# SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC LIFE IN CONTEMPORARY OAXACA

Edited by Aubrey Williams

With contributions by
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*Mitla, Oaxaca, 1976.*

## *PREFACE*

*This volume contains eight ethnographic studies. Each of the eight authors has written about aspects of the contemporary behavior of people living in the Oaxaca Valley, Mexico. What is intriguing to the authors, and to many others, is that while the Oaxaca Valley is serviced by commercial jet airliners, has modern things like newspapers, television, cash crops and petroleum geologists boring holes in the ground, nearly half of the population still speaks Zapotec, a pre-Columbian language native to the area, and carries on ways of life deeply rooted in the past. Oxen and ox-carts are seen frequently; wooden plows are often used in preference to metal ones; and farmers continue to erect crosses in their fields of corn, beans and squash.*

*There is no thematic unity to the presentations, each article reflecting a particular anthropological orientation and featuring certain aspects of the total culture of the inhabitants of the valley. Several of the articles concern economic matters such as marketing (Beals), the economic influence on social cohesiveness of village life (Downing), and economic causal features (Higgins). There are two articles that broadly concern political action, one of which is by Corbett, and the other by Dennis on inter-community problems and their resolution. Two authors concern themselves with problems of a socio-political nature, with Esparza writing about the "poor tourists" who visit Oaxaca, while Paddock probes the peaceful nature of communities in the Oaxaca Valley where resolution of conflicts is accomplished without paid police officers and without firearms. There is an article on Guelagetza (Williams) which describes in some detail this "gift-giving" system and how it influences the social cohesiveness of Zapotec-speaking people in Mitla, Oaxaca.*

*Many people have assisted in the formation and presentation of this volume, and we offer profound thanks to the hundreds and maybe thousands of kind and concerned people of the Oaxaca Valley who gave all of us their time, their interest, and their thoughts. We owe many thanks to two typists, Linda Deil and Linda Podryhula, who somehow were able to maintain a good sense of humor along with superb skill in typing and re-typing these manuscripts. The translations of the abstracts into Spanish were done by George Accame and Andres Archilla, and their assistance is greatly appreciated. The photographs used in the text were drawn from the files of Aubrey Williams. The maps and charts were drawn by John Shea, and he also prepared the photographs and entire volume for printing, and we thank him for his skill and artistry.*

*We hope that these articles will prompt those who read them to ask us questions about what we have tried to do.*

*Aubrey Williams*
*Editor*

*Department of Anthropology*
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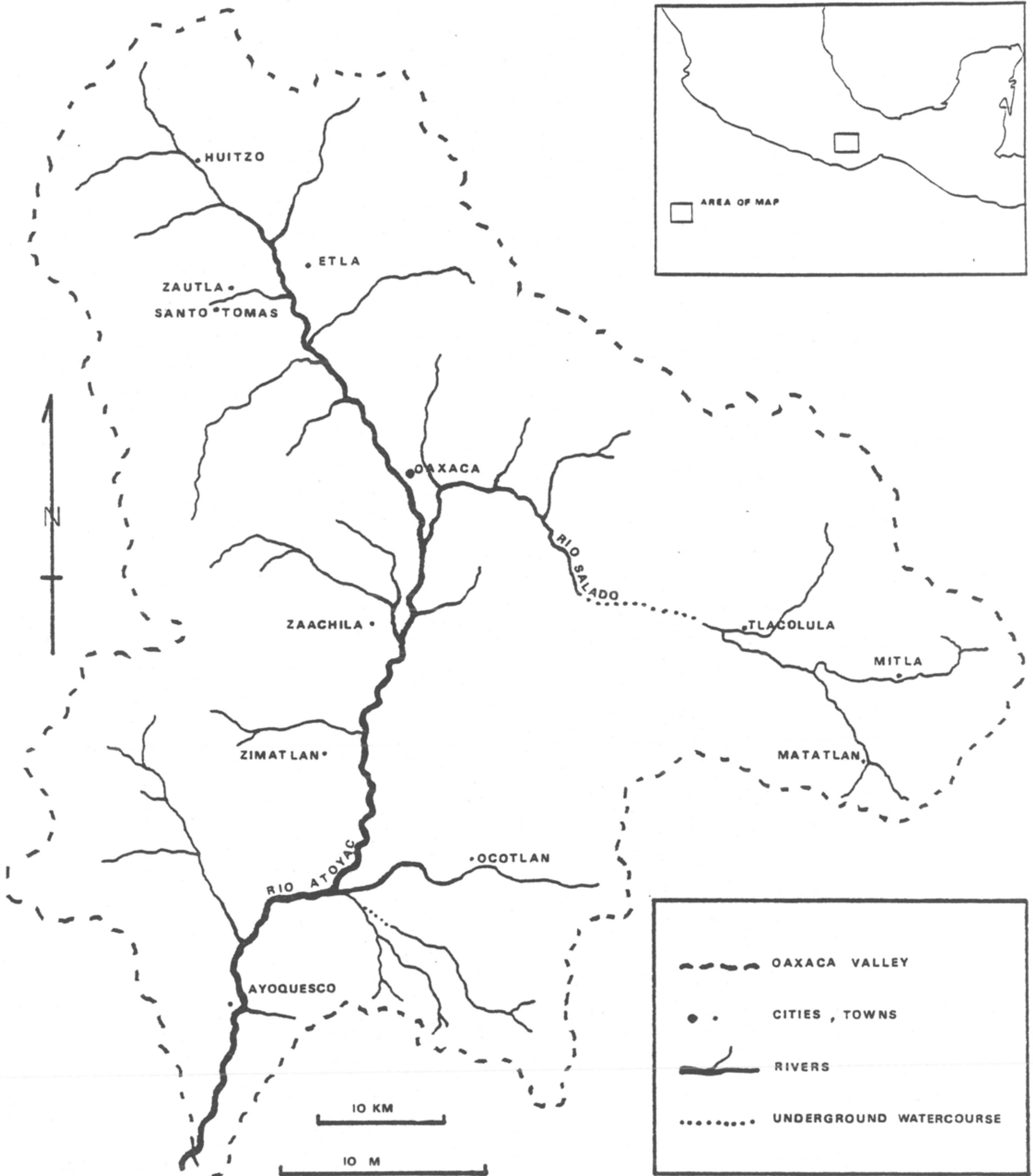
# OAXACA VALLEY, MEXICO



# A NEW LOOK AT THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN VIOLENCE

John Paddock
University of the Americas

Enfocando las comunidades indigenas anti-violentas de Oaxaca, en cuanto se diferencian de aquellas más violentas, Paddock sugiere que su aversión al uso de la violencia puede interpretarse como una selección por estabilidad, que establece un valor mayor en el "bien de la comunidad" a expensas del provecho individual. Estas comunidades para evitar la interferencia por ejecutores de la ley pagados y extraños, parecen depender de la socialización de sus miembros desde su tierna infancia, del consenso comunitario y policía, propia y voluntaria. Las disputas generalmente se solucionan a través de la componenda en vez de la determinación de lo que es correcto o incorrecto. No pueden aparecer héroes, ni cabezas de turco debido a la evaluación del "bien de la comunidad" y la difución del poder de la toma de decisión entre toda la comunidad masculina adulta, manteniendo así un status quo pacífico, estable, y tranquillo.

Suppose that tomorrow your city finds itself without any money for law enforcement--not a penny for police, for courts, for prisons, in the foreseeable future.

Would this mean the end of civilized life? Terror and violent death? Everyone at the mercy of robbers and killers? Schools, factories, stores, offices, services closed down? It might.

If we are stubborn and blind enough, foolish enough, wilfully ignorant enough, it might indeed. But if we are willing to look humbly at how other people live, willing to

admit that our accustomed way may not always be the only or the best way, we will find that modest Pacific islanders, jungle hunters, and poor peasants have something valuable to teach us.

These varied peoples, scattered over the world, are exceptional. Most of the human race, like us, tends to be more or less violent much of the time in various ways. But these exceptions are just as real as the rest of us, just as human; and all day every day they are demonstrating, for anyone who is willing to learn, that no money at all is needed to maintain communities free of interpersonal violence, and to maintain them so generation after generation.

We spend billions, and fail. They spend nothing, and succeed. They are not fictitious utopias in the fevered mind of some visionary, but real societies of real people. Obviously we ought to have a look.

That is what I have been doing, on a very small scale, for several years. Already my colleagues and I have a little something to report.

A firm warning is in order, though. There is a great distance separating scientific data, however sound, from usable principles and policies and rules to guide the people who make our public decisions. Science and engineering must not be confused with each other; each has its own nature, needs, possibilities, and limitations.

Science is a disciplined search for understanding, under-

standing for its own sake. There is an underlying assumption that all scientific knowledge will be useful eventually, but the labors of science are not governed by immediate practical needs.

Engineering or technology, in contrast, is the application of knowledge, usually drawn from science, to some definable, immediate real-life problem or need.

As a scientist, not a technologist, I will have to be cautious about practical implications of my research. No doubt it would be much more exciting if I could be less circumspect, but in the long run my imprudence would be damaging.

Nevertheless, social engineering, the "how to" of managing social problems, must be based on social knowledge if it is to succeed, and social knowledge comes from the scientific study of human behavior. (Common sense and intuition are by no means unimportant in the scientific process, but they are disciplined in it.)

But human behavior is the most complex subject matter studied by any science. The social sciences are sometimes said to be young and immature, or to be staffed by incompetents, or to be impossible, or even a fraud. None of that is true. They are hard to apply to the problems of everyday life, and imprecise, because they are grappling with a much more difficult task than that of any natural or biological science. Any human being is infinitely more complex than mere matter,

even though he is made of it. The behavior of a laboratory rat, while difficult enough to account for, is a simple problem compared to the behavior of a human being.

In spite of all such complications, our analysis of how certain communities maintain the peace must have some applicability to the painful problems of today's industrial civilization. Every human being has a number of unique characteristics, shared with no other person anywhere. He has other characteristics that he shares with some, but not all, other humans. And, fortunately, every one of us has traits and experiences that are shared with _all_ other human beings. Therefore, some of what we learn must surely be applicable everywhere, and another portion applicable fairly widely.

The communities we are studying are Indian peasant villages and towns in southern Mexico. We call them antiviolent, in part because a genuine repudiation of violence is a major foundation of their way of life. Antiviolence is also known elsewhere in Mexico, among American Indians of both North and South America, and in Malaysia, New Guinea, some Pacific islands, and possibly in Africa. But our study is limited to a single valley in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca.

Obviously antiviolence is also characteristic of some communities in Western and Oriental civilization such as monasteries, but these are not complete societies, being

limited to a single sex and also to a small range of activities. The communities we are studying are ordinary and complete, and self-sufficient in the biological sense.

It is curious, and perhaps not simply coincidence, that wherever antiviolent communities occur, they tend to have especially violent neighbors. This lends itself to many interesting speculations, but for the present they can be no more than that and therefore had better be left aside. But the existence of violent and antiviolent communities as neighbors does draw attention to some important points.

First, both extreme violence and complete antiviolence are workable ethical, philosophical, and behavioral foundations for viable, lasting societies.

Second, having violent neighbors does not invariably force one to be violent in order to survive. For example, the Pueblo Indians remained antiviolent even though occasionally they were forced to fight neighboring tribes that made raiding, killing, hand-to-hand combat, wife- and horse-stealing, and violence against one's own self into a way of life.

And third, when towns (such as our antiviolent ones and their more "normal" neighbors) that share language, biological inheritance, habitat, and economy still are radically different in their attitudes toward interpersonal violence, then we have an ideal research situation, for obviously none of these factors they have in common is likely to make them either

violent or antiviolent; they all are demonstrably compatible with both violence and antiviolence.

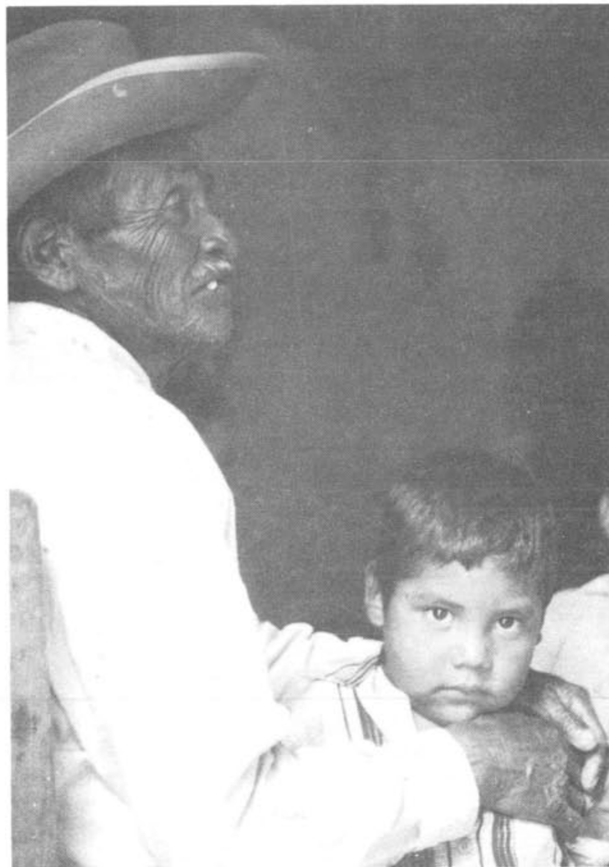
Our research has already made it possible to discard certain other factors that are often considered to be causes of violence. Alcohol is a good example. In many towns of our valley, alcohol and blood both flow every Saturday night. It seems reasonable, then, to conclude that alcohol is causing bloodshed. But drunkenness--frequent, thorough, enthusiastic drunkenness--is common in our antiviolent towns. There are even quarrels between drunks, and sometimes they are armed; but something stops the escalation of quarrels before the blood flows. That something is exactly what we hope ultimately to explain.

Boundary disputes are commonly cited as a cause of violence. In our valley, historical records show that such disputes are often centuries old. The antiviolent towns have managed somehow to defend their holdings without violence, even though other towns have had real little wars over theirs.

Poverty too is often pointed to as causing violence. Like so many other factors, it can be associated with violence, obviously enough. But our data show that it is not in itself enough to cause violence, for poverty has been the state of practically everybody, in both antiviolent towns and others, for centuries.

Crimes of violence commonly are crimes of passion. While we have as yet no objective way of comparing the frequency and

intensity of jealousy, hostility, hate, frustration, and so on in the antiviolent town and in their neighbors, we can say with confidence that these feelings are common, and sometimes powerful, in the antiviolent communities without causing any



*Grandfather and grandson. Mitla, Oaxaca, 1970.*

breakdown of the antiviolent norms of behavior. In fact, business competition is extremely sharp in some of the antiviolent places. Gossip is malicious, though often hilarious. Infidelity to spouses is not uncommon. A few well-to-do people own most of the good land, and the productive businesses too.

