue of Santiago astride his horse was taken from the Parroquia to a chapel in another part of the town. In a fascinating twist of culture, the statue was borne aloft by young men who represented the moors (conquered by Santiago when he appeared to Christians in medieval Spain), but were adorned as tlahualiles, mythical and Indian figures from pre-columbian Mexico.

But there were many other less immediately obvious customs and ways of doing things which, because they were so universally adhered to, made for a highly unified local culture. The Sunday paseo in the central

square, during which young men and women donned their best clothes and walked in opposite directions in the hope of establishing a noviazgo, provides one immediate example. In terms of everyday life, the rituals of food preparation and eating were also defined by custom and there was a high degree of conformity within this sphere. The vast majority of the working population - finances permitting - ate caldo de pollo (chicken broth), eaten with rice, avocado and jalapeño chillis every Sunday. Although home and kin-centred, many Sahuayans went in the evenings to the homes of neighbouring women who prepared and sold suppers of traditional Mexican food such as tamales (corn dumplings wrapped in maize leaves) or pozole (corn soup with pork). The cena was therefore a site of social gathering and a good venue for daily gossip, primarily for women. Wilson (1990) has noted the symbolic importance of food among the villagers of nearby Santiago Tangamandapio. She writes that the preparation of good and abundant food - defined in terms of local cultural values - was a mark of decency. In their efforts to dress well and to eat a varied and nutritious diet, the working population of Sahuayo also sought to construct an image of themselves as civilized and respectable.

It is important to emphasize that while wealth itself was a signifier of the superior social status of the local bourgeoisie, the Sahuayan bourgeoisie - like the rancheros of the Huasteca - saw themselves as better versions of the poor mestizo population, rather than as ethnically or essentially different. Many of the religious festivals were sponsored by the rich and they too were enthusiastic participants in these events, turning out for las mañanitas, and dressing up as tlahualiles in July. Such events therefore bound the population together in a kind of local patriotism which, while it did not deny social differentiation, did reinforce the idea of a unified local community.

On a more everyday level, the role of food was also important in constructing a transclass image of Sahuayan identity. Ehlers (1990) has noted that in San Pedro, Guatemala, certain sectors of the local

bourgeoisie had begun to eat American food, such as hamburgers and fried chicken, as a way of signifying superior social status. This was not true in Sahuayo, where a preference for Mexican dishes was universal and virtually no fast food was available. While the rich expressed their "civilized" status through the importation of foreign clothes, jewellery and other artefacts, they simultaneously expressed a kind of commonality with the people of Sahuayo through the consumption of food which expressed a powerful identification with the values of local culture.

9.4 Hegemony and invented tradition

Returning to the question addressed at the beginning of this chapter - that of a locally-produced vision of unity which transcended class and social divisions in the town - I turn now to an examination of Sahuayo's culture of social relations. In so doing I will draw upon Lomnitz-Adler's concept of a localist ideology, which provides a way of thinking about how "transclass identity groups" may be created and maintained within a particular regional culture. As noted above, the culture of social relations tends to favour the point of view of the dominant regional class; that class generally controls the frames of interaction for the production of the culture of social relations. According to Lomnitz-Adler, therefore, ideologies are required to ease the interpretive tensions emerging from the existence of a culture of social relations which responds to class interests that are, in varying degrees, at variance with those of intimate cultures. More important perhaps, in the case of Sahuayo, localist ideologies are ideologies about the nature and place of an intimate culture in the wider society and it is in this sense that they may result in the emergence of an identity which overrides processes of social differentiation within the locality. The idea of the nation state is always the starting or ending point for localist ideologies, and intimate cultures are thus

conceptualized in relation to that wider community.[12]

A recurring theme of this thesis has been that of various kinds of resistance to incursions by the national state. Thus the Sahuayan bourgeoisie had sought to retain control over its own spheres of economic activity. This had involved a number of strategies including diversification and concealment, through the development of geographically dispersed commercial activity; and the forging of informal alliances with influential figures within the state government. Likewise, investigation of huarache manufacture showed that at least some sectors of the working population had remained fiercely anti-government and had clung to ownership of the means of production as a way of securing a degree of autonomy and control over their own livelihoods. Thus an antagonism toward the central state lay at the heart of Sahuayo's culture of social relations. In what follows I will examine a number of ideological and discursive elements which gave expression to this antagonism and formed the basis for a powerful localist ideology. I will argue that while there were points of resistance, which opened up spaces for contesting the hegemony of the elite class, there were other mechanisms which acted to foreclose such possibilities. Most important, I will argue that an ideological opposition between the community of Sahuayans, and an outside world peopled by various kinds of threatening "others", created an enclosed local culture, within which the unity of Sahuayans overrode class or other social divisions in the locality.

The first of these mechanisms could be defined as an ideology of tradition, which referred to an idealized pre-revolutionary world embodied by the moral and spiritual values of Catholicism, an insistence

---

[12] Knight (1980), described precisely this kind of phenomenon in his discussion of serrano movements during the Mexican revolution. These movements were localized rebellions of entire communities under the leadership of their caciques. Characteristic of these movements was the way in which they cross-cut internal social or political divisions and were revolts of the periphery against the central state.

upon female purity and a family structure in which obedience to parental authority was strongly enjoined.[13] Second, the maintenance of traditionalist ideology and practice depended upon insulation of local society from potentially dangerous extra-local forces, whether political or social in nature. A process of cultural closure - which was directly contradicted in practice by the expansive and spatially extensive economic activities of the bourgeoisie and by widespread male migration - was accomplished through the continuous recreation of a self-referential local universe, in which alternative discourses or forms of behaviour were both denied and rejected as immoral and dangerous on the one hand and "uncivilized" on the other.

The way in which invented tradition worked in practice to uphold elite hegemony and to unite Sahuayans in opposition to the outside world, may first be briefly demonstrated through an examination of the meanings attached to the religious conflict known as the cristiada, which took place between 1926 and 1929. As we have seen, Christian belief and the practice of Catholicism were integral to ideas about Sahuayan identity. While the rich saw themselves as guardians of the town's morals and engaged in public displays of religiosity, even the poorest padre de familia ensured that his children attended mass on a regular basis. Indeed, Sahuayans were famed for their dedication to the Catholic faith and for the performance of religious rite, although unsympathetic observers went further and described them as fanatics or mochos (ignorant, superstitious). Religious practice was therefore one of the points at which intimate cultures converged. As Lomnitz-Adler's example of Zapatismo in Morelos demonstrated, it is precisely at such points of convergence that spaces for the re-negotiation of the hegemonic class may be contested or re-negotiated by subordinated groups

---

[13] Hobsbawm (1985), calls this kind of traditionalism "invented tradition" and defines it as a "set of practices...which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past". Such tradition is invented precisely because reference to a historic past and to continuity with it, is largely factitious.

within a regional culture.

The significance of the cristiada lay in the contemporary construction of historical events, and the ways in which a mythification of the past rendered coherent a vision of the present. A notion of Sahuayo as passionately and universally cristero was integral to the way in which all Sahuayans described themselves and their history. Gonzālez (op.cit.) notes that in reality the rich in Sahuayo opposed the cristeros during the conflict and this view was confirmed by some local commentators in their more cynical moments. Nevertheless, the local bourgeoisie had constructed a cristero past for itself, standing in opposition to that which was agrarista and - insofar as it was against the church - immoral.[14]

For the bourgeoisie, secularization contained the threat of transformed class relations and the breakdown of patriarchal authority and ecclesiastically endorsed "natural hierarchies" upon which the smooth running of economic affairs depended. For working people, however, Christian belief embraced a further layer of meaning and was associated with human identity itself. Former cristeros and other members of the working population often said that religion was "All we have as human beings, what separates us from animals". As Hamnett (1986) has observed, religion had long provided "a moral justification for the sources of legitimate dissent" and, to the extent that it expressed the universality of human nature rather than earthly hierarchy, the cristiada remained a potent symbol of such dissent.

Meyer (1976) has rightly conceptualized cristerismo as a symbolic expression of resistance to the invasions of a power-hungry central state, although, as we have seen, the motivation for such resistance varied according to the differing social positions of those who pledged allegiance to it. But ultimately it was this construction - through which Sahuayans defined themselves as unified against a hostile outside

---

[14] Representations of the Sahuayan bourgeoisie as cristero were fully reflected in local historiography. See for example Prado Sanchez (1976) and García Urbizu (op.cit).

world embodied by the national state - which prevailed. This particular mythification worked well precisely because the majority of working people were dependent for their survival upon a moral and social order which bound them to the rich in relations of patronage, debt and the wage-contract; and because the memory of social disintegration remained a vivid one. In the end cristerismo in Sahuayo mitigated in favour of, rather than against, the hegemony of local elites.

9.5 Female purity

The traditionalist vision in Sahuayo placed much emphasis on the observance of moral codes of behaviour and these were most elaborate, and most stringently exercised, around issues of sexuality and especially female sexuality. At the core of these codes was an ideology of female purity which was shared by all social groups in Sahuayo. The attendant need to protect women from defilement had a fundamental effect upon many aspects of social, cultural and economic life. The ideology of female purity, and the practices it enjoined, were therefore important elements of Sahuayo's culture of social relations. Local theories of male and female sexuality, and the everyday experience of relationships between men and women, compounded the issue of culture and class relations insofar as they comprised a distinct arena which held the potential both for upholding hegemony, and for forms of resistance to it.

The ideology of female purity meant that women were required to be virgins at marriage (both ideally and actually). Women who had lost their virginity outside marriage were deemed to have lost respect and to have become worthless.[15] Both unmarried and married women were expected to behave modestly and to eschew familiar or intimate relations of any kind with men who were not kin. Unmarried girls were under the authority of their fathers and brothers, but also that of their mothers and of

---

[15] This view was often explicitly expressed by men and women alike and I was frequently told that "There's nothing sadder than a woman who has lost her respect. A woman without respect is worth nothing".

local society at large. Girls were allowed to go out - with permission - to certain clearly defined social events, to participate in the Sunday evening paseo in the town square, to attend family social gatherings, and to the town discotheque. Their brothers were frequently present at these events to ensure that the girls behaved well, but in any case, gossip functioned as a powerful mechanism of social control so that the actual presence of male kin as chaperones was mostly unnecessary. The idea that a woman would be irrevocably contaminated by sexual contact before marriage underpinned the enactment of courtship practices and rituals. Couples who broke the rules, for example by eloping, were without exception obliged by their parents to marry.

Among the elite classes these rules had been superficially relaxed, to the extent that young men and women mixed freely in restaurants and the discotheque, and occasionally parties of young people travelled together to Guadalajara to see a concert or show. An appearance of greater informality in relations between the sexes did not, however, signal greater freedom in terms of sexual behaviour and female members of the elite class were expected to remain chaste until marriage and male friends would not have been permitted to enter the house of an unmarried woman unless she was properly chaperoned by male kin.