So we're not talking about paradise. Most of the problems that afflict humanity elsewhere are very much present. But our antiviolent towns do have one major social problem, that of violence, thoroughly in hand. And even at this early stage of our research, some points about how they accomplish it are clear.

Even though the 250 villages and towns in our valley look very much alike in most respects, and to us at first seemed almost identical except for size, detailed study of behavior shows differences that do go beyond the frequency or lack of murders and assaults. Comparing life cycles will illustrate.

Obviously a pregnant woman in an antiviolent community has an experience somewhat different from that of a pregnant woman in some other place. I doubt that the boldest psychologist would dare to propose specific effects such an experience would have on her unborn child; but we do know that conditions inside the womb are affected by the mother's physical and emotional state, and that these conditions in turn obviously do affect the developing embryo. I am confident that no pregnant woman is able to communicate violent or antiviolent attitudes or preferences to her child before birth, even though I can't prove it. But as soon as the child is born, such communication begins. Long before any adult makes speeches about violence to it, the child is observing, absorbing, preparing to imitate adult attitudes and behavior. An infant in its mother's arms shares the varied reactions of her body to

changing social situations. When the mother is fearful and tense, the infant she holds is made aware of various physical signs in the mother's body to which he is still partially attached. When she is relaxed and happy, the infant perceives a different state of affairs. We don't know how an infant conceives such incoming messages, or what effects they may have on his developing personality; I only want to point out that in some way and degree, infants do perceive. It would be ridiculous to propose that the effect of cold is the same as that of heat, or that light is the same as darkness to an infant, or relaxation the same as tenseness.

Nevertheless, my women co-workers--the study of child rearing requires spending long hours of observation and conversation with village mothers, and men are not allowed to do that--have so far found little difference in the overt treatment of infants between antiviolent and other towns.

From about one to three years of age, however, children in the two kinds of communities are under clearly differing regimens. In the antiviolent places discipline is firm and consistent, but minimal. Expectations of good behavior are communicated, even if at this early age it may not be achieved. There is a casual acceptance of children into the family group, and they are not the object of special attention in showing off their increasing accomplishments. Misbehavior is ignored as much as possible.

Toddlers in the other communities get a quite different

discipline--arbitrary, and subject to the whims of adults. The adults of the household take pleasure in showing off children's skills, quite in contrast to what happens in the antiviolent towns. There is frequent amusement at bad behavior, for example throwing things. Children are treated somewhat as pets, with adults as spectators at a performance. Threats are more common and more elaborate. The children learn to disbelieve exaggerated threats made by their parents, and they hear disrespectful talk among the adults about authority figures, local and national, outside the family.

Treatment of children from about three to seven years is also quite different in the two kinds of communities. In the antiviolent ones, there is a deep concern that children not leave family compound or yard except when accompanied by their elders. Children in this age group are taught to run away from or to ignore mistreatment by other children. A single mild spanking is considered enough to correct any misbehavior permanently, and most correction is purely verbal. Appeal to parents or other authority figures is expected in cases of conflict.

Children of this age group in the other communities are threatened much more, though threats are often not carried out, and there is a considerably stronger belief in the effectiveness of striking children. The children, especially boys, respond by defying some threats. Parents seem to show

no concern about the children's leaving their own yards to play.

During school years in all the towns the children are expected to be, and almost always are, unobtrusive, respectful, and helpful in various chores. But in the antiviolent communities there is much more emphasis on achieving skill in household duties as compared with school accomplishments, whereas schoolwork is regarded as more important in the other towns.

Friendships with children of the same sex are common during school years, and may continue until marriage. But adult friendships, especially in the antiviolent places, seem to be replaced by other forms of association--forms more closely controlled by custom and the community, such as kinship, ritual kinship resulting from godparenthood, and common participation in the frequent elaborate festivities and in the abundant group activities.

Sentence completion tests, a simple form of projective test, have told us several interesting things about sixth grade children. In the antiviolent communities, sixth graders are, with few exceptions, at the end of their education. They are commonly thirteen or fourteen years old, having started school late and having had to repeat a grade or two because of prolonged absences caused by family duties and encouraged by the low value placed on schooling in the antiviolent towns. Some of them will be marrying at sixteen or so. Thus the test results tell us about the attitudes of young people who are in

many ways on the threshold of adulthood. The children of antiviolent and of other towns differ sharply from each other, and in some cases girls have also shown attitudes contrasting with those of boys.

When asked to complete a sentence that begins by saying, "When I am alone . . .", some 70 percent of all the boys, and also the girls in the average town, finished the sentence by saying something like "I am sad." But only 18 percent of girls in an antiviolent town said, "When I am alone, I am sad." Instead, 36 percent of them said, "I am happy," and 27 percent said they did something constructive when they found themselves alone. No boy said he did constructive work when left alone.

A sentence beginning, "When they paid no attention to me . . ." was completed with "I was angry" (or some equivalent) by half the children in an average town, but by only 14 percent of boys and 30 percent of girls in an antiviolent town. The same question about being ignored stimulated a third of the children in the antiviolent town to see the cause in others, whereas in the contrasting town less than half as many projected the cause upon other persons.

One crucial question begins, "When I get mad . . ." "I strike somebody" was the response of only 5 percent of the boys, and no girls at all, in the antiviolent place. In a contrasting town, 23 percent of the boys and 6 percent of the girls said they struck somebody when angered. And 30 percent of boys in the antiviolent town have inward reactions to their

own anger such as trembling, flushing, turning pale, or being unable to speak or do things well when they get angry. These reactions were vary rare in the other kind of town, and also among girls in the antiviolent town.

Some of these sixth graders go on to become antiviolent adults; among the others, killing and being killed are predictable events in the futures of some, and important aspects of the world they live in even for those not personally involved in violence.

An adolescent in an antiviolent community has been set firmly on a path toward antiviolent adulthood by teaching and example throughout his early years. But the community does not leave it at that. In everything he does the individual is supported, urged toward unviolent responses, rewarded for being obedient to the community's demands, restrained instantly from incipient behavior that would threaten or conflict with the community's self-image. In the rare instance of behavior that seems likely to escalate into physical violence, the individual will probably find himself physically restrained before the escalation gets very far.

Physical restraint seems out of character for an antiviolent community, and it is in truth a last resort. It is most likely to be applied by family and friends of the person whose self-control seems to be giving way, but in their absence police may act. And the offender might then even go to jail and later be judged. Antiviolent communities do not totally

lack such institutions; they don't spend any money on them, however.

The police force consists typically of a group of youths

*Sisters. Mitla, Oaxaca, 1970.*

making their first of many contributions to the community by serving for a year. These amateur policemen are unarmed except for the short canes that serve as their badges of office. They don't usually walk beats, but rather sit at the town hall and wait to be called upon. Most of their work consists of running errands for higher officials. They may be called to

pick up a drunk lying in the street, if his relatives fail to carry him home, or to summon a party to stop a quarrel from escalating into a fight, but normally relatives of friends of the participants will act first.

The one-room jail is used rather often, but never for long. A drunk may stay there until he can walk. If an infuriated woman comes to the town hall and accuses another of having uttered intolerable insults, or perhaps of having wildly (this is ineptly done) flung a handful of pebbles at her, the accused may be clapped into jail until the town fathers gather for a hearing--never more than a few hours. The jail thus is a place of strictly temporary detention; nobody is sentenced to serve a term in it.

The town fathers gather daily, morning and afternoon, whether or not a case is pending. They transact town business and, on most days, hear out one or more quarrels, accusations of abuses or thievery, or disputes of some kind.

The parties to a dispute are encouraged to reenact the quarrel, with shouts and gestures and bad language. With the approving silent attention of the authorities, the disputants call each other names, wave their arms, exaggerate, express anything previously held back; in short, they blow off steam. When they sink into silence at last, the town fathers confer in a murmur. Then the mayor makes a speech. He announces and explains the decision, and how it is congruent with traditional values. A small fine, or a compensation to the

injured party, may be imposed. The decision, usually a compromise, is the opinion of the town fathers as to what will be best for the community more than which of the parties is "right." Then the mayor, in ceremonious phrases sanctified by many generations of tradition, admonishes the parties to the dispute, reminding them that transgressing the accustomed ways of the town got them into trouble and threatened the community's peace.

If a little fatherly talk from the temporary and unpaid mayor is the maximum sentence, why are these towns not infernos of rape and pillage and murder?

It might be proposed that fear of punishment is, in fact, a significant restraining force, for any major crime would not be handled within the local system but passed on to a larger center where the state and national legal and penal systems would be applied. The prospect of being tried and jailed outside their own town probably is terrifying to antiviolent villagers, but it almost never happens because in fact they successfully prevent such crime.

Forbidding violence our way is not preventing it. In past times when punishments were extremely harsh and violent, and often public, Europe had not lower but higher levels of violent behavior. Our southern Mexican friends obviously have an answer that has escaped us.

Only a madman would propose that we eliminate our repressive apparatus of laws and enforcement, and set up in its place some

imitation of a small antiviolent Mexican Indian town. Nevertheless, if our judges were obeyed as these Mexican mayors are, much or most of our crime would cease to exist.

The mayor of a Mexican peasant town is chosen by a rather informal process. Several men of appropriate age, men who have served the community in a series of jobs beginning as policemen and moving up, are approached. One is pressured into volunteering. It's an honor, but an honor almost nobody wants. The term is three years, and no one may succeed himself. Nobody would want to; after three years of taking several hours a day away from his own business, the victim is happy to quit. Some mayors are able, and some are not. But, whatever their personal abilities, they are obeyed. Obviously, then, the office itself commands respect.

Our system of repressive measures is based on an assumption that man is somehow violent by nature. And therefore he must be held back, controlled, repressed.

Yet everybody knows, though it is not fashionable to say it publicly, that repressive measures have never solved any social problem. Even the extreme repression in Soviet Russia has not been enough to eliminate crime.

The continued existence of self-policing, murder-free communities is telling us something important: that our fundamental assumption about the violent nature of man may be mistaken. If these Mexican villagers can live, resonably

happy in spite of their poverty, for generation after generation without ever being allowed to express physical violence, then possibly the acting out of physical violence against other human beings is not a fundamental necessity of the human race.

If so, this would have important implications. Bashing in your neighbor's head would be fun, or a satisfying expression of resentment, only if you had somehow been altered--perverted from your natural state in which appropriate violence occurs only in such circumstances as hunting animals for food.

The lack of any special development of sorcery, or violent sport, or other symbolic violence in antiviolent towns suggests that these people are in fact not feeling deprived just because they can't do in their fellow citizens.

And so we might propose that antiviolence is the natural state of the human race. After all, almost no other species kills its own kind, so why should we?

But that would be to overlook one major aspect of antiviolent community life. There is a great force at work, a force that gives the mayor's lecture to a wrongdoer its power. The same force is what ultimately keeps everybody in line. This crucial force is utterly simple: an overwhelming, if not total, community consensus. What keeps people from disobeying the mayor's lecture, and keeps most of them from ever having it directed to them, is the force of public opinion. Not physical force or the threat of it, as many theorists of

the state would have it, but a simple consensus about how things ought to be.

After all, if consensus is nearly total, nobody can resist it. What happens to the occasional rebel? We think they are, in a way, exiled. A person who, because of whatever factor in personality, finds himself too uncomfortable with the ways of his community can always emigrate. A few--very few--have left the antiviolent towns, but we haven't tracked them down and studied them yet so we don't know just how many there are or what they are like.

Every society is, among other things, a compromise--a way of reconciling the demands of individuals with the demands of the group. Some, like ours, attempt to give the maximum possible weight to the individual in achieving a balance. Others treat individual needs as subordinate to those of the group. When this latter tendency goes to extremes, we call it authoritarianism.

If the situation in our antiviolent towns is one of conform or get out, isn't that authoritarian? In a way it certainly is; but, though individuals must subordinate many of their own impluses to the demands made by the community, there is no authority we can point to in justification of the term authoritarian. In fact, one of the most striking traits of the antiviolent communities' political life is an extreme diffusion or dilution of authority.

For example, in one such place there are about 250 males

aged between fifteen and sixty. Of these 250, nineteen are officials of some kind. Another thirty young men make up the three shifts of amateur police. An advisory but respected council of elders consists of those men who have already fulfilled all their community obligations by holding a series of offices. And a considerable number of committees exists to carry out a variety of functions such as supervising the water supply, the school, the church, the cemetery, the roads, and so on. At a given moment, about half the eligible males hold some post; and, all but the council of elders being changed once every year or once every three years, obviously every male from fifteen to sixty can expect to serve in some community post about half the time.

Further, the scope and functions of the committees are very vaguely defined. Thus any significant decision is made, not by an individual or two, but by one or several committees together with the incumbent officials and the lifetime council of elders. Nobody is sure who should decide what. The inevitable consequence, aside from the fact that reaching any decision at all is often slow and difficult, is that decisions are not just by majority, but by consensus, ostensibly unanimous. And, if nobody can be singled out for blame if something goes wrong, it is equally true, and perhaps more important, that nobody becomes a hero.

In a society that prizes tranquillity above almost everything else, the absence of heroes and villians may be essential;

they are disturbers of the peace almost by definition. The well-to-do in successfully antiviolent towns avoid ostentation and work hard. It is considered desirable for a man to have to be dragooned into becoming mayor. Individual prominence would threaten the balance that is essential to lasting stability.

This is another point of possible interest to our social engineers. Though it is doubtful that anyone in the antiviolent communities would state it in these terms, it is apparently the case that freedom from interpersonal violence is a means to an end: lastingness. Stability would be another means to the same end. Ups and downs of societies make interesting history, and tranquil societies tend to make dull history or none at all, but many observers have noted that individual lives may be happier in a stable, if dull, social setting. The well known Chinese curse, "May you have an interesting life," comes to mind. Life has been interesting indeed for Western industrial civilization these past two or three centuries. Constantly accelerating growth has reached a limit, and the choice now is obviously stability or decline, perhaps to extinction.

Almost all the societies that ever existed are now extinct. Ours may be in a bad way, but there is one vital difference between it and past societies that faltered and, in many cases, ceased to exist either through biological extinction or through loss of identity and absorption into other societies. This difference is that we possess the

idea of studying cultures and societies scientifically. Another vital idea is that societies and their destinies can be changed not only by the whims of emperors, but by the exercise of human intelligence and ethical sense as well.