The need to protect female purity acted to restrict the movements and activities of women among all sectors and classes of local society and affected women's access to the economic sphere. Activities which were deemed acceptable as women's work were in the main those which were based safely in the home - selling food, weaving or domestic service. Women's work was thus also defined as an extension of their "natural" role as mothers and wives. Although some girls had begun to work in the factories, many married women in Sahuayo strongly disapproved of this new practice, arguing that if respect was to be maintained girls should at the very least, work in a separate part of the building from the men. And furthermore, participation in factory work had not impinged on local conceptions of womanhood or come to signify women's excursion into more

autonomous realms of activity. On the contrary, factory work was accepted insofar as it was defined as a temporary departure from the real duties of women. Indeed, the majority of these girls took on factory jobs in order to save money for elaborate wedding dresses or to buy household goods for the homes they would establish after marriage.

The fortunes of local elites rested upon their continued ability to resist the forces of state encroachment and the appropriation of locally-controlled capital, labour and other resources which would inevitably ensue should such resistance break down. The traditionalist ideology, which upheld patriarchal control over the labour and activity of both women and children, was one important means by which families ensured the reproduction of the status quo. Without exception the elite class upheld tradition, Catholicism and its moral values because these underpinned an economic structure which relied upon monopolies, patronage and various forms of family, subcontracted and cheap labour. Furthermore, as we have seen, the availability of cheap female labour was also directly beneficial to some household producers, in particular to huaracheros, as the low cost of weaving was necessary for the sustained profitability of household production. But the ideology of female purity was deep-seated and complex and it could not be explained solely in terms of its being economically convenient for local elites, for entrepreneurs engaged in manufacture, or for household producers in specific branches of manufacture.

9.6 Traditionalism and *machismo*

One question arising from a consideration of these issues was why it was that individual men continued to invest so strongly in the ideology of female purity, with all the constraints it placed upon relationships between men and women. The question was the more salient given the extent to which the actual boundaries of the Sahuayan universe were continually under threat. While it was true that to a certain extent young Sahuayan men were denied access to certain kinds of politically threatening information (of which more below), hundreds migrated

periodically to the United States and to Mexico City. The potential for challenging localist ideas about morality and tradition had also greatly increased because the development of communications - and increased access to television - provided visions of alternative models of social practice and behaviour.

In fact what was particularly striking about Sahuayan cultural life was the extent to which men adhered to traditionalist ideas and modes of practice, despite knowledge of alternative ways of conducting relationships. While men of all social classes had experienced life at university, in big cities and in the United States - and often talked about the greater sexual freedom they had encountered there - behaviour which deviated from locally imposed rules was strictly forbidden within the confines of Sahuayo itself. As one elite woman put it: "They [the men] get up to all sorts of things when they are out of town but in the end they all want to marry a virgin and they come back here to find a wife". Even men who complained about the tedium and stupidity of puritanical local society (and they were numerous), remained adamantly moralistic with respect to the women in their own families.[16]

The explicit rationale for control over women rested upon a particular cultural construction of both male and female sexuality. Thus male needs and desires were thought to be naturally voracious and not amenable to social control. It was also true that male sexual prowess, manifest in men having relations with more than one woman, or visiting women or prostitutes outside the confines of the town, was perceived as an expression of manliness or machismo. Interestingly, male members of

---

[16] Conspicuously absent from anthropological discussion of gender relations, are studies of the psychological and emotional factors which are the stuff of sexual relationships in real life. This failing is most evident and most serious with respect to the emotional and subjective reasons underlying men's continued investment in notions of machismo. Women's acquiescence in structures which seem only to oppress and restrict them also deserves much fuller treatment than it has received to date (although see Seidler (1987) for a discussion of desire and male sexuality, and Ehlers (1990) for a useful contribution to the question of female acquiescence).

elite families in Sahuayo identified themselves in some respects with a ranchero past and shared some of the characteristics described for the ranchero men in the Huasteca, despite the fact that everyday life in Sahuayo had long since ceased to be a ranching town. While elite women in Sahuayo were expected to display attributes of refinement, wealth and purity, this was not the case with the men. Indeed, like the rancheros of the Huasteca, many rejected these qualities and espoused instead the machista values of the charro and the rancher. Elite men in Sahuayo drank hard, used vulgar language and were at times cynical about and contemptuous the moral codes which they themselves prescribed for their wives and children. One powerful merchant, who was active and influential within the Club de Leones and the PRI, described Sahuayan morality as being from "la cintura por abajo" (from the waist down), implying that it was irrational and without real substance. Such contempt was not of course reflected in the way he behaved toward his wife and female daughters who were subject to the same moral strictures as other women in the town.

Among the working population, machismo, which at times resulted in men behaving irresponsibly and sometimes violently toward their wives and children, was at least in part explicable historically as a male response to the violence and social chaos of the revolutionary years and as a result of the humiliations and brutalization of the migrant experience in the United States (see Wilson 1990 for a useful discussion of these questions).[17]

As with the rancheros of the Huasteca, mythologized notions of what constituted a real man - the Mexican charro - were an important aspect of the localist ideology in Sahuayo. These notions defined a

---

[17] The phenomenon of machismo in Mexico is of course a much more deep-rooted and complex matter than these brief comments suggest. But Wilson's linkage of machismo with individual and collective humiliation is an interesting one. Octavio Paz' (1981) discussion of the Mexican word chingar (the principal meaning of which is "to screw over" in both the sexual and the sense of cheat or harm someone else) also makes this linkage and it is a theme which deserves fuller discussion than be undertaken here.

local masculine identity which stood in opposition to the urban and bureaucratic (implicitly effeminate) values of the national government. And it is interesting to note in passing that such values were part of a structure of invented tradition insofar as - unlike the Huasteca elites - Sahuayans had long ceased to be actively involved in the ranching world. But at the same time ideas about machismo directly clashed with the moral imperatives which characterized the overall structure of traditionalist ideology in Sahuayo. By insisting upon female purity - through which woman expressed the values of morality and decency which were also central to localist identity and to the structure of social control, - this contradiction was at least partly resolved.

9.7 Cultural closure, images of disorder

Ideas about female purity and the imperatives of correct feminine behaviour in Sahuayo were universally associated with the Catholic church and Christianity, which as we have seen, symbolized the moral and ordered nature of Sahuayan society and was opposed to the secular values of the world outside the municipio. More important still, the ideology of female purity, with its emphasis on women being protected from defilement, provided a rationale for controlling access to certain kinds of information which might have threatened the prevailing social and sexual order. It thus served to reinforce perceptions of the world outside the municipio as immoral and disordered. The insularity of local culture and everyday life in turn meant that those who transgressed from socially-sanctioned ways of behaving could be punished by ostracization, shaming and, if necessary, expulsion from the town. The following brief examples give some indication of the extent to which closure was maintained and provide eloquent testimony to elite perceptions of the need to control ideological as well as economic elements of social life.

The power of the elite class to enforce cultural closure and to expel those who posed a potential threat to the sexual and social order, was not inconsiderable. One accountant who was not a native of Sahuayo had settled there in 1976 and established a thriving business as

financial consultant to many of the emerging entrepreneurs in the commercial and manufacturing spheres. In 1985, he began an extra-marital affair with an unmarried woman. The affair was initially conducted in secret, but the couple were found out after they left the town for two weeks, during which they went on holiday and returned to live together in Jiquilpan. His girlfriend then returned to the family home to collect her things, upon which she was reproached by a scandalized family and locked into the house. In the face of such total opposition, the girl was eventually persuaded that she had behaved badly and agreed to remain at home. The accountant returned to his business and continued as normal. But in the following months his clients slowly began to withdraw their custom, so that by 1987 the Sahuayan business was barely profitable. A process of exclusion was also expressed in the social sphere, as the accountant almost entirely ceased to receive invitations to parties, baptisms and other local events. In 1990 lack of customers, and a general sense of social isolation, obliged him to move to Guadalajara and to establish a separate accountancy business there.

Access to politically as well as sexually threatening information was quite explicitly controlled. Thus, none of the left-wing newspapers was on sale in Sahuayo. Parents who held the family purse strings were able to systematically restrict young people's access to secondary education. While elite families could easily afford to educate their children to university level, in practice, only men left Sahuayo to go to college and, moreover, the vast majority studied medicine or accountancy or a discipline which would be of direct practical value to the family business. Politics and the social sciences were frowned upon and the censuring power of the prevailing discourse was evident in the fact that few attempted - or expressed a desire - to study any but the conventionally accepted disciplines.

For women, opportunities to be educated were even more limited. Indeed, for elite families, and for those members of the working population who could send their daughters to private school, female education was an indication of status rather than a means to an end and

girls were not expected to use what they had learned to prepare for a future career. The possibility of leaving the town to go to college or university was rarely, if ever, broached. And for women with little experience of life outside the municipio such an idea would have been difficult to contemplate. The importance of the restrictions on education should not be underestimated. In studies of San Pedro, Guatemala and Cuernavaca in Mexico, Ehlers (1990) and LeVine et. al. (1986) respectively have noted while women who had been educated did not necessarily get better work, they did achieve more power within the family and were able to influence decision-making in a more effective way.

In the realm of sexuality, controls were more specific and extreme. Reading matter which discussed sexual relationships, for example Masters and Johnson's report of their survey of sexual behaviour, was deemed thoroughly unsuitable and young people who managed to obtain books like this had to read them in secret. In the late 1970s a performance of a play by George Sand at the local cultural centre was brought to a halt when members of the bourgeoisie dragged their wives out of the theatre after hearing the line "women have hormones too...". And in general terms, the whole issue of female sexuality was shrouded in secrecy and partial knowledge.

Finally, within the enclosed world of the local community, the fear of public shame, and being the object of public opprobrium, was a powerful pressure for conformity with the rules of sexual behaviour. One woman, who married a divorced member of the Sahuayan bourgeoisie bitterly recounted that she had been unable to make friends despite living in Sahuayo for several years. Among the working population female transgression frequently resulted in beatings by their male kin, and young couples who eloped were virtually always given no option but to marry and settle down together, sometimes causing serious emotional difficulties for the individuals involved.

In general, however, fear of gossip was in itself sufficient to prevent women from transgressing the boundary of acceptable behaviour

and many women referred to las críticas (criticism) as the reason why they would never behave inappropriately. One woman, whose husband was in California, observed:

> "I go to parties but only when my brother's there, or I go with my brother-in-law and his wife. I never dance, everyone would criticize a married woman for that, then they would start telling him tales in Los Angeles and I would have real problems".

In sum, women were discouraged from venturing beyond the confines of the locality. The enclosed nature of local society and everyday life, and the lack of access to educational or other sources of information made them fearful and timid of the outside world. Moreover, those who chose to disregard moral codes of behaviour risked ruthless criticism and social isolation. One important consequence of this general state of affairs was that it was difficult for women to challenge the social position assigned to them. Because of the absence to alternative models of practice, the ways in which women did contest their role tended to reinforce rather than undermine existing structures. For example, women were the principal bearers of religious values, and to an extent their religiosity acted as a pressure upon men to fulfil their moral obligations as padres de familia. At the same time the church, and particularly its earthly representatives who were closely allied to the bourgeoisie, upheld notions of female purity and virtue. Likewise, women of all classes were strong proponents of the idea that their virginity should remain intact until marriage. They frequently argued that this was "all they had" with which to confront men and they used it to pressurize their boyfriends to behave well towards them, or to secure a commitment to marriage. The ways in which women sought to challenge the existing order, thus tended to uphold and reinforce a set of ideas and practices which restricted their behaviour.