# SOME SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF AN OPEN PEASANT MARKETING SYSTEM[1]

Ralph L. Beals
University of California
Los Angeles

El sistema abierto de mercados campesinos de Oaxaca se considera que afecta la esfera económica y social de la vida de cada compesino. El hecho de que casi nadie sea auto-suficiente en esta zona implica que cada familia participe en cierto grado de este sistema de mercados. Las estrategias económicas están dirigidas hacia el sistema de mercados y consecuentemente hay alternativas entre las diversas opciones existentes. Las ideas de bienes limitados y envidia, son superadas aquí y la ética de trabajo parece ser la cave. Juntando gente con diferentes tradiciones e idiomas, la toerancia hacia los diferentes estilos de vida se convierten en una necesaria adaptación, por lo menos durante los días de mercado.

This paper comments briefly on some of the social and economic implications of an open peasant marketing system.[2] The system discussed is in Mesoamerica and centers upon the city of Oaxaca, Mexico, in the state of the same name. As the system is described in detail in The Peasant Marketing System of Oaxaca, Mexico (Beals, 1975) only a few salient features will be mentioned here.

Participating in this regional system are one city and more than a thousand towns, villages and hamlets. In 1970 these had a population of nearly one million people. At about 1965 prices the total value of goods consumed is es-

timated to be in the neighborhood of two billion pesos. The number of people and the quantities and value of goods involved hence is not trivial.[3]

Peasants within the area produce a great variety of goods and services. In the case of staple foods, a significant amount of the production is auto-consumed, that is, consumed within the producing household, but no household within the area is completely self-sufficient in all consumption goods. The majority of the peasants are farmers, but many do not farm. Not only are non-farmers dependent upon the market for the basic food staple, maize, but a great many farming households as well as the majority of villages do not produce all the maize they consume. In addition, on the production side, many households and villages tend to specialize, whether it be in farming, the production of handicrafts, the exploitation of natural resources, or in the provision of services. The variety of goods produced and consumed by peasants within the region of the Oaxaca marketing system is very large and every peasant household is to a varying degree involved in the exchange of goods. Moreover, the marketing system to a very large extent serves to facilitate the exchange of goods between specialized villages rather than between villages and towns. That is, a large proportion of the movement of goods from producer to consumer ultimately is horizontal rather than vertical even though it may be upward and then downward within the plaza system.

A very minor part of this exchange of goods takes place on a household-to-household basis within the village of residence, but most takes place externally through the marketing system. Some of the external trade is on a village-to-village basis and some through professional traveling traders visit-

*Woolen shawl displayed by its maker.*
*Mitla, Oaxaca, 1971.*

ing a number of villages, but by far the major part takes place through a series of cyclical plazas in market towns or the city of Oaxaca. These plazas are weekly affairs (except in the Isthmus where they are daily) in which large

numbers of peasant sellers and buyers meet together with a sizeable number of interplaza part- or full-time traders. The latter buy goods for resale and many travel to several marketplaces. These plazas constitute the principal components of the marketing system and are the primary focus of my comments.

Some years ago Sol Tax (1953:15) suggested that Central American peasant markets, i.e., plazas, approached the economists' perfect market and Manning Nash (1967) later extended this to Mesoamerican markets in general. The economists' perfect market is of course an ideal model, and even the more restricted model suggested by some students of marketing (e.g., Waite and Cassady, 1949:78-89; 274), probably has never existed at any time or place. The perfect market hence is simply a measuring standard by which markets may be ranked according to the degree to which they approach the standard. On such a ranking the Oaxaca marketing system and its plazas probably offers as close an approach to a perfect market as one may find.

The limiting imperfections of Oaxaca plazas are several. It is true that the plazas bring together large numbers of buyers and sellers for any commodity. The largest, the Saturday street plaza in Oaxaca City, is attended on the average by around 30,000 buyers and sellers, plus around 2,000 regular professional traders.[4] Access to the plazas is relatively free but there are transportation costs for many, and most sellers must pay small fees and may be restricted as to

location. Despite a remarkably efficient informal information network, individual information is unequal. Products are not standardized or completely interchangeable, although comparisons of goods and prices is facilitated by grouping together the vendors of similar commodities. Despite these limitations, the marketing system contributes to a remarkable freedom of choice and offers endless opportunities for decision making and the selection of alternate strategies whether it be in production, consumption, or distribution of goods.

The opportunity, indeed in many cases the necessity, for decision making and choosing between alternatives goes far beyond the marketplace situation, although in most cases market considerations influence decisions. Even those farming peasants who seek to achieve maximum self-sufficiency make their production decisions in the light of market opportunities. Over the long term, no peasant in Oaxaca really is self-sufficient for all his needs in housing, clothing, and given prevailing consumption patterns, all his needed foodstuffs. Hence, he must to some extent "produce" for the market, either selling his labor or some of his production in order to get cash for the purchase of some necessities. No peasants produce all their own cloth and many do not even make their clothing or at least such items of clothing as sandals, hats, belts, and blankets or serapes. Relatively few produce their own chile peppers, tomatoes, onions, or all the protein foods they consume. The decision hence is

not whether to produce for the market, but rather how much and what to produce for the market at any given time.

Landless peasants with no special skills or control of a handicraft-- and there are probably some in every village-- have perhaps the fewest options. But they still have some.

*Fruit and ice cone vendor. Mitla, Oaxaca, 1970.*

They may depend solely on rural or urban employment, sometimes migrating seasonally for this purpose. They may become sharecroppers. They may raise chickens, turkeys, or pigs, and perhaps pyramid the returns from these into buying a team

of oxen which can be rented to farmers. They may engage in small-scale trading. They may even with industry and luck be able to buy a piece of land.

Landholders have many more options. Not all landholders are equal by any means. Some may hold only rights to an _ejido_, usually not large enough to provide all the subsistence needs of a family. Landowners differ in the quality and area of land they control, either through the accidents of inheritance, losses to meet financial crises, or through purchase as a result of industry, frugality and luck. But many landholders must make a variety of decisions about which crops to grow and the farming strategies to be followed. Within the constraints of land quality, rainfall, temperature ranges, and in some cases, access to transportation, farmers may choose to grow different crops or to attempt a one, two or three crop annual cycle. Examples are whether to grow vegetables or flowers or not and in what proportion to other crops, or the long-term advantages of growing coffee, avocados or maguey. The farmer with a maize surplus must decide whether to sell it and when or whether to raise or buy animals and feed them for later sale. In selling, he must decide whether to sell to local buyers or in the plaza. In the latter case shall he sell to wholesale buyers or at retail?

If he has more land than he and his family can handle, should he sharecrop some or hire laborers? If labor costs go up, should he convert distant marginal lands to pasture

and concentrate on improving and intensively cultivating his better lands? If he has a handicraft skill or a store or trading enterprise, would he do better to sharecrop his lands or not? Should he vary his handicraft production in accordance with current demand or try to accumulate a stock of goods against an anticipated increase in demand?

On the consumption side, should the peasant, if circumstances permit, improve his food intake, wear better clothing, improve his housing, buy modern gadgets such as radios, bicycles, beds, gas stoves, furniture, or undertake more status raising activities such as accepting public or ceremonial offices, or should he be frugal and try to buy more animals or land or start a store?

All these and many more are very real options for Oaxaca peasants although not all are available to every peasant in every locality. It is important to note that most of these options stem from the existence of the marketing system and its' characteristics. This point is amply developed in my book on the marketing system (Beals, 1975a) and I will not elaborate it further here. What is much more relevant to my present purpose is that knowledge of these potentialities and their implications are widely accepted by peasants within the Oaxaca market area. This means that most peasants recognize that choices may be made and that they have economic results. They recognize that individuals may gain econcmic advantage by proper choice among alternatives and that indus-

try and frugality may have payoffs. They also recognize that some choices carry risks which they personally may not be willing to assume. They also recognize that the element of luck, the operation of unforeseeable external forces and events, may play a part in results. The wisest of choices

*Belt loom weaver making tapestry for tourist markets. Santa Thomas, Oaxaca, 1972.*

and the greatest of industry and frugality may be frustrated or negated by weather, illness, or market changes.

Along with these attitudes goes widespread acceptance

of the view that the market serves useful purposes by bringing needed goods together conveniently and determining prices in relation to supply and demand. Peasants consider that individuals serving these purposes may legitimately profit from market operations within reasonable limits. Like others, traders must make a living.

I turn now to the somewhat more speculative aspects of this paper, that is, some of the social implications of the prevalence of choices and the attitudes toward their exercise. More specifically, I want to discuss the principle of limited good and the related concept of envidia or envy. In recent years in a number of articles George Foster (1965; 1972) has developed these two ideas and advanced them as general characteristics of peasant societies. Many others have discussed these concepts. Here I merely suggest that the Oaxaca marketing area provides a notable exception to any general application of these two ideas.

Essentially the principle of limited good involves the ideas that wealth is finite, that the amount any individual may obtain by his own efforts is limited, and that anyone who accumulates a significantly greater amount of wealth than his neighbors has done so primarily either through somehow taking away from others some of their wealth or through luck, in Mexico usually interpreted as discovery of hidden treasure. Under these circumstances envidia acquires a special meaning and depth. Not only does one envy the better

fortune of the wealthy but one is bitter because in some way their wealth has been acquired by taking a share of the envier's wealth. As a consequence, frequently those who have more wealth than their neighbors tend to conceal it. Often they live in unostentatious houses, dress relatively poorly, and do not accumulate visible and costly consumer's goods.

There is a good deal of evidence for the currency of these ideas in many peasant groups and they are not unknown from larger societies. A good deal of Spanish political economy for some centuries at least, including the colonial period, was based on the theory that all wealth came ultimately from the earth and was definitely finite. True, some resources, such as minerals, were undiscovered but even so they were finite-- a view becoming more common in our own society. The concept that wealth could be created by commerce or industrial processes was not generally accepted with the result that Spain lagged behind in the mercantile and industrial developments of Europe in the sixteenth and subsequent centuries (as it does to some extent today). The economic function of government hence was primarily to supervise the division and allocation of a very finite pie. Operation of this system is sometimes obscured to modern observers for it was associated with a belief in a segmented and stratified society with differential functions and privileges. But, in theory at least, the state was concerned to ensure to each sector of society the proportion of the pie of wealth necessary to the perfor-

mance of its functions.

There is little or no evidence that this type of thinking exists among the peasants of the Oaxaca marketing system area. It is, indeed, contrary to his experience for he is surrounded with evidence that right decisions and the seizing of new opportunities results in increased wealth for individuals. The lucky man who prospers because he has inherited more or better land than his neighbor, is not thereby viewed as taking something away from the latter. Neither is the man who is willing to put in the extra labor and take the risks involved in planting an early spring crop of maize or who exercises better tillage practices. If a village storekeeper is prospering because of overcharging, the answer is to buy from a competitor or manage one's needs so as to make purchases at the known lower prices in a plaza town. The craftsman who profits by putting in longer hours and increasing his output is to be admired, or perhaps pitied as one who does not know how to enjoy life, but he is not considered to be profiting at his neighbor's expense. Envidia, then, in its' extreme sense is little developed or absent in the area.

A consequence of this is that the wealthy (by local standards) do not seek to conceal their prosperity. They do not hesitate to build better houses or improve those they have, or to wear better clothes. They do not hesitate to buy more animals, purchase new outfits for their children for school functions or graduations, or buy a radio or a

modern bed. A man may be criticized as exercising poor judgement in wasting his money on such things, but he is more apt to be emulated than condemned or envied.

Criticism of the wealthy exists but the criticism is not of their wealth but of how they use it. The wealthy who are criticized are those who fail to participate proportionately in community affairs. If a man who can afford to do so refuses to accept public office, or, accepting fails to give adequate time to it, refuses to accept responsibility for *mayordomías* or *cofradías* or skimps in their performance, ignores other customary ceremonial obligations, or fails to contribute to public works, then he is condemned. Wealth and its reasonable display are not envied *per se* but only if they are accompanied by failure to meet community obligations and responsibilities, obligations that are greater for the wealthy than for the poor.[4]

Another consequence of the Oaxaca marketing system is that it enforces each of those participating in it-- and to some varying extent this includes all peasants-- to be bicultural. Participants in the marketing system speak a variety of languages and come from villages with somewhat diverse cultures. The marketplace, and especially the plaza, has its own region-wide culture which may demand very different behaviors than those proper in the village.

Villages in the Oaxaca region are closed corporate communities. They are closed, however, in a sense rather different

from that in Eric Wolf's (1955) classical formulation of the concept. Wolf classed villages as "open" or "closed" primarily on the basis of economic self-sufficiency. In this respect Oaxaca villages tend to be open, depending as they all do to some extent upon the market system. Because of village speci-ialization and the high percentage of horizontal trade in the market, it is not the village that is "closed" economically, it is the region of the traditional marketing system. Vil-lages are closed, however, in respect to their cultural and social systems. Villages tend to be endogamous in marriage and to restrict residence by outsiders. Each has its' self-contained status and prestige system and boundary-maintaining mechanisms revolving about the hierarchical system of cargos and offices.[5] Although these are similar in each village, they vary significantly in detail. Birth, death and marriage observances often are observably different. Each village has a definitely delimited land area and sphere of political influence. In many cases adjacent villages differ in crops produced and farming methods employed as well as in handicrafts or services produced or offered. Interpersonal contacts tend to be with well known others. Behaviors, expectations, and responsibilities are defined in local terms.

The plaza presents a somewhat different situation. It tends toward impersonality in contacts with others and has its' own behavioral standards which may or may not be congruent with those of a particular village. Although sellers may

be located among or near friends or fellow villagers, buyers tend to be isolated. Actors are not only from different villages, they may speak different primary languages. Nevertheless, transactions are carried on according to well understood rules. Sellers do not interfere with the transactions of a neighbor or attempt to attract his customer until negotiations are broken off. Except late in the day or for a few peddlers, little effort is made to attract the attention of potential customers beyond an occasional low-voiced "Mira, marchante" or "Comprame, marchante." Occasional bickering between sellers occurs, mainly over space rights, but usually it is settled quickly and only occasionally does an inspector or official interfere. Indeed, the most striking thing, even in the great and crowded plaza of Oaxaca, is its quiet and order. With thirty thousand or more people functioning within a few square blocks, police and officials are few and almost invisible. Hard bargaining is expected but it follows well-established patterns and is carried on in a low key. These characteristics and others are most apparent in contrast with markets elsewhere in Mexico. I have talked with a couple of would-be traders from Mexico City who confessed themselves completely frustrated by the Oaxaca market and unable to operate effectively in the manner to which they had become accustomed.