The exercise of control over women's behaviour, and the denial of access to certain kinds of information, was one of the means by which Sahuayan culture was effectively insulated and defended against threatening social or political forces. Ideas of Christian morality and

the notion of female purity were also fundamental to the way in which a unified local identity was constructed and opposed to the values of a secular and disordered outside world. It was in this sense that they were an important arena for the enactment and expression of Sahuayo's localist ideology and they did much to uphold rather than undermine the hegemony of the elite class in the town.

In an examination of the ways in which notions of female purity affected women's access to factory work in Naples, Goddard (1987) has argued that the control of women and their sexuality, which resulted in their exclusion from various activities and spheres, could be explained in terms of women's role as boundary-markers and carriers of the social identity of a particular social world (in Lomnitz-Adler's terms within a culture of social relations). Goddard refers to Hegel's discussion of Antigone and his suggestion that women are carriers of family law, which is inevitably in contradiction with the law of the state. Thus the symbolic role of women may be to defend values and loyalties against outside forces. In a suggestion which may be particularly salient in terms of Sahuayo, Goddard goes on to argue that the maintenance of female purity "becomes particularly important in historical situations of actual or threatened destruction of sociocultural groups in the face of religion, the state and/or capitalism." In a study of nineteenth-century Cuba, Martínez-Alier (1974) has also observed that under some historical circumstances female purity, and control of women's sexuality, may serve to uphold the honour of a class, rather than that of individual families, and thus may serve a symbolic function, upholding social rather than sexual purity.[18] Linked to this is the idea that transgression would bring dishonour and disorder in its wake.

---

[18] In this respect Martínez-Alier provides a useful counter to classic discussions of the honour-shame complex observed by anthropologists in Mediterranean societies. Authors such as Pitt-Rivers (1965), Peristiany (1974) and Davis (1973) have principally defined honour and shame as attributes of families within small, communities, and argued that they are manipulated by men in struggles for the control of resources.

9.8 Conclusion

This concluding chapter has contained an exploration of themes which go beyond the original subject matter of this thesis and doubtless it leaves many questions unanswered. While the research for the thesis focused upon the history and contemporary organization of huarache manufacture, confrontation with the social and political realities within which the huarache sector was embedded opened new vistas and possibilities for investigation and indeed shed new and fascinating light upon the forces and events which had structured the history of sandal production itself. What was perhaps unexpected was the extent to which examination of huarache production led ever further into an investigation of the local bourgeoisie and of how the political and economic history of the region had shaped entrepreneurial strategy and practice, not only within the huarache sector, but within the urban economy as a whole.

From the 1930s this history had been impelled by various kinds of resistance to incursions by the predatory and interventionist national state. As I have tried to demonstrate here and elsewhere in the thesis, from that process of resistance had emerged an unusually self-contained and distinctive local culture, which had permeated the social and political life of the town and in turn acted to shape the organization of manufacture. This chapter is intended not to provide a conclusive or definitive analysis of Sahuayo's culture of social relations, but to point to further possibilities for investigation. It has suggested that idealized representations of local history may themselves be an aspect of a process by which the boundaries of the community are defined in relation to the "imagined community" of the nation state. It has considered some of the elements of which Sahuayo's intimate cultures were composed and has looked at the reasons why - for a complexity of reasons - these cultures had intersected in such a way as to uphold the dominant position of the local elite class. Finally, it has looked at the ways in which symbolic meanings attached to religion and sexuality had been opposed to images of a disordered and immoral world outside the

municipio and had played a part in the construction of a localist identity and to philosophies and modes of practices which transcended class and other social divisions within the locality.

APPENDIX I

The field research

Field research was carried out between August 1984 and November 1985 and the methodology was primarily based on techniques of participant observation. For the duration of the research I lived in the sandal-producing neighbourhood of Sahuayo. During the early stages a series of detailed interviews with elderly members of huarache-producing families provided invaluable information about the transformation of the huarache sector during and after the 1940s. Interviews were also conducted with members of the Sahuayan bourgeoisie who had owned peleterías, suppliers of leather and other materials required for huarache production. Following on from this, life-history interviews were conducted with some 120 huaracheros, working in household talleres of various sizes and capacities. This body of interviews provided a detailed picture of the history of huarache production and the way in which it was organized in 1985. Obviously some interviews were more detailed than others and, as time went on, closer friendships developed with about one dozen huarache-producing families and they continued to assist with information and discussion of the politics and economics of the huarache sector in Sahuayo.

This initial investigation of huarache production revealed the existence of three kinds of productive enterprise, although as we shall see, they overlapped in a number of important respects. The first was the household taller, in which an individual producer owned his own tools and produced several dozen pairs of sandals each week. This was historically the most common unit of huarache production in Sahuayo and it continued to predominate in 1985. Among this group of workshops were those, known as maquileros, who were subcontracted by the factories or peleteros to produce set numbers of sandals each week. The second kind of productive unit was the household enterprise. These were also located in family dwellings and were owned and run by household members. What differentiated them from the household workshops was that they had

accumulated some capital, albeit virtually always from outside the huarache sector itself, had increased the volume of production, acquire machinery and employ wage labourers on a regular basis. The third group was comprised of the huarache "factories", which were not linked to households and which had been established during the 1970s by entrepreneurs with capital derived from other activities. On the basis of this information two separate questionnaires were designed, one for the household workshops and enterprises and one for the factories. The questionnaires were designed to seek specific information about the volume of production, labour costs, the cost of raw materials, machinery and other equipment, and subcontracting arrangements where applicable. Fifteen huaracheros in household workshops, six owners of household enterprises and five factory owners provided information for the questionnaires.

Important and detailed information of a more qualitative and analytical nature emerged from long discussions with members of the San José cooperative, a union of huarache producers which had emerged in 1982. The cooperative had begun to produce as a collective for the first time in 1984 and its members were kind enough to permit me to attend their meetings and to become fully informed of all the union's activities. Approximately half the membership (a total of 50 huaracheros) also discussed at length in private conversations their reasons for joining the cooperative and their own explanations for political and economic developments which occurred within the cooperative during the fieldwork period.

In order to build up a more general picture of the economic life of the huarache neighbourhood, and to understand how the huarache sector fitted into the a wider urban economy, a survey of households supplying labour to the sandal industry was also carried out. Sixty six households participated in the survey, which was designed to collect information about the labour history and current employment of all household members. The survey also collected information about household and family structure, incomes and patterns of consumption. The residential

survey was particularly important in gaining a proper understanding of the significance of female domestic labour - the weaving of the sandals - a vital but easily obscured element of the total process of production.

Investigation of the history of huarache production inevitably posed more general questions about the development of manufacture in Sahuayo. Of particular significance, in explaining the rationale for productive organization, was the way in which a flourishing independent sombrero industry had been largely dismantled and incorporated into the sphere of state control during the late 1950s. During the latter months of the field investigation a series of interviews were conducted with the owners of the remaining independent workshops, with men who had worked in the sombrero industry in the past, and with employees in a state-owned sombrero factory established in Sahuayo in 1975.

Throughout the fieldwork more general interviews and discussions were held with local political figures, including those affiliated to the ruling _Partido revolucionario institucionalizado_ and the opposition _Partido de acción nacional_; with the chairmen of the local chambers of commerce and industry; and with other members of elite families with an interest in or knowledge of the urban history and development of Sahuayo. Representatives of the municipality and staff at the municipal office provided information about the occupational structure of the town and statistical information about population, land use and agricultural production in the region. They continued to provide periodic assistance throughout the duration of the fieldwork. This information was supplemented by statistical material from the offices of the Chambers of industry in Guadalajara and Zamora and by archival materials from the office of agrarian reform in the state capital, Morelia, and from the municipal archive in Jiquilpan.

REFERENCES

Alba C. 1986, "La industrialización en Jalisco: Evolución y perspectivas" in G. De la Peña and A. Escobar (eds.)

Alba C. and D. Kurijt 1989, "Urban Hacendados: The Industrial Bourgeoisie of Guadalajara", in W. Pansters and A. Ouweneel (eds.)

Alcántara S. and E. Sánchez 1985, Desarrollo rural en Jalisco: contradicciones y perspectivas Guadalajara: El Colegio de Jaliso

Alonso, A.M. 1988, "'Progress' as disorder and dishonor: discourses of serrano resistance" Critique of Anthropology 8(1)

Arias P. 1980, "El proceso de industrialización en Guadalajara, Jalisco siglo XX" Relaciones 1(3)

______ 1985, "Talleres comerciantes e industriales, una trilogía persistente" in P. Arias (ed.)

______ (ed.) 1985, Guadalajara: La gran ciudad de la pequeña industria Zamora: El Colegio de Michoacán

Ayata S. 1986, "Economic growth and petty commodity production in Turkey" Social Analysis (20)

Bienefield M. 1975 "The informal sector and peripheral capitalism: the case of Tanzania" IDS Bulletin, Vol 6 No 3

Brading D. A. 1971, Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico 1763-1810, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

______ 1980, "Nationalist Politics and the Populist Tradition" In Brading (ed.)

______ 1980, Caudillo and Peasant in the Mexican Revolution, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Brass T. 1986, "The elementary structures of kinship: Unfree relations and the production of commodities" Social Analysis (20)

Bravo Ugarte J. 1962-64, Historia Sucinta de Michoacán, Mexico City: Editorial Jus

Calleja M. 1984, "Dependencia y crecimiento industrial: Las unidades domésticas y la producción de calzado en Leon, Guanajuato" Relaciones 5(17), Zamora: El Colegio de Michoacán

Caplan P. (ed.) 1989, The cultural construction of sexuality, London: Routledge

Cardoso F. 1975, "The City and Politics" In J. Hardoy (ed.)

Castells M. 1979, City, Class and Power, London: MacMillan

Cerutti M. 1989, "The Formation and Consolidation of a Regional Bourgeoisie in Northeastern Mexico (Monterrey: From Reform to Revolution), in W. Pansters and A, Ouweneel (eds.)

Chant S. 1991, Women and Survival in Mexican Cities: Perspectives on Gender, labour Markets and Low-income Households, Manchester: University of Manchester Press

Chevalier F. 1963, Land and Society in Colonial México, Berkeley: University of California Press

Connolly P. 1985, "The Politics of the Informal Sector: a Critique" in N. Redclift and E. Mingione (eds.)

Davis J. (1973), Land and Family in Pisticci London: Athlone Press

De la Peña 1980, "Evolución agrícola y poder regional en el sur de Jalisco" Revista Jalisco 1, Guadalajara

______ 1981, "Regional Change, Kinship Ideology and Family Strategies in Southern Jalisco"

______ 1984, "Ideology and Practice in Southern Jalisco: Peasants, Rancheros, and Urban Entrepreneurs" in R. Smith (ed.)

De la Peña G. and A. Escobar (eds.) 1986 Cambio regional, mercado de trabajo y vida obrera en Jalisco, Guadalajara: Colegio de Jalisco

De la Peña G. 1986, "Mercados de trabajo y articulación regional: apunte sobre el caso de Guadalajara y el occidente mexicano" in G. De la Peña and A. Escobar (eds.)

De la Peña G., J. Duran, A. Escobar and J. García de Alba 1990, Crisis, conflicto y sobrevivencia, Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara

Duran J. 1985, "Siglo y medio en el camino de la industrialización" in P. Arias (ed.)