The point here is that in the plaza the Oaxaca peasant not only must adopt special behavior patterns, but he comes in

contact with people of diverse speech and customs and a wide variety of goods which may be unknown in his own village. In conversation he may encounter many new ideas and he may seek the aid of strangers in finding special goods or the location of services. He may become aware of new alternatives in the problem of making a living. Confronted with different customs, not only in the plaza but in neighboring villages, the peasant tends to be tolerant of differences. Asked to comment, his response is apt to be "That is their way, it is good for them; this is our way and it is good for us." As Beverly Chiñas has remarked, "In Oaxaca heterogeneity is a way of life."

The open marketing system hence affects both economic behavior and social attitudes. Economically, the marketing system permits numerous alternative economic strategies. By making proper choices among these alternatives people may and in many cases do better themselves economically. On travels in the market system region people see and hear of many different things which they talk about on their return. Above all, the marketplace creates an avid interest in the price of things. He who does not maximize or bargain to get the best price in market transactions is foolish. In such an atmosphere, there is little room for ideas of limited good. Envy of material success is present but it is tempered by curiosity as to how it was achieved. Tolerance of other ways extends to deviations in life-styles in the village if

accompanied by proper performance of local obligations.

No doubt there are variations in the responses to the market from village to village. This is a matter for further research. More importantly, I suggest that a closer examination of other open marketing systems is called for to see whether the Oaxaca system is unique or not.

## NOTES

[1]A version of this paper was read at the American Anthropological Association meeting in Mexico City in 1974.

[2]The research on which this paper is based was financed by a grant from the National Science Foundation.

[3]The bases for these figures are presented in more detail in Beals (1975a; 1975b). The major criterion for inclusion of a settlement of locality is whether 50% or more of its trade is within the system or not. For many localities this involved an informed but still subjective estimate. More extensive research could refine and objectify these estimates. Diskin (1975) suggests ways of delimiting the system more accurately.

[4]Based on surveys conducted by Ronald Waterbury and assistants for the Oaxacan Market Project.

[5]The difference in status and prestige systems of the "traditional" village based on community service, and the modern capitalist systems based on wealth, acquisition of material goods, position within a status ranked occupational hierarchy of occupations is essential to understanding of Mexican peasant communities. In the "primitive" capitalist and market oriented economy of peasant Oaxaca, acquisition of wealth and material goods are condemned only when individuals fail to use their wealth to advance within the local status and prestige system based on community service.

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# INTER-VILLAGE CONFLICT AND THE ORIGIN OF THE STATE[1]

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El conflicto entre pueblos es un aspecto bien conocido de la vida compesina en Oaxaca. Este trabajo describe tal conflicto, y sugiere que era uno de los procesos que provieron el origen del estado en la región. Desde los tiempos coloniales, el conflicto inter-comunal ha sido de utilidad para el gobierno central. Resulta en la dependencia a las autoridades estatales para la resolutión de los litigios, y aun mas, en una población campesina atomizada e impotente. Los primeros estados en la región posiblemente se construyeron sobre el mismo principio de la "economía de fuerza." Su orientación teocrática, entonces, servía como foco de una lealtad comun, respaldando así la existencia precaria del estado que se mantenía encima de una multitud de conflictos locales.

Research on the origin of the state, like other classic problems in anthropology, might benefit by more collaboration between archaeologists and social anthropologists. In this paper I will try to develop an hypothesis about state formation, based primarily on contemporary data, and on a few suggestions in the archaeological literature. I hope that somehow ways of testing it archaeologically might be devised.

Very briefly, the problem is: how does a centralized political system gain control over a surrounding rural hinterland, and once achieved, how does it maintain that control? The many answers that have been given to these questions

can be sorted into a number of categories: state formation resulting from the technological requirements of irrigation agriculture (Wittfogel 1957); state formation by internal developments, in which a sort of "logical unravelling" of social organization leads to increased complexity (see, for example, Adams 1966); formation through the conquest and subordination of one group by another, for example, agriculturalists by herdsmen (Oppenheimer 1926). Flannery (1972) diagrams and compares a number of such explanations.

One recent summary of theory in this area asserts, probably correctly, that there are many different processes by which states are formed, and that there can be no single theory of state formation (Krader 1968:106). Different circumstances require different explanations, and at least at one level of analysis, the concern should be with the variety of micro-processes involved. Inter-village conflict seems to have been one such micro-process in the Valley of Oaxaca. In analyzing the role of the state in colonial and contemporary land disputes, I think we can see some suggestive hints about the origin of the first states in the area.

## Land Disputes in Oaxaca

In the Valley of Oaxaca today, conflict between village communities is endemic. The obvious underlying cause of such conflict is competition for the scarce agricultural land available, but the form disputes take depends on village organiza-

tion, and on the pattern of village-state relations. Conflict concerns community boundaries and control over communal land, and comes to be a moral as well as a practical issue. The whole community has a stake in the lands, whose defense becomes a duty of every citizen. Previous village authorities who are suspected of "selling out," of allowing enemy villages to gain control of the land, are regarded as archtraitors. The moral nature of village land claims makes it difficult to settle disputes and serves as one mechanism by which feuds are perpetuated.

Land disputes may involve considerable violence. Periodically, battles erupt along village borders, usually when groups of men working in fields along boundaries exchange words, blows, and finally gunfire. The church bells in the village are rung to assemble the citizens, who rush out to engage in pitched, bloody battles. Informants in Amilpas[2] remembered such tumultos of 50 years ago "as if they were yesterday." Isolated murders and various other violent episodes also occur during feuds. In Soyaltepec, informants estimate that about 60 men have been killed in inter-village violence during the past 80 years.

The essence of conflict, however, is not in the isolated violence that occurs, but in the litigation and political maneuvering by which villages gain legal title to land. The arena within which villages operate is one in which, for many centuries, the central government has dominated. In

contemporary disputes, villages are always careful to emphasize their loyalty to the government and the implied disloyalty of their opponents. Official correspondence contains many such statements as:

> They have introduced themselves into our communal lands, an act which shows complete disobedience to the Presidential Resolution... and is a true infraction.[3]

The implication seems to be that state authorities have good reason to take strong measures with the opponents, given their disobedience. The opponents, on the other hand, usually argue that they were not really disobedient, given the entire set of circumstances. The general point is that villages never question the fact of state control, but instead try to maneuver state authorities into supporting their own side of disputes.

Tumultos and other kinds of violence, in fact, are often counterproductive for village land claims, since communities judged legally responsible for aggression may be heavily fined and denied government benefits such as ejido lands or irrigation dams. Violence also creates special problems for municipal authorities, who may be held personally responsible (Dennis 1973b). In the larger perspective, of course, violence, like the land claims to which it is related, provides an opportunity for government intervention in local affairs.

During colonial times, the arbitration and settlement of inter-village disputes was entrusted to district officials,

the *Alcaldes Mayores* or *corregidores*, although disputes frequently reached the Audiencia itself in Mexico City. Today, a branch of the Mexican government has the same responsibility. Under the Echeverría administration, the former *Departmento de Asuntos Agrarios y de Colonización* has been elevated in status, and is now the *Secretaría de la Reforma Agraria*. The corresponding increase in budget and personnel reflects the Echeverría administration interest in resolving rural problems such as land disputes.

In village *municipos*, old land titles are carefully preserved, along with maps, photographs, and other evidence related to land claims. These documents, together with land surveys, provide the basis for settling the disputes. Paleographers, engineers, and other technical personnel of the Secretaría de la Reforma Agraria try to determine priority of claims and suggest reasonable solutions. The Chief Executive may then issue "definitive settlements" of the disputes. The dispute between Amilpas and Soyaltepec, which I studied in detail (Dennis 1973a), was supposedly ended in 1943 by a presidential resolution.

In reality, however, a number of factors make me question the finality of the settlement. In reviewing the documentation of the dispute from the past, I noticed that a number of similarly "final" judgments had been reached by colonial authorities, although none had turned out to be final. General village strategy seemed to be to wait until a *patrón* favorable

to the other side had died or slipped from power, and then re-open the dispute. Villagers explain that decisions won by their opponents were a result of bribery and the favoratism of government officials, or the corruption of their own village authorities, and they patiently await new opportunities for presenting their own case. In the case of Amilpas-

*Catholic Church in Matatlan, Oaxaca, 1967.*

Soyaltepec, the historical record showed a series of active and latent periods in one long, continuing dispute. Even today after the presidential resolution, residents of Soyaltepec talk of regaining their mountain land, and have kept their documents carefully guarded for future use. I conclude that feuds are rarely settled definitively, and that the

central government plays a continuing role in arbitrating difficulties between communities. To some extent the moral nature of village land claims is responsible for this situation. However, insofar as government officials have been corrupt, and colonial corregidores were notorious in this regard, the state has actually contributed to the persistence of disputes. Old feuds are never settled when decisions are regarded as "bought," and when villages look for opportunities to obtain their own favorable decisions in the future.

Many contemporary land disputes in the Valley date at least to the colonial period. The Amilpas-Soyaltepec dispute begins as early as 1694, when a tumulto broke out at Mojonera Pacífico, a prominent boundary marker still in use. Taylor reports that Tlacochahuaya's disputes with its neighbors, which continue to the present, also began in the late seventeenth century (1972:87). I suspect that some disputes in the area may even antedate the Conquest. Gibson (1955:589), referring to the 16th century, mentions a "wave of litigation" between Mesoamerican communities, which he suggests may have represented a continuation of inter-village warfare from the previous century.

The corporate communities as we know them today are clearly products of the colonial period (Wolf 1957). The Spanish programs of reduction and community reorganization, and the tremendous depopulation of the late 16th century, profoundly changed the character of the local communities.

Nevertheless, it seems likely that there was some continuity in local-level conflict from earlier times. Paddock (1966:149) suggests that inter-village disputes in the Valley date at least from the time of Monte Alban III (A.D. 400-800), when the human carrying capacity had probably been achieved. Adams (1966:59) mentions an intense rivalry between local communities early in the process of state formation in Mesopotamia, and a similar situation may well have existed in Mesoamerica. Flannery, et al (1967:452) mention "hints" of inter-community warfare in the Middle Formative (600-200 B.C.) in the Valley of Oaxaca. The long history of these disputes suggests they may have some significance in the long-term political evolution of the area, and it is that hypothesis I now want to develop.

The Rise of Central Government

Local-level conflict has usually been interpreted by anthropologists as a balancing or judicial mechanism in stateless societies. Evans-Pritchard's analysis of Nuer feuding (1940) is the classic example. Among the Nuer, the absence of central government is compensated by self-help mechanisms (i.e., feud) which resolve disputes and allow mutual adjustments between groups. Conflict, by creating regular patterns of alliance and group formation, serves as a functional substitute for central government. Higher levels of organization result only from the process of feuding which becomes the central organising principle of such "seg-

mentary" societies. Perhaps the persuasiveness of this explanation at the stateless level has made it difficult to perceive the different role conflict may play in peasant societies dominated by a central state. A common viewpoint is that local-level disputes simply constitute obstacles to be overcome by central governments in the process of forging the state. Spicer, for example, interprets the contemporary situation in Oaxaca as the remains of an earlier, less centralized political system.

> The state of Oaxaca is still a very loosely united congeries of village groups often at war with one another over land boundaries, speaking different dialects though only a few miles apart, and frequently forcing federal troops to come up into the mountains to settle their longstanding feuds so that basic law and order may be maintained. (1966:82)

I suggest that to the contrary, local antagonisms may have been one of the building blocks ot the emerging state. Carneiro in a stimulating paper (1970) has refocused attention on this sort of possibility. In an area of circumscribed agricultural land, says Carneiro, conflict between villages has a different result from conflict in areas not circumscribed. The losers, with no place to go, become politically subordinate to the winners and are forced to produce more to pay tribute. Winning villages, on the other hand, form the nucleus of the emerging state. Geographic and in some cases social circumscription, plus warfare, provide the impetus for state formation. Insofar as it

emphasizes conflict, Carneiro's is a modern variant of Oppenheimer's (1926) and other older conquest theories of state formation.

I suggest that local-level conflict in Oaxaca was also important in the formation of the state, not because of geographical circumscription, but because of the political possibilities inherent in controlling and resolving conflict. Conflict seems to provide a setting favorable to the rise of centralized authority. By putting itself in a position to arbitrate conflict, the state gains power and assigns to itself a perpetual and highly useful function. Sanders and Price have made the same argument in regard to conflict over irrigation rights:

> The theoretical position defended here is that it is precisely this conflict [over irrigation water] that stimulates the selective process in favor of centralization of authority--the more severe the conflict, the greater the need for and probable evolution of centralized control (1968:183).

From one point of view, state arbitration is a service performed on behalf of local communities. The communities' best interests are "obviously" served when a central government exists to maintain peace and order. This is the attitude adopted in colonial documents: administrators admonish villages against conflict, and acting as spokesmen of the moral superiority of the state, uphold brotherly ideals of conduct. In a 1774 document from Amilpas, the district

corregidor states dramatically, "I look upon both villages with fatherly love, and I desire peace and public tranquility for all." Unfortunately, the decision to which this comment was appended became a key element in a dispute lasting into the 1940's. The service interpretation may be valid for individual civil servants, but it obviously serves as a rationalization, and not as an objective analysis, of the state's behavior.

It seems clear that the effect of arbitration is to create dependence on the central government. The only way of obtaining valid land titles is through litigation, and each new case brought before the government in effect reconfirms its legitimacy. While sitting and working in the local and national offices of the Secretaría de la Reforma Agraria, I had the opportunity to observe dozens of peasant groups waiting patiently to present their cases before the proper authorities. The time and money spent by such groups, and the obstacles they must overcome to settle their cases, become real acts of homage to the bureaucratic authorities in power. In the colonial period, Taylor (1972:83) mentions groups of Indians travelling all the way from Oaxaca to Mexico City on foot to defend their land rights, and quotes a circular from the Viceroy attempting to stop this "endless stream" of Indian petitioners. Given state control, of course, peasants recognize that such "acts of homage" are necessary; there is no other way of gaining valid land titles

than through the central authorities, so one goes and sits and waits.

Service agencies, as sociologists have pointed out, demand a continuing clientele, and much of their activity seems to be aimed at maintaining it. Colonial period corregidores and Alcaldes mayores spent a great deal of time re-

*Males in costume and on stilts in an inter-community fiesta. Zaachila, Oaxaca, 1969.*

solving disputes, and if their decisions were contested, appealed, and frequently reversed, so much the better from the point of view of the employment of corregidores. To settle a dispute definitively would mean, after all, an end to the corregidor's role in the affair. The part played by the recent DAAC and SRA is probably not all that different.

The army of cartographers, surveyors, archivists, paleographers, secretaries, district chiefs, and other personnel of the SRA, depend directly on land disputes and related problems in the countryside. The recent change from Department of Agrarian affairs to full-scale Secretaría de la Reforma Agraria, with corresponding increase in budget and personnel, may very well result, not in the definitive solutions that have eluded 400 years of colonial and modern rule, but in perpetuation of the problems the SRA is designed to resolve.

Arturo Warman, in a brilliant and savage indictment of Mexican agrarian policy, describes the "network of control" which envelops the contemporary peasant (1972: 101-115). As he points out, some of these control devices are consciously manipulated as such, but others have grown naturally as a product of government action and peasant response. One of these controls is the perpetuation of inter-community and other sorts of inter-group antagonisms. Peasants, the largest sector in the country's economy, are politically the weakest, because "they are atomized in thousands of small units that live in mutual antagonism" (1972:102). Warman concludes bitterly that Mexican peasants are so divided it seemed impossible they could ever organize politically; even that favor had to be done for them by a "benevolent" government.

I suggest that the network of control and dependence so

clearly visible in the recent and colonial periods may date to the original period of state formation in the area. The settlement of disputes must have been an important task for the earliest state authorities, just as it is for contemporary ones. Given a dense agricultural population in competition for the available land, disputes between local communities must have been common, and the possibility for arbitrating them a golden opportunity for early bureaucrats. Disputes during the formative, the original period of state formation, were probably between small-scale localized kinship groups. By the time of Monte Alban IIIa, when the first Valley-wide political system probably emerged, the state must have had to deal with disputes between large kingdoms or cacicazgos of the type described by Spores (1967) for the 16th century Mixteca. If my hypothesis is correct, however, later states, just as earlier ones, as far as possible tried to deal directly with competing local units, in order to maintain control and to limit the growth of intermediate levels of social organization. In other words, atomization and dependence on arbitration were probably used to tie the local communities directly to the state, and thus to maintain control through the centuries.

## The Theocratic State and the Economy of Force

While encouraging the local-level conflict, the state must, of course, maintain it within certain bounds. In par-

ticular, it must insist on retaining the right and ability to arbitrate. All-out conflict which by-passed the central government entirely would eliminate the state, and imply a return to a lower level of political organization. For this reason, definitions of the state have often stressed its monopoly on the legitimate use of force.

Although the central government must be stronger than its constituent units, it often seems to be local antagonisms that make control possible. Atomization, as Warman points out, makes political control easy. The armed might of the state can be imposed with great effectiveness against isolated peasant communities.

> Because of its spontaneous character, peasant movements are easy to stop if this is done in time. The army is infinitely superior to these outbreaks in numbers, armament, and organization. The danger is of extension, not of magnitude. (Warman 1972:115).

Soldiers are used in Oaxaca today as a means of controlling inter-village violence, and as a way of punishing villages for disturbances, and presumably have been so used since the first states emerged in the area. The state's monopoly of force can be highly effective even as a threat. Correspondence from villages to the SRA often asks that troops be used against opponents, since no other means will make them obey, and official replies often threaten force against recalcitrant villagers. Amilpas decided not to participate in a 1965 scheme to attack Soyaltepec, because of the possible

consequences.

Large standing armies as a device for exercising force involve enormous costs, and a system of local-level feuds can be viewed to a certain extent as an economy measure. In such a system much less force is required, since the state only has to be able to dominate each individual unit. During the Revolution in Oaxaca, much of the conflict seems to have been rival villages carrying on their traditional disputes, under the banner of different revolutionary leaders and ideologies. Kearney (1972:30-40) describes the bloody battles between Ixtepeji and her neighbors, which culminated in the sacking and burning of Ixtepeji by Ixtlán. Amilpas informants described to me how Mixtecs from the mountains to the west enlisted as government soldiers, only to desert at the first opportunity and return home, armed with government issue rifles and ammunition, ready to prosecute more effectively their own inter-village warfare. A system of feuds thus seems to minimize the force that can be employed against the state, by drastically reducing the possibility of any large-scale coalition in the countryside. The effect is to minimize the force necessary for control at the center.

Perhaps the theocratic and relatively non-militaristic nature of early states in Mesoamerica can be related to the loose system of political control. Lacking an overwhelming military, early states may have been built on the principle of economy of force. Roberts (1965) has interpreted the use

of oaths and ordeals in primitive judicial systems as economy devices: they shift the responsibility for decisions from political leaders to the super-natural, and allow authority to be exercised in weak political systems. In a similar way, early theocratic states which lacked decisive military or political control, may have come to rely on divide and rule political systems in the countryside. The only realistic basis for the first centralized government may have been "to balance on top of" the local conflicts that antedated it, serving the function of arbitrator while directing the energies of the population into other activities, such as temple building and religious ritual. Instead of being a substitute for centralized government, I suggest that feud systems made it possible for the first centralized governments to gain control.

In general, states seem to have different poles or foci of integration. The earliest states were apparently integrated around religious concepts and activities: priests manipulated sacred symbols on behalf of the populace, and demanded in return their time and devotion. Great ceremonial centers such as Monte Albán in Oaxaca must have captured the religious loyalty of villages over vast expanses, and united them in common ritual activities. Construction of public buildings, an activity which seems to have been important for millenia in Oaxaca (Flannery and Marcus 1975), was probably a way of concentrating or focusing religious loyalty

in a specific enterprise, at a specific location. In such a political system, religious control could be maintained in conjunction with political atomism, since the unity of the state was expressed through deference to religious authority. Even in colonial times, religious unity was of great importance, and provided an alternative focus of integration not

*Candy being thrown to children in an inter-community fiesta. Zaachila, Oaxaca, 1969.*

available in the modern nation state.

Contemporary states seem to be built through quite different processes. Their focus is primarily political: loyalty is to the concept of the nation, as expressed in its organization, its symbols, and its functionaries. In

recent African states Southall (1974) describes how independence heroes have been replaced by military cliques, and how pressures from developed countries and the self-interest of the new leaders have contributed to increasing centralization. There is no tolerance of local-level conflict in this recent process, but instead ruthless attempts to supress it. The aim is to create and maintain the strongest possible central authority. Political differentiation within the country is held to a minimum, and local-level conflict is viewed as a danger to national unity.

Modern, highly centralized and bureaucratized states, are obviously not built on antagonisms between local communities. They have an overwhelming monopoly of force, and the economy measure of building on local conflicts becomes unnecessary. The conflicts with which the nation state has to contend are those between political pressure groups in the population. Only a residue of conflict between local-level communities remains, expressed in competition for investments, in athletic contests, and in character stereotypes.

Paradoxically, the earlier situation of minimal state intervention in local disputes may act as a long-term stabilizing device. Lees (1974) suggests that recent government intervention in local irrigation systems may subject the ecological and eventually the political system to breakdown. As delicate local adaptations are overridden, the total system becomes more and more unstable. Lees speculates that, in general, state systems go through cycles from more to less

cohesiveness, based in part on their sensitivity to local adaptations. Inter-village feuds, however, make it possible to preserve local adaptations. Government intervention can be restricted to the arbitration of conflict, and such processes as the expansion and contraction of local units can be left to a normal process of adjustment between villages. Taylor (1972:87-89) indicates that this is what happened in the Valley of Oaxaca during the colonial period: over time, larger villages tended to take land away from smaller ones. In this situation, the state does not have to manage the adjustment of population to land, a function of which it may not be capable, and which would certainly demand additional resources. Through the conflict process, villages maintain themselves, and the state is spared an excessive managerial role. By preserving a conflict situation, the local communities become dependent on the state for arbitration, in the sort of process Flannery (1972) calls "linearization," but the state itself does not acquire responsibilities towards the communities which it is incapable of fulfilling.

I suggest that the earliest states were intermediate between the stateless condition and the modern nation. Evolving partially in response to the opportunity for arbitrating inter-community conflict, they probably found a situation of perpetual conflict useful as a device for maintaining control Lacking decisive political control, they were built on the principle of economy of force, a process which seems to have been adaptive in the long run. As the early states

directed the loyalty and energies of the populace into religious activities, they balanced precariously on existing antagonisms and maintained themselves by adroit administration.

NOTES

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[2]Fieldwork was done in 1970-71. Village names have been changed in the paper.

[3]From the Expediente of San Pedro Yolox, 447 T.C., Archives of the Secretaría de la Reforma Agraria, Oaxaca. Special thanks are due to Manuel Esparza, Director of the Centro Regional de Oaxaca, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, and to the Oaxaca office of the SRA, for help in working in the Archives during the summer of 1975.

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# LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROBLEMS OF RESOURCE MOBILIZATION[1]

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Los problemas de movilización de recursos paracen ser el principal obstáculo en el desarollo y la modernización de las pequeñas comunidades del sur de México. Los medios directos de conseguir recursos monetarios incluyen: impuestos, multas, avalúo de proyectos mayores, e ingresos de agencias gubernamentales. Los medios indirectos, tales como las donaciones involuntarias de trabajo y tiempo, abarcan una porción significatíva de los recursos de las comunidades, y garantizan que se lleven a cabo el necesario mantenimento y trabajo de reparación. Corbett sugiere que los antropólogos que estudian la estructura comunitaria deberían examinar los problems de movilización y distribición de recúrsos, puesto que afectan la política pública y por consiguiente, influencian las relaciones intra e intercomunitarias, así como la cooperación de la comunidad y el gobierno.

One of the most notable developments in political science during the past decade has been increased attention to the substance and content of public policy. As Richard Hofferbert puts it,

> Instead of being concerned primarily with what affects government, or what goes on inside political institutions, we are primarily interested in what comes out of the process (Hofferbert, 1974).

Although it is beyond the scope and purpose of this paper to review the public policy literature, one consistent finding is the very considerable impact of socioeconomic factors on

policy alternatives. Among the most critical factors are the kinds and levels of resources actually or potentially available to political decision-makers. Ample resources appropriate to resolve the problems at hand may allow a variety of options, while inadequate or inappropriate resources may markedly circumscribe freedom of action, or even prevent any action at all. Additionally, the political system needs what Gabriel Almond has called an "extractive capability", that is, an ability to extract resources from its environment for system disposal (Almond, 1965). Without this ability to extract or mobilize resources, their existence is relatively meaningless from a system perspective. Thus, in any discussion of public policy options two key variables are the resource base and the system's extractive capability.

Undoubtedly, many anthropologists-- especially those working in small communities in developing societies-- will be inclined to dismiss questions of public policy as irrelevant to their research setting. For some anthropological concerns this may be perfectly valid, but increasingly questions of public policy intrude into a wide range of community life, from economic behavior and social structure to deeply-rooted patterns of culture. This is a consequence of increased centrality of the political system in the affairs of the community, a centrality which develops for several reasons. First, national governments are concerned with increased control and development at the local level, and frequently attempt to place part

of the burden for these goals on the community, generally through the political system. Second, population growth, rising expectations regarding living standards, and other concerns tend to increase demand for policy outputs from the political system, even at the local level. Third, because of major changes both within and external to such communities, it is in the area of public policy, whether generated within or outside the communities, that we would expect major qualitative and quantitative departures from traditional patterns. Because of the multiple and complex life, any significant modification in public policy is likely to have a ripple effect or to founder on unperceived obstacles. Either outcome may have serious consequences for the community.

This paper hopes to explore and illuminate some of the points outlined above through examination of the problems of resource mobilization for public ends in a Mexican community. Resource mobilization offers a useful focus for two reasons. First, research elsewhere has suggested it is a critical variable in public policy, and it would be desirable to learn whether it holds the same importance in this research setting. Second, issues involving resource allocation are increasingly important within communities and between communities and other political systems. At least this was the case in the larger project of which this paper is a part, a study of modernization in the Oaxaca Valley of southern Mexico. The primary focus of the larger research effort has been the analysis of

community adaptation to a changing environment, with special emphasis on adaptation in the areas of political organization and behavior. Begun in 1968, the project involves data collected from a variety of sources through informants, interviews, observation, archival research, and questionnaires. Although the overall research includes several communities, the findings reported here draw heavily upon data frcm the community of Santa Clara (a pseudonym), an agriculturally-based _municipio_ approximately twenty miles from the city of Oaxaca de Juarez.

## The Resource Base

If, as research on public policy in the United States suggests, the socioeconomic environment strongly affects policy options, then decision-makers in Santa Clara face serious constraints on their ability to mobilize resources. Agriculture provides little more than a subsistence living for much of the population, and land and water scarcities make improvements in productivity unlikely without substantial investments in technology, education, and infrastructure. Commercial activities such as handicrafts or tourism, major components of the economic life of many Oaxaca Valley communities, do not exist. Remittances from migrants working in other parts of the country, occasional or seasonal employment in urban centers, and a small group of regular commuters to the state capital contribute only marginally to the resource base. As in many Mexican villages, there is a continuing outflow of

the better educated and more highly motivated to areas of better opportunity. While Santa Clara does not demonstrate the levels of misery and impoverishment to be found in the most depressed part of Mexico, the margin between an adequate and inadequate resource base is very narrow.

Historically speaking, from a policy perspective this narrow margin was not particularly meaningful. Demands for resource-based outputs were limited and routinized. Some of the demands could be met through the mobilization of a plentiful labor supply, and others through the activation of religious ritual. Although population data are spotty, it appears population pressure on agriculture was less than it is now. Consumption opportunities were low. In short, while the resource base was somewhat more limited than it is today, the demand for resources mobilization was also low, legitimized by cultural practices (such as *mayordomías*) and in all probability rarely a center of community conflict. Prior to the Revolution, and perhaps even the 1940s, then, it seems likely the resource base and extractive capabilities of the local political system were adequate to the limited demands for performance.

Within the past generation there have been major quantitative and qualitative changes in demands for system performance, many of them originating outside the community. For example, there has been a steady stream of assessments for

public service projects such as the installation of potable water and electricity. Administrative tasks have multiplied, and with them trips to the state capital, record books, and the many other costs of day-to-day governance. At the same time the need for monetary rather than labor resources has shifted mobilization requirements from a resource in ample supply to one in tight supply. Additionally, population growth and a desire to improve living standards places further strains on the resource base, and increases competition for resources between public and private uses. Clearly, if political authorities are to have some flexibility in dealing with new and rising demands it will be largely a consequence of their ability to mobilize resources, which is in turn a function of the extractive capabilities of the local political system. Most of the remainder of this paper attempts to analyze available extractive capabilities and various difficulties in their application.

## Extractive Capabilities

Evaluation of the extractive capabilities of Valley communities is complicated by a shortage of accurate documentation, the nature of some of the resources tapped, and the procedures utilized. Although theoretically each municipio must submit detailed budgets to the state legislatures for approval (Jimenez, 1968), some do not and in general these budgets have no relationship to the level or process or resource extraction. In Santa Clara, for example, the

only lines on the form used for the budget reports which the treasurer bothered to fill in were total income and total expenditures, figures which always matched exactly, did not change from year to year, and always underestimated the total flow of resources by several hundred per cent. In many cases no written records are kept of the movement of funds or other resources. Financial management is casual in the extreme, and Foster's observations in Tzintzuntzan are equally applicable to Santa Clara: "The treasurer has no strong box or safe. He simply puts income in his pockets, carries it home, and keeps it informally until it is paid out." (Foster, 1967). Comparing municipio account books with what many informants claim to have contributed to the community over the course of the year suggests that not more than one-fifth of all income and expenditures are recorded. The bulk of the unrecorded resources are directed toward capital expenditures and specific projects, a point which will be covered in greater detail later in this paper.

One obstacle to the development of an effective extractive capability has been a shift in legitimacy patterns, away from blanket compliance and toward selective resistance to extraction, the resistance and the issue varying from one member of the community to the next. Perhaps this would be more accurately described as a denial of the ayuntamiento's right to expand its range of operations beyond those seen as traditionally appropriate, irregardless of changing circum-

stances. Few community members dispute assessments for the patron saint's fiesta, even though they may participate only on a minimal basis. Resistance to electrification assessments may be widespread, however, even among members who appear to derive substantial benefits from electrification. Develop-

*School board watching end of school year pagent. Matatlan, Oaxaca, 1968.*

mental as opposed to maintenance assessments may be regarded as violating the unwritten constitutional norms of the community, with refusal to pay a perfectly reasonable response.

Problems of legitimacy, inflation, population growth and broadened responsibilities combine to threaten the system's ability to generate resources equal to its most minimal needs and produce continuing pressures for the expansion of extractive capabilities.

That this has been difficult to accomplish may be seen in the decline in municipio income in Santa Clara during the period 1960-69[2]. During this period, Santa Clara experienced a net population growth of nearly 15 per cent (not including those who left the village during that time), and from the account books I estimate the costs of goods and services rose by at least the same amount. Yet municipio income, which averaged approximately 2065 pesos yearly for the nine years for which data is available, actually decreased from 1960 to 1969. Income for the three year period 1962-64 averaged 2145 pesos per year, while the 1967-69 period averaged 1803 pesos per year[3]. There is no evidence to indicate a shift in income from "regular" to "assessment-based", nor did authorities report any change in the basis of taxation[4]. During the 1960s, therefore, Santa Clara was unable to maintain its previous income, let alone expand it to keep pace with changing conditions.

One major obstacle to such expansion is the state government's stringent regulation of municipio taxation authority. Article 7 of the Ley de Ingresos Municipales specifically delineates what aspects of economic activity the municipio

may tax[5]. The state constitution forbids any non-specified taxes unless they have been approved by the legislature[6]. Article 7 limits municipios to the taxation of commercial activities such as markets, stables, garages, and public baths. Income, sales, and real estate taxes are thereby excluded from municipio jurisdiction. Taxation of public markets supplies nearly half of the municipal income in Oaxaca City (Waterbury, 1970), but it is meaningless in small and isolated communities such as Santa Clara. With the exception of a few small stores these villages have little or no commercial activity, and what little that does exist tends to be undependable from the perspective of taxation. Frequently stores or other businesses will close for extended periods because the owner has other commitments or interests. The traveling cinema may or may not come depending on weather conditions and the like. Furthermore, some taxes are highly inelastic or contribute more problems than revenue. When Santa Clara attempted to raise the tax on the traveling cinema from ten to fifteen pesos per show, it simply refused to include the village on its circuit. Similarly, attempts to tax itinerant vendors prompted them to avoid the community, irritating those families who depended on the vendors for occasional purchases to the degree that the taxes were dropped. Even with all these limitations, however, direct taxes contributed a third to a half of the recorded municipio budget in Santa Clara during the 1960s.

Somewhat surprisingly the second most important source of income for Santa Clara during the 1960s was the levying of fines for various kinds of misbehavior. Fines generally constituted a quarter to a third or reported income. Informants claim state regulations bar municipios from fines of more than 100 pesos, although a few fines greater than this appear on the books. Sometimes any ayuntamiento will attempt to bypass this by fining individuals for goods rather than cash. One municipio levied fines in chairs and tables, apparently to equip its school. However, there are limits to the exploitation of fines as a source of revenue. First, an orderly community will provide fewer opportunities to levy fines than a disorderly community. Second, some individuals prefer to spend time in the municipal jail rather than pay a fine or simply lack the cash to pay a fine. Third, frequent and heavy fines lead to the accusation that the presidente and/or other members of the ayuntamiento are using the fines to enrich themselves (Fajerstein, 1969)[7].

Other sources of income tend to be small and highly irregular. Some ayuntamientos charge fees for services such as writing letters or good character, certifying documents, and other miscellaneous acts. Entries for such fees are found from time to time in Santa Clara's account books, though during nearly two years in the community I never saw anyone charged for such services. From time to time it may be possible to sell public property, but such sales are rare.

In the 1960s sales never exceeded 100 pesos in any given year, or at best approximately 4 per cent of the total recorded income. Sales and fees tend to be unexpected and wind-fall additions to municipio funds.

As noted earlier, municipio income recorded in the

*Municipal council meeting. Mitla, Oaxaca, 1970.*

official ledgers represents a modest fraction of all resources mobilized by the community and therefore is not a comprehensice indicator of its extractive capability. The community extracts resources, directly and indirectly, from those who

serve in authority roles. When the community is without funds the ayuntamiento must put up the money needed for day-to-day operations, either as a loan or out-right gift. This is also true of many committees such as the school committee. The community also extracts resources indirectly. Most members of the ayuntamiento are reluctant to take expense money for traveling to Oaxaca City to attend to municipio business because they believe they will be condemned as abusing their office. Sometimes they must hire someone to tend their animals or fields while they discharge their official responsibilities. Direct expenditures, uncompensated expenses, and the cost of hiring labor for field or other work might well equal, if not exceed, the amount officially recorded on the balance sheet as income.

While only a few of the major office-holders spend so much of their time on municipio affairs that they may be forced to hire others, all males between the ages of 16 and 65 are subject to call for <u>tequio</u> service several times yearly. The tequio is unpaid labor on public maintenance or construction projects. A man may be called to do tequio service in cleaning the cemetery, fixing the road, carrying rock for construction, or any other activity which requires general labor power. In Santa Clara approximately 140 eligible men give two to four days of tequio service per year, and members of the ejido will give one or two days of service to the ejido in addition to their community responsibilities.

Tequio is obligatory, but one may hire a substitute and many older or more affluent men prefer to do so. While occasionally someone may protest that he has been called more frequently than is equitable, there seems to be no objection in principle.

Aside from whatever contributions to a sense of community solidarity tequio service might make it reduces a possible drain on a scarce resource (money) by substituting an over-abundant one (labor). Presuming the absolute minimum number of man-days and daily wage (ten pesos, but 12-15 would be more realistic) it would cost Santa Clara 2800 pesos per year to employ one man for public works and maintenance. This would have more than doubled the amount currently spent for day-to-day operations and greatly increased the problems of finding the necessary funds. In a labor-surplus economy time is less valuable than money, and by scheduling tequio service for slow periods in the agricultural cycle the ayuntamiento saves both the municipio and its residents scarce cash. From the perspective of capabilities analysis the relatively high ability of the political system to extract unpaid labor from its members reduces the adverse consequences of its limited ability to extract financial resources[8].

There are limits, however, on the substitutability of labor for capital and it appears that over the past twenty years the municipios' financial needs have grown much more rapidly than their tax bases. Given the legal restrictions on taxing powers and widespread belief among community resi-

dents that ayuntamiento members will steal or mis-use any surplus accumulated by the municipio, most ayuntamientos have turned to special quotas or assessments levied to support specific projects. Indeed, such assessments generate far more resources than taxes, fines, or other methods. Most informants reported total assessments ranged between 100 and 200 pesos yearly, sometimes even more. Assuming the minimum figure is correct in Santa Clara, these assessments would generate more than 15,000 pesos yearly, or about six times the revenue extracted by "normal" methods. This is probably unrealistically low, as most families must meet electrification assessments of nearly five hundred pesos over a three-year period[9]. On the other hand few families meet one hundred per cent of every assessment, and some are unable or unwilling to pay most.

Assessments may be established either by the ayuntamiento or worked out in a public meeting, with the latter approach favored for major or controversial assessments. Although hammering out the amount and timing of assessments in a community-wide meeting is cumbersome and time-consuming it allows the ayuntamiento to gauge public sentiment, develop a plan which has broad community support, and enhance the legitimacy of the assessment. It also provides a way to put generalized social pressure on those who might attempt to avoid the assessment. Minor or routine assessments (such as getting together funds for a celebration of Independence Day) are gener-

ally handled by the ayuntamiento. In theory the ayuntamiento may fine or jail community members who refuse to meet their assessments, but in practice it attempts to avoid this except with habitual shirkers or for major projects such as electrification or school construction. Payment of one's assessment is affected by the amount involved, the likelihood of sanctions, and the breadth of public support for the project. The extractive capability of the assessment system depends largely on the skill of the ayuntamiento in manipulating these three variables.

Thus far the discussion has focused on resource mobilization within the community. However, it is possible, at least theoretically, for the community political system to extract resources from the extra-community environment. One measure of an effective presidente or ayuntamiento is his ability to persuade an external agency or actor that it should contribute to the community in some tangible way while pleading the inability of the community to assist or reciprocate, at least in a material sense. The logic, of course, is that by extracting something from the environment the community gains at no cost to itself, and some of the conflict which might be generated by internal resource mobilization will be avoided.

Revenue-sharing remittances from the state and federal governments would appear to offer opportunities for generating resources for community use, but in practice these programs have yielded very little to Santa Clara. According to a 1961

decree all municipalities in the Tlacolula district should receive ten per cent of the real estate taxes paid to the state from within their jurisdiction[10]. Santa Clara records a small payment in 1962 but nothing thereafter, although reportedly the decree is still in effect. Federal taxes on certain consumer items are supposedly shared with the municipios, but again there are records of only a single payment. Aside from the possibility of faulty bookkeeping, the state and federal governments may be sitting on these resources for their own use. Few council members know such programs are on the books, and no-one seems inclined to pursue the matter.

In balancing the number of petitions, delegations, and other efforts to extract resources from outside against apparent results one would have to conclude most Valley municipios have only limited success. One finds in Santa Clara's municipal archive fragments of correspondence dating back to the late nineteenth century requesting assistance in the development of an irrigation and water control system, but such requests rarely get even a paper, let alone programmatic, response[11]. Politicians and patrons may help out on occasion, but almost never in any systematic fashion. Some Valley municipios have become adept in extracting resources from Oaxaca beer companies in return for exclusive concessions in village fiestas, but it is unclear whether these contributions and gifts go to the community or to the council members.

Finally, it should be noted that Santa Clara and many

other communities are recipients of certain generalized distributions from outside agencies in the form of services such as primary education and malaria control. We cannot consider these as resources explicitly extracted by the community political system, as they are developed without regard to the concerns of a single community. Nevertheless, to the extent that better health or education enlarge the options open to local decision-makers they could be considered an input to the resource base.

## Pulling it All Together

Some anthropologists, getting this far, may be inclined to say "that may be political science, but what does it have to do with my research interests on such-and-such topic in such-and-such community?" I think the key points are the following:

1. From the national to the local level, in developing as well as developed countries, governmental units are allocating resources and values. These allocations may not be the same kind as those seen in the United States, and they may not have the same intensity and scope at this point, but they are there. Indeed, the steadily increasing impact of government is one of the outstanding aspects of modernization. This is especially true at the local level, where people experience this impact in three ways: (1) the formation and implementation of policy by local political units; (2) policies

flowing from higher levels of government, but impacting at the local level, sometimes through the mediation of local government; and (3) the interaction, competition, and conflict between community and higher levels of government over aspects of policy which may ultimately embroil the total community membership. Many aspects of community dynamics revolve around efforts to ignore, subvert, or resist national or local policies which members feel to be ill-founded, illegitimate, or prejudicial to their interests.

2. In many cases, attention to policy implementation and its consequences contribute to a better understanding of the linkages between the community and more inclusive systems. At times there is a tendency to see the community as a closed system, a useful analytic device but one which may lead us to ignore or downplay important external influences on community life.

3. Resource allocation policies, because they are qualitatively and quantitatively different from what people have experienced in the past, are likely to be major focal points of confusion, dissatisfaction, and conflict. They touch a number of issues bound to be of critical concern, including traditional public expenditures, the distribution of resources between public and private needs, the establishment of allocation priorities, and the distribution of costs and benefits.

4. For Santa Clara we have identified several means of mobilizing resources, including tequio services, normal taxa-

tion, assessments, extraction from the external environment, etc. More important, however, is the fact that all the extractive or mobilization techniques put together are barely able to sustain minimal services and make an occasional contribution to infrastructure development.[12] Even this meagre effort comes at the cost of considerable conflict and tension within the community, reducing the willingness of many potential leaders to serve in municipal office, prompting young people to migrate, and weakening the bonds which have long held the community together. Perhaps Santa Clara is an extreme and unusual case, but for anthropologists and political scientists alike questions about the impact of changing parameters of public policy on developing communities are destined to be of major importance for the foreseeable future.

NOTES

[1]This paper was prepared for delivery at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Mexico City, November 21-24, 1974.

[2]Income based on taxes, fines and other "ordinary" sources listed in municipio accounts. 1961 data were not available. The treasurer estimated the data for that year at between 2100 and 2400 pesos, but his estimate has not been used in the following discussion.

[3]While, as noted earlier, these figures account for only a fraction of total revenues, they include all revenues allocated to day-to-day operations.

[4]By "regular" I mean taxes, fines and other general sources of revenue. "Assessment-based" refers to assessments levied for specific projects, such as electrification or school construction. This category is discussed more completely later in the paper.

[5]Chapter 2, Article 7, Nueva Ley General de Ingresos Municipales de Oaxaca. Peridico Oficial, Estado de Oaxaca.

[6]Article 107, Section 3, Constitucion Politica del Estado Libre y Soberaño de Oaxaca. Publicaciones Loyo Muñoz, 1968.

[7]He comments, "It is general opinion in the municipality that those discharging the functions of presidente and sindico gain monthly incomes of more or less five hundred pesos each by appropriating fines and accepting bribes. My translation. Also, see comments on Zincantan in Evon Z. Vogt, Zincantan: A Mayan Community in the Highlands of Chiapas, (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 282. Appropriation of fines appeared to be rather limited in Santa Clara.

[8]If one were to attempt to calculate compensation for unpaid police which patrol the community at night the total value of the labor extracted would increase substantially.

[9]In Santa Clara the community's share of the electrification costs was alloted rather equally among all households, except for a few destitute elderly residents. Fajerstein reports the assessments in Soledad Etla were made on the basis of wealth. (Fajerstein, pp. 121).

[10]Decree 106, Article 2, Nueva Ley de Ingresos.

[11]Few responses to such requests have been preserved. It may be that others have been lost or discarded, but an informant who had served as municipal secretary under several ayuntamientos claimed the majority of the requests made during his service were never answered and others were returned with a negative form letter.

[12]Foster and Lewis make similar observations with regard to Tzintzuntzan and Tepotzlan. Foster: "The important thing to note in this financial system is that other than street lighting no real community services are provided. Almost all income goes to keep the system running. . .and there is virtually no excess for community projects or betterment." Foster, p. 170. Lewis: ". . . the official income is much too meager for any significant public works program with local funds." Lewis, pp. 225.

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# COHESIVE FEATURES OF GUELAGETZA SYSTEM IN MITLA[1]

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El sistema _guelagaetza_ de Mitla, Oaxaca, descrito en detalle aqui, consiste en que los miembros de la comunidad comparten la carga financiera de las fiestas y ceremonias mayores, mientras reafirman su posición en la comunidad. La guelagetza entraña un intercmbio de bienes y servicios que posibilita la realización de grandes celebraciones sin la necesidad de una gran acumulación de riqueza. Cada familia mantiene un relación detallada de todo los regalos dados o recibidos, y durante toda su vida son reembolsados en especie. Al dar algo o sér acreedores de algo, los miembros de la comunidad pueden elevar su posición social. La guelagetza propicia la estabilidad en Mitla, al inducir a los mitleños contraer matrimonio con miembros de su misma comunidad, figándolos allí, ya que el no hacerlo implicaría la renuncia del privilegio de ser acreedor.

The social and economic activities of the people of Mitla, Oaxaca, a Zapotec-Spanish speaking community of four thousand "souls"[2] in the Oaxaca Valley of southern Mexico, are intertwined in a system of ceremonial exhange they label _guelagetza_. It is basically an exchange of economic goods and services between members of extended families, although most always the male elder of the extended family is considered the responsible agent by members of the Mitla community. Guelagetza occurs between extended families when one of the

families decides to have a major celebration such as a wedding, to sponsor a fiesta to honor a particular Christian saint for the benefit of the community (mayordomía), or to organize a funeral for one of the members of their extended family. These celebrations are extensive social affairs, sometimes lasting a week during which time large numbers of people come to the house of the sponsor and are fed vast quantities of food and drink which is consumed in part at the house of the sponsor. A "second" portion is given by the host for the visitor's family that could not attend. Music is considered essential for all three celebrations, and often two bands are hired, so as to have continuous music throughout the days and nights of the fiesta. The system of guelagetza is also utilized for minor celebrations such as first communion, baptism, birthdays, and fiestas honoring an engagement of a couple to marry, but the intensity of the social interaction and the number of people involved is less than with the major ceremonials.

Conceptually there is agreement on the dual function of gift-giving found in Mitla and gift-giving in other communities, especially in regard to the reciprocal nature of the gift-exchange and the status-maintaining or improving nature of it described in anthropological literature (Johnson:1974, Malinowski:1926, Mauss:1967, Sahlins:1965). The major basis of assigning individuals high or low rank within the social structure of Mitla is the amount of economic wealth one has

accumulated, and large fiestas are a major way of demonstrating economic power within the community. There are other ways, too, to demonstrate one's economic power in Mitla, and these include owning a retail store or business, having a car or truck, gold-capped incisors, and sending the family's children to school in clean, freshly pressed

*Bride and godparents beginning their walk to Church on her wedding day. Matatlan, Oaxaca, 1967.*

clothing every day. However, the display of wealth, excluding the large ceremonial fiestas, must be done in subtle ways lest the individual be accused of egotism, or even of being in league with the Devil, who has provided the individual with money to do the Devil's bidding. Thus, guelagetza functions to establish, maintain, and increase

one's rank within the socio-economic structure of Mitla. There are at least two other major functions of guelagetza: (1) it strongly influences individuals to marry a person born and raised in Mitla, and (2) it strongly influences married couples to remain in Mitla for all of their lives.

Among contemporary Mitleños, guelagetza is considered almost without exception as a "good thing", and this positive sanction for guelagetza appears all the more significant after determining that nearly one-third of those Mitleños interviewed[3] on this subject had few if any guelagetza relationships, and expressed the desire to obtain one or more of these relationships. The usual manner of obtaining guelagetza relationships occurs at the time of marriage. The pattern of wedding responsibilities in Mitla designates the father of the groom as the person most responsible for costs of the wedding fiesta; the groom eventually shares a major portion of the cost of his wedding. The father of the groom and his extended family share the burden of organizing financial resources and assigning tasks to others outside of the immediate extended family circle. One of the first considerations the family occupies itself with (after the son has informed them of his decision to marry) is how much and what other Mitleños owe it via the guelagetza system. Each family in Mitla who is included in the guelagetza system has a book in which they have written in utmost detail the various items they have lent out and what has been lent to them. This

guelagetza book is kept in the most secure place in the house, usually a large wooden chest or baul. The book contains the names of individuals, the item given or received, the number of the items exchanged, the weight or character of the goods, and on what day of the fiesta the item was exchanged. An entry would read as follows: "Eligio Gomez Sanchez, October 15, 1967, six male turkeys, 30.4 kilos, bar of Maria Chavez Lopez, anti-vespers." This means that Eligio Gomez Sanchez brought six male turkeys as guelagetza to the family on the day before the to-be-married couple went to the church for a vesper service, and that the six turkeys weighed 30.4 kilos utilizing the weighing bar of Maria Chavez Lopez. Repayment of this gift is to be made as nearly as possible a duplicate of the original exchange, including the use of the same weighing bar.

The adult members of the extended family planning a wedding fiesta examine their assets, and one member of the family, usually the mother of the groom or alternatively the sister of the father of the groom, goes to those individuals who owe material goods and services to the family and advises them of the coming wedding. As almost an afterthought, it is mentioned that it would be nice to know if they can repay what they had "borrowed" some years back. No decision is made at this first meeting, but delayed, since the day of the wedding cannot be set yet. This will be done when the Priest can be contacted and a firm date established for the

church part of the wedding ceremony. Thus, the visitor advises the guests that she has invited that she will return to tell them of the exact date of the wedding.

When the actual date for the church wedding is set, the return visit is made, and the invited family lets the person know whether or not they will be able to bring what they

*Godparents with wedding couple after signing documents of marriage. Mitla, Oaxaca, 1971.*

owe to the wedding celebration. Thus a member of the groom's family will make two visits to as many as 20 to 25 households, and then must coordinate the participation of each of these groups within the inner workings of the fiesta. Each day of a wedding fiesta, as with a fiesta of the Mayordomía variety, and with funerals, is identified and special tradi-

tional foods are to be served on these days. Also the work force must be organized, and since jobs of cooking, preparing and cutting meats and vegetables are socially ranked, it would be a grievous social error to put a socially high-ranking women in with a group of women making tortillas. High status women are given the task of cutting up meat; lower ranks do such chores as stirring pots of beef stew, and tortilla making; the lowest ranked women do the dishes. Eventually all these things are organized, and the wedding ceremonial begins. When guests arrive, they first go to the main house structure, and pass inside it with their gift or guelagetza. They pause long enough for a person in an inconspicuous location to note who they are and what gift they are bringing to the wedding fiesta. This person in the "corner" can be best described as the "scribe of the wedding", writing down in a guelagetza book the names of the people arriving and what they have brought. If the item is large and bulky and needs to be weighed, he goes with the guest and gets that vital information and returns to his corner. Then the guest goes with his gift to the family altar, kneels and says a silent prayer, crosses himself, and then stands and turns to greet his host, the father of the groom to whom he presents his gift.

When the wedding festivities are over, the extended family sits with the newly wedded couple to figure out the costs of guelagetza. What the father of the groom cannot absorb via his previous loans to members of the community is made

the responsibility of the groom. Thus, a newly wedded couple starts out owing at least 20 individuals or their households varying amounts of wealth and services, yet according to all but one informant, there is a good feeling about this circumstance. In general such couples expressed the attitude that those people who lent them goods and helped with the tasks of the wedding have expressed a faith in them, both socially and economically. There were explicit comments from informants that they fully expected to reciprocate and looked forward to such an event with pleasure. When the informants were asked about whether or not they were aware that it would involve them in a lifetime of exchanging gifts and labor, all but one expressed great satisfaction over having people owe them something, and the most frequent expression was, "It is just like having some money in a bank, but even better, since it is Mitleños who owe me things." Likewise, when queried about greater economic opportunities in big cities as opposed to Mitla, the response was frequently, "If I went away I would lose all the guelagetza I have invested, and people here would not think well of me leaving without repaying them what I owe them." It seems clear that those people in Mitla who are participants in guelagetza approve of it and want it to continue, and most likely understand that guelagetza strongly influences native sons and daughters to remain residents of Mitla.

A similar influence appears to operate in regard to the

selection of marriage mates among Mitleños. While it is recognized that there are many and extremely subtle reasons for the selection of a marriage partner, the loss of one's parents' guelagetza wealth, or the fiesta it will support may be quite influential in such a selection process. The bride's family does have some financial obligation in a

*Basket of shelled corn being prepared for guelagetza. Mitla, Oaxaca, 1969.*

wedding fiesta, particularly in sponsoring the all-night fandango. This is supported by guelagetza obtained by the bride's parents, and is generally looked forward to with great expectation, since both men and women, married or not, dance with whom they please. Equally exciting for the women at the fandango is that they get to throw hard candy at the men. If a man marries a non-Mitleña, then there

would not be this particular part of the wedding celebration. Normally even less takes place when a girl from Mitla marries outside of the village, since the wedding takes place elsewhere, and usually the girl does not return with her husband to live in Mitla. Also, in such a marriage, a Mitleña marrying an outsider, the people in Mitla would not extend the guelagetza relationship to them, since the male is not born and bred in Mitla. Thus, there is a strong tendency for people in Mitla to marry Mitleños for social and economic reasons, as well as for many other reasons which influence the selection of a mate for marriage.

In summary, there exists in Mitla, Oaxaca, a system of exchange of economic goods and services called by them guelagetza. It is operative principally in major celebrations or ceremonies which require large amounts of wealth, and the sponsors of these celebrations reaffirm their social position and economic status to the community-at-large. There is a strong tendency for the guelagetza system to be closed; however, it is open for movement within it, and membership within the sets of relationships is dependent on whether or not one is born and bred in Mitla by Mitleños. Thus, the guelagetza system approaches that of a corporate body made up of non-kin, yet restricted to one ethnic community affiliation. Guelagetza thereby functions to maintain some semblance of ethnic and cultural purity for its members, as well as to provide economic necessities in times of social need.

## NOTES

[1]This paper was prepared for delivery at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, in Mexico City, November 19-24, 1974.

[2]"Souls" used in the context hopefully will orient readers toward E.C. Parsons' book, Mitla, Town of the Souls, published in 1936, by the University of Chicago Press.

[3]There were a total of 142 informants interviewed specifically in regard to the features of guelagetza.

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# SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE URBAN POOR OF OAXACA

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Higgins sugiere que las relaciones sociales entre los pobres del sector urbano en Oaxaca están determinadas por sus condiciones materiales en términos de excedentes de trabajo y capital. Los miembros de esta clase encuentran dificultad en transformar su excedente de trabajo a capital, necesario para el mantenimiento de cada hogar. La estructura nuclear de cada hogar parece ser la mejor adaptada para balancear los dos, esperándose que el hombre convierta su trabajo a capital mientras que la mujer lo dedique al mantenimiento del domicilio. Los hijos ayudan en ambos papeles. Los hogares pobres procuran garantizar cierto grado de seguridad financiera para sus hijos y para ellos mismos a través de la institución del compadrazgo, lo que implica el establecimiento de relaciones individuales con personas no emparentadas de mayores recursos económicos.

## Introduction

This paper is an analysis of the nature of social relationships among the urban poor in the city of Oaxaca, Mexico. The paper works from the Marxist framework which stresses that resource allocations and access to and participation with the modes of production within a social system will provide the boundaries in which social relationships are structured. In capitalist nation states, the urban poor are embedded in adverse social and economic conditions because of their lack of means for developing or sustaining

any adequate amount of surplus wealth. This "lack" is a structural feature of the capitalist profit that "exploits" or alienates the surplus value of the worker's labour activity to produce profits (Marx 1967). All forms of productive activity in a commodity market system have their surplus value alienated in this general form, however, for the poor it is more graphic because of the low exchange value awarded their labour. Internally this process of labour alienation leaves the poor with two complementary yet opposing forms of surplus wealth: labour and capital. It should be stressed that I am using the terms labour and capital in their narrowest contexts. By labour I mean the actual physical activity, with surplus labour being that amount of physical activity that can be freely given or alienated in excess of what is needed to maintain one's own form of productive activity. Capital is defined as the actual amount of monetary resources that an individual would have, with surplus capital being that amount of monetary resources that can be freely given or alienated in excess of what is needed to maintain one's household. Labour and capital are complementary forms of surplus in that at the simplest level one converts one's physical labour through employment into capital or monetary resources. However, in terms of the urban poor this is also where the process becomes contradictory. The urban poor are totally embedded in a commodity exchange system. To attain the necessity of their existence they must be able

to accumulate capital. However, since their labour is evaluated at such a low exchange rate they can only - if at all - produce enough surplus capital for individual households (Higgins 1974). Outside of an employment role or a small or micro-enterprise, there are no structural means available to the urban poor to transform their potential surplus of labour into capital. In the contexts of the political action of the urban poor in Oaxaca it can be demonstrated that at one stage of development the surplus labour of the poor can be used in collective action to build a micro infra-structure within their communities. However, a point will be reached at which this form of action has limited success or may fail. That is, there is a point at which the needs of the community can only be met by a surplus of capital. This produces strong internal tensions within a poor urban community and restricts the usefulness of collective action. Households can generally afford to "freely give" their labour to the community without taking away from the needs of their households although this is not true of their limited surplus of capital (Higgins 1975). What I attempt in this paper is to investigate if an understanding of the opposition between labour and capital can provide new insights into the nature of social relationships among the urban poor.

The data for this paper was gathered over a six year period from a poor urban colonia in the city of Oaxaca (Higgins 1974). The colonia named Linda Vista, is two miles

from the center of town, and is located on the northeastern foothills of the city. The colonia was formed 15 years ago as a low cost housing development. However, there were legal problems concerning the validity of land titles and this caused the colonia to become a squatter settlement. Currently the colonia has a population of some 3,000 persons whose occupations range from rural school teachers to peons and domestic laborers. In 1971 the average monthly income was $75 (USA), with over 60 percent of the households in the sample (N. 131) earning below the average. Residents found it difficult regardless of their occupation to maintain any form of surplus capital. All of the households studied used some system of informal credit alliance and borrowed from moneylenders in the colonia to maintain their households.

In a sense the analysis presented in this paper is a restudy of my previous work. The data was originally presented as part of a general ethnology of the colonia. Thus in this work the data is presented in a descriptive fashion with some surface analysis. The conclusion attempts to rethink the description and to go beyond the surface presentation. The data is arranged so as to describe two general areas of social interaction in the colonia. These are fiesta activities and related personal inter-relationships and the nature of marriages and household composition. The conclusion of the paper will look at the material base that underlies these domains of interaction.

Fiestas and Godparents

There are two types of fiestas given in the colonia and these are public and private ones. Public fiestas are either church or government sponsored public holidays. This would include such events as "the Day of the Dead" or the "16th of Sept." Public fiestas are of such a general nature that they provide a limited amount of useful information on the nature of social relations in the colonia. However, private fiestas are structurally the opposite. Private fiestas in the colonia are centered around the "rites of passage" such as births, puberty, marriages, and death. These are labeled as private because they include only the particular family involved and those people who are invited to share the celebration. The most common fiestas given in the colonia associated with a passage rite are baptismal and confirmation fiestas, birthday celebrations, saints' days, and funerals. Although these celebrations are similar to other accounts in Mexican ethnographies, they are included here to illustrate how the colonia residents deal with them. The following descriptions are accounts that informants gave on how these particular fiestas should be celebrated, along with observed variations on these norms.

Baptism and Confirmation - According to the people in the colonia, first prerequisite for giving a baptismal or confirmational fiesta is to choose a godparent for the child.

There seems to be an emphasis on having a man to serve as the godparent for the male child and woman for a female child even though the spouse is also considered a godparent. The person chosen should ideally be of "noble" character because, if the child's parents die, it is expected that the godparent (especially the baptismal godparent) will care for his godchild. Second, one would choose a nonrelative as a godparent, and preferably a person who is of higher economic stature than the family of the child. The reason for this is that in times of need, such as if the child needs expensive medical care or money to pay school tuition, one can ask the godparent to help and not feel embarrassed. A godparent who is better off than the child's family serves as a type of insurance for the godchild and his family.

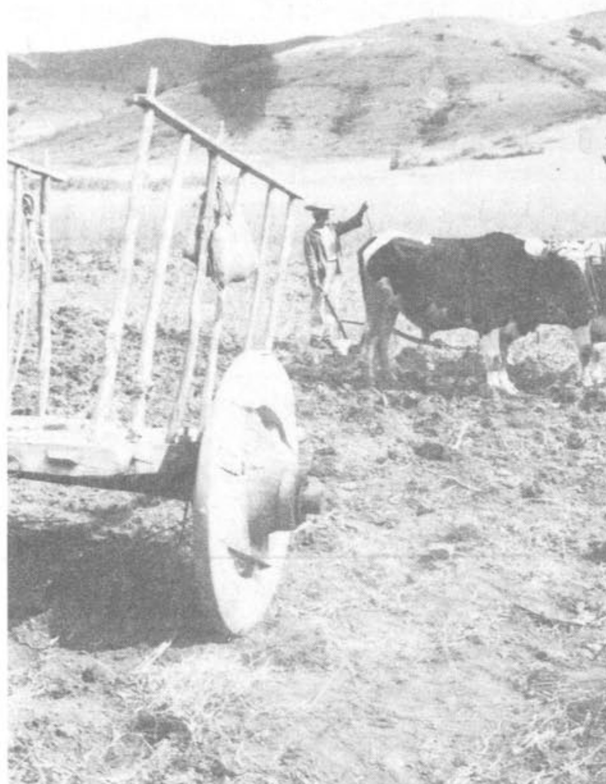
Once the godparent has been chosen, the child's family decides when the baptism will take place and preparations for fiesta are begun. Only the parents and the godparents attend the religious ceremony itself. In the colonia it is expected that the godparent will provide the godchild with a new set of clothes and that the child's family will pay for the fiesta. The fiesta should include a proper meal which consists of soup, rice and vegetables, and _mole_, or a pit-roasted goat. Also necessary is beer, soft drinks, and a type of distilled liquor such as _mescal_. Common, though not expected, is some kind of music. This is usually provided by a band or by a record player. Generally, guests are the immediate family,

the godparents, and a few close friends or neighbors in the colonia.

Few people in the colonia are able to perform at this idealized level. Most people do have their children baptised and confirmed; however, not all can afford the cost of a fiesta. The number of persons invited to the fiesta, the kinds and varieties of foods served, and the type of entertainment provided are all indicators of the family's economic resource base. Obviously, the better-off families are able to provide more elaborate fiesta than are poorer families.

The rules for choosing a godparent for one's child are also idealized. First, not everyone has a social network which is elaborate enough to choose a nonrelative to sponsor the child. Thus, many families do choose relatives as _compadres_. If one has to use a relative, the economic advantage of the godparent being useful in times of economic crisis is negated since a relative is usually in the same economic stratum. However, it should be noted that there is no indication of a relationship between a family's socio-economic standing in the colonia and the ability to obtain a godparent who is better off economically than oneself. Some of the poorest families in the colonia have "well-to-do" compadres. Those poor families that do have compadres from a higher economic stratum generally exhibit some type of patron-client relationship which predates the _compadrazgo_ relationship, and in some cases the patron-client relationship continues after the establishment

of compadre ties. For example, Sra. Sosa did the laundry for the wife of a man who owns several drug stores in the city. From the Sosa point of view, this family was quite well off and they are godparents to several of the Sosa children (there seems to be no restriction on using the same person for more



*Farmer with his ox team and wooden wheeled cart. Huitzo, Oaxaca, 1969.*

than one child). The woman is considered a good comadre because she loans the Sosas money in time of need, and she periodically comes out to the colonia with used clothing for

the family. However, when she gives her own fiestas, she invites Sra. Sosa, not as a guest, but to work as a servant.

Birthday Celebrations - Yearly celebrations in the colonia are not frequent; however, there is an idealized expectation that one should provide daughters with a special celebration for the fifteenth birthday. It is analogous to a coming-out party, and it serves as an announcement that this girl is now a senorita and no longer a child. The celebration of this birthday can be very elaborate, and ideally includes: 1) choosing godparents for the event who are expected to share some of the cost of the celebration, 2) arranging to have a Mass given for the girl, and 3) selecting fourteen young girls and fourteen boys to act as the escorts, plus one particular escort for the girl. The whole affair is formal and the girls are dressed in matching evening gowns (often home-made), and boys are expected to be in white shirts and ties. All who attend the fiesta should be in their best clothing. The celebration begins with an evening Mass after which the girl and her escorts return to her home and are greeted by the majority of the guests. The celebration begins with a dance (a waltz) begun by the girl and her special escort; then the other fourteen couples join in the waltz. After this dance, everyone participates. It is not expected that a meal be served, only drinks and possibly a cake. Generally there are a large number of guests.

A quince años fiesta is rare in the colonia and, during

the time of the investigation, I knew of only two such events. One was the elaborate type described above (the girl was the only daughter of a mechanic), and the other was for the daughter of a very poor plumber. She was dressed in an evening gown, and there was a Mass, but is was not an elaborate affair. The vast majority of girls in the colonia pass their fifteenth year without any type of celebration save a recognition among household members.

Saint's Day - One's saint's day is the day on the calendar from which one's name has been chosen. Each day of the year has a saint's name associated with it, and the tradition has been that the name that a child receives was that of the saint associated with the day of birth. Currently it is common to choose another name because of personal preference. Interestingly enough, one's saint's day is considered to be more important than one's actual day of birth, and thus one is more likely to celebrate one's saint's day rather than a birthday. The celebration is not elaborate and generally only involves the immediate family.

Funerals - Funerals in the colonia are a form of social get-togethers and are rather popular; they consist of a wake and nine days of rosario (novena). Funeral practices follow a traditional Mexican pattern. For instance, it is common to lay the body out in the house on a limestone cross which is surrounded by flowers and candles. If a person chooses to

attend a funeral, it is expected that some sort of gift such as flowers or candles will be brought. Also, one may be expected to make a monetary donation to the deceased's family to help with the cost of the funeral and the novena. Funerals tend to be very open events with no great show of sorrow except in the immediate family of the deceased. At the wake, people stand around chatting and children run in and out of the house to look at the body. A rosary is said over the body by a _residor_ (prayer chanter), and it consists of three series of prayers said nine times for each series. After the prayers have been said, the family of the deceased serves coffee or chocolate and sweet bread. During the event mescal is served. The body is buried the next day. Following the burial the rosaries are given for nine nights (the novena), after which there is the _Levantado de la Cruz_ when the limestone cross and remaining flowers and candles are collected and taken to be buried on top of the grave. The funeral for a small child is more relaxed because children under the age of one are considered to be angels and incapable of committing sins, if baptised. Thus, it is believed that they will go to heaven. The one child's funeral which was witnessed during the research stay was very casual. Children acted as the pallbearers and carried the coffin to the cemetery where the child was simply buried. In fact, at the gravesite it was remembered that no one had brought a cross, so while one of the adults tried to make a cross from flowers, one of the children took a cross from a nearby grave and placed it on the

grave of the just-buried child. Ideally, a person would give the child a Mass and a fiesta before the burial, but few families can afford the cost. At this particular funeral the child was only a few hours old.

Friendship Patterns

Friendship patterns are restricted to the colonia. At the level of verbal reponses in terms of socio-grams, residents label very few people as friends. The standard response was "no tengo amigos aqui, nada mas amistades" (I have no friends here, only acquaintances). This pattern of constricted or closed social networks has been reported before for Mexico (Butterworth 1962:257-274; Foster 1967). There is little verbal stress on establishing friendship relationships among the residents of the colonia, and there is no evidence for male reference groups such as a _palomilla_ or _amigos de confianza_ (Rubel 1971). There are many statements made by the people of the colonia about how one should be careful in establishing strong relationships with others, and they tend to be somewhat distrustful and suspicious of others.

Most of the dyadic relationships in the colonia that resemble middle class concepts of friendship are structured by the residents of the colonia into compadrazgo relationships. In terms of social relationships in the colonia, the compadrazgo system serves two functions. One is to establish a system of alliances between families of low incomes with families of higher incomes, thus providing an insurance policy for the

future needs of the parents and godchildren. Second, those relationships that develop toward what could be labeled as "friends" is often codified by making the parties involved compadres. The compadrazgo system in the colonia is complex, though the particular relationships can be placed in two broad categories of major relationships and minor relationships. The major categories are those for baptism, confirmation, weddings, and funerals. It is for these relationships that one would prefer to establish alliances with better-off families. Minor compadrazgo relationships are for such things as housewarmings, or lighting a candle in the church for a child. It is through these relationships that one codifies friendship bonds. Both types of relationships are more concerned with the relationship between the compadres than in the relationship between the godparent and the godchild. In the major categories the emphasis is on using the relationship as a means of economic security, whereas in the minor categories the emphasis is on structuring friendships.

## Household and Familial Structures

This section deals with household and familial structures in the colonia and is organized as follows: 1) the demographic and statistical nature of the households, 2) an illustration of statistical patterns with material from specific colonia families, and 3) a description of the household roles as defined by the residents of the colonia.

The following types of households are present within the colonia:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| nuclear | 97 | 74 | per cent |
| matrifocal | 17 | 12.9 | |
| extended | 12 | 9.1 | |
| single individual | 4 | 3.0 | |
| miscellaneous | 1 | 0.7 | |

A nuclear family consists of a man, a woman, and any children they accept as their responsibility to care for, regardless of actual parentage. A matrifocal family is defined as a unit in which the adult female has no male companion residing in the household with her, an extended fmaily unit is composed of vertically related persons such as a father and his son, or horizontally related relative such as two sisters, living together. In the sample, there are both residential extended and nonresidential extended unity made-up of several siblings living very near to each other in the colonia. The above categories of extended households include only residential extended units.

This statistical profile of Linda Vista is similar to those attributed to other squatter settlements (Butterworth 1970; Chance 1971:122-147; Leeds 1967; Mangin 1967:65-98; Turner 1970:1-19). That is, Linda Vista is a young population that is growing and overwhelmingly structured in terms of the nuclear family both as a residential unit and as a resource base.

## Illustration of Different Household and Familial Structure in Linda Vista

Following is a description of the three of five types of familial structures and residential units found within the colonia. As suggested by Buchler and Selby (1968), the terms of nuclear, extended or matrifocal should not be considered as ideal types, but more accurately, as stages of development that a particular household goes through. That is, a household can move from being extended to nuclear and then to a matrifocal unit (or the reverse): and by thinking of the terms as stages in development instead of actual sets, they become dynamic and lose their static description.

### The Sosa Family - Nuclear Family

The Sosa family is made up of the parents, Alberto and Maria Elena, who are both in their middle forties, and eight children whose ages range from two to sixteen years. The oldest daughter (age sixteen) has just recently married and left the household. Alberto was born in the city of Oaxaca and Maria Elena was born in a village on the coast of Oaxaca near Puerto Angel. Alberto claims Elena as his only wife; however, Elena had another husband who was the father of her oldest daughter. This daughter died in childbirth about five years ago. Alberto and Elena met on the coast of Oaxaca where he was working on a construction job. They remained on the coast several years and all the older children were born there. Eight years ago the family moved to the colonia, and two

years ago the parents became legally married to prevent any troubles the children might have had with legal matters concerning their parents' free union marriage.

Alberto is a master carpenter and works as an independent, small-time contractor. His main jobs are building private

*Adobe wall being constructed. Matatlan, Oaxaca, 1967.*

homes. He is paid a full amount for the job from which he must purchase his materials, pay his help, and support his family. He uses only manual labour, and his main building material is brick. When he is working he estimates that he only clears

around 50 to 60 pesos a day. It should be noted that the trade of master carpenter is very common in the city of Oaxaca, and that the wages that a person receives for his work are not high. Alberto is often out of work so that the family often lives on Elena's "mini-enterprises" and Alberto will often go to the coastal region to look for work.

The Sosas are one of the poorest families in the colonia. They live in the lower section of the first part of the colonia in a one-room brick house with an adjoining cook shack and an open patio area. The family is marginal to the social and political affairs in the colonia. They have no immediate relatives in the colonia, Alberto claims to have no friends in the colonia, and Elena's social networks in the colonia are her immediate neighbors whom