Edholm F., O. Harris and K. Young 1977, "Conceptualising Women" Critique of Anthropology 9/10

Ehlers T. 1990, Silent Looms, Boulder, San Francisco and London: Westview Press

Escobar A. 1986, "Patrones de organización social en el mercado de trabajo manual de Guadalajara" in G. de la Peña and A. Escobar (eds.)

______ 1988, "The Rise and Fall of an Urban labour Market: Economic Crisis and the Fate of Small Workshops in Guadalajara, Mexico" Bulletin of Latin American Research 7(2)

Escobar A. and M. González de la Rocha 1991, Social Responses to Mexico's Economic Crisis of the 1980s, San Diego: University of California Press

Fuentes C. 1986, The Good Conscience, London: Andre Deutsch

Galvez Montes E. 1959, Ensayo Económico del Lago y de la Ciénega de Chapala Mexico City: Imp. Aldina

García Urbizu F. 1963, Zamora y Sahuayo Zamora: Talleres Guía

Gilly A. 1982, The Mexican Revolution London: Verso Press

Gledhill J. 1985, "The Peasantry in History: Some Notes on Latin American Research" Critique of Anthropology 5(1)

______ 1988, "Agrarian social movements and forms of consciousness", Bulletin of Latin American Research 7(2)

______ 1991, Casi Nada: A study of agrarian reform in the homeland of cardenismo, Austin: University of Texas Press

Goddard V. 1989, "Honour and Shame: the control of women's sexuality and group identity in Naples" in P. Caplan (ed.)

González L. 1974, San José de Gracia Austin: Universtity of Texas Press

______ 1979, Sahuayo, Morelia: Gobierno del Estado de Michoacán

González de la Rocha M. 1988, "Economic Crisis, Domestic Reorganisation and Women's Work in Guadalajara, Mexico" Bulletin of Latin American Research 7(2)

Gramsci A. 1971, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, London: Lawrence and Wishart

Gudiño Villanueva J. 1978, Recuerdos de Sahuayo, Guadalajara

Hamnett B. 1986, Roots of Insurgency: Mexicon Regions, 1750-1824, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Hansen R. D. 1971, The Politics of Mexican Development Baltimore and London: John Hopkins Press

Hardoy J. (ed.) 1975, Urbanization in Latin America: Approaches and Issues New York: Anchor Books

Harris O. 1981, "Households as Natural Units" in Young, Wolkowitz, McCullogh (eds.)

Hart K. 1973, "Informal income opportunities and urban employment in Ghana" Jouranl of Modern African Studies, Vol 2

Helm J. (ed.) 1965, Essays in Economic Anthropology, New York: Academic Press

Hewitt de Alcántara C. 1978, La modernización de la agricultura mexicana, 1940-1970 Mexico City: Siglo XXI Editores

______ 1980, "Land Reform, Livelihood and Power in Rural Mexico" in D. Preston (ed.)

Hobsbawm, E 1985, The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Humphrey J. 1987, Gender and Work in the Third World: Sexual Divisions in Brazilian Industry London and New York: Tavistock Publications

Jelin E. 1991, Family, household + gender relations in Latin America *

Johnson E. 1970, The Organization of Space in Developing Countries Harvard: Harvard University Press

Kaplan D. 1965, "The Mexican Market Place Then and Now" in J Helm (ed.)

Knight A. 1980, "Peasant and Caudillo in Revolutionary Mexico 1910-1917" in D. Brading (ed.)

Laclau E. and C. Mouffe 1982, "Recasting Marxism: Hegemony and New Political Movements", Socialist Review 66

Lailson S. 1980, "Expansión limitada y proliferación horizontal: La industria de la ropa y del tejido de punto en Guadalajara" Relaciones 1(3), Zamora: El Colegio de Michoacán

LeVine S.E, C. Sunderland and F. M. Tapia Oribe 1986, "The Marital Mortality of Mexican Women: An Urban Study", Journal of Anthropological Research 42

* London : Kegan Paul International

Littlefield A. 1978-79, "The Expansion of Capitalist Relations of Production in Mexican Crafts" Journal of Peasant Studies 6

Llaca P. 1940, Diccionario enciclopédico del estado de Michoacán, Secretaría de hacienda y Crédito Publico

Lomnitz L. 1977, Networks and Marginality: Life in a Mexican Shanty Town New York: Academic Press

Lomnitz L. and M. Perez-Lisaur 1987, A Mexican Elite Family 1820-1980, Princeton: Princeton University Press

Lomnitz-Adler C. 1992, Exits from the labyrinth: culture and ideology in the Mexican national space, Berkeley: University of California press

Long N. and B. Roberts 1984, Miners, peasants and entrepreneurs: regional development in the central highlands of Peru, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Maher V. 1981, "Work, Consumption and Authority within the Household: A Moroccan Case" in Young K., C. Wolkowitz and R McCullagh (eds.)

Martínez-Alier V. 1974, Marriage, Class and Colour in Nineteenth Century Cuba, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Marx C. 1976, Capital, Volume I, London: Penguin Books

______ 1978, Capital, Volume II, London: Penguin Books

Mendels F. C. 1972, "Protoindustrialisation: The First Phase of the Industrialisation Process" Journal of Economic History 32

Meyer J. 1976, The Cristero Rebellion: the Mexican People between Church and State, 1926-1929, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Miranda J. 1962, Humboldt y México, Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

Moreno H. 1980, Cotija Morelia: Gobierno del estado de Michoacán

______ 1980, Guaracha: tiempos viejos, tiempos nuevos Mexico City: FONAPAS and el Colegio de Michoacán

Moser C. 1978, "Informal Sector of Petty Commodity Production: Dualism or Dependence in Urban Development" World Development 6

Moser C. and K. Young (eds.) 1981, Women and the Informal Sector, Institute of Development Studies Bulletin, Sussex University

Morse R. 1971, "Trends and Issues in Latin American Urban Research" _Latin American Research Review_ 6(1)

Muria J. 1982, "Notas sobre la historiografía regional jalisciense en el siglo XX" _Relaciones_ 10

Novelo V. 1976, _Artesanías y Capitalismo en México_ Mexico City: Septimah

Nugent D. 1987, "Mexico's Rural populations and _La Crisis_: Economic Crisis or Legitimation Crisis" _Critique of Anthropology_ 7(3)

Ochoa A. 1985, _Los insurgentes de Mezcala_, Zamora: El Colegio de Michoacán

______ 1985, "Política y un poco de agrarismo en la Bolsa de Guaracha 1911-1940" Zamora: El Colegio de Michoacán (mimeo)

Ong A. 1987, _Spirits of resistance and capitalist discipline_, Albany: State University of New York Press

Pansters W. and A Ouweneel (eds.) 1989, _Region, State and Capitalism in Mexico: nineteenth and twentieth centuries_, Amsterdam: CEDLA

Paz O. 1981, _El laberinto de la soledad_ Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica

Peristiany J. (ed.) 1974, _Honour and Shame, The Values of Mediterranean Society_, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press

Pitt-Rivers J. (1965), "Honour and Social Status" in _Peristiany_ (ed.)

Prado Sánchez J. 1976, _Sahuayo: Tradiciones y Leyendas_ Sahuayo: Edición del autor

Preston D. (ed) 1980, _Environment, Society and Rural Change in Latin America_, Chichester: John Wiley

Quijano A. 1974, "The Marginal Pole of the Economy and the Marginalized Labour Force" _Economy and Society_ 3(4)

Redclift N. and E. Mingione (eds.) 1985, _Beyond Employment: Household, Gender and Subsistence_, Oxford: Basil Blackwell

Riviere D'Arc H. 1973, _Guadalajara y su región_, México City, SepSetentas 106

______ 1980, "Change and Rural Emigration in Rural Mexico" in D. Preston (ed.)

______ 1984, "Fueron los años sesentas para Guadalajara y su región los últimos de una sociedad comercial y rural?" in Encuentro 1(4)

Roberts B.R. 1978, Cities of Peasants, London: Edward Arnold

Romero Flores J. 1960, Diccionario michoacano de historia y geografía Morelia: Talleres Tipográficos de la Escuela Técnica Industrial

______ 1977, Historia de Michoacán, México City: Costa-Amic

Romero Vargas J. 1973, Cotija cuna de trotamundos, Mexico City: Editorial Progreso

Sahagún Cortes E. 1939, Informe general sobre la exploración sanitaria de Sahuayo, Michoacán y lugares circunvecinos, Mexico City

Sanchez R. 1896, Bosquejo estadístico e histórico del distrito de Jiquilpan de Juarez, Morelia: Imprenta de la Escuela Industrial Militar Porfirio Díaz

Scott A. 1986, "Why rethink petty commodity production?" Social Analysis (20)

Seidler V. 1987, "Reason, desire and male sexuality" in P. Caplan (ed.)

Smith C. 1980, "On Urban Primacy, Export Dependency and Class Struggle in Peripheral Areas of World Capitalism" Duke University (mimeo)

______ 1986, "Reconstructing the elements of petty commodity production" Social Analysis 20

Smith R. (ed.) 1984, Kinship Ideology and Practice in Latin America, Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press

Stolcke V. 1981, "Women's Labours: The Naturalisation of Social Inequality and Women's Subordination", in Young K., C. Wolkowitz and R. Mccullagh (eds.)

______ 1984, "The Exploitation of Family Morality: Labor Systems and Family Structure on São Paulo Coffee Plantations, 1850-1979" in R. Smith (ed.)

Taussig M. 1980, The devil and commodity fetishism in South America, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press

Van Young E. 1980, "Hinterland y mercado urbano: el caso de Guadalajara y su región en el siglo XVIII", Revista Jalisco 2

Villa Lever L. 1986, "Escolaridad versus experiencia: la calificación

del obrero y del técnico en la industria jalisciense" in G. de la Peña and A. Escobar (eds.)

Wallerstein I. 1974, The Modern World System, Volumes I and II, New York: Academic Press

Weeks J. 1975, "Policies for Expanding Employment in the Informal Urban Sector of Developing Countries" International Labour Review 3

Willis K. 1993, "Women's work + social network use in Oaxaca City, Mexico" *

Wilson F. 1990, De la Casa al Taller: Mujeres, trabajo y clase social en la industria textil y del vestido. Santiago Tangamandapio, Zamora: El Colegio de Michoacán

Wolf E. 1956, "Aspects of Group Relations in a Complex Society: Mexico" American Anthropologist (58)

______ 1957, "The Mexican Bajío in the 18th Century: An Analysis of Cultural Integration", Middle American Research Institute Publication 17, New Orleans: Tulane University

Young K., C. Wolkowitz and R. McCullagh (eds.) 1981, Of Marriage and the Market, London: CSE Books

Zaldivar J. 1942, Un plan de explotación para la Ciénaga de Chapala Unpublished manuscript, Briseñas, Michoacán

Zepeda J. 1984, "Le das la mano y se toman el pie: transnacionales y polarización de la agricultura michoacana" Textual: Análisis del medio rural Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Chapingo

______ 1985, "Sahuayo: Genesis de la Rivalidad por una Region 1880-1930" Zamora: Colegio de Michoacán (mimeo)

* in Bulletin of Latin American Research, Vol 12 No 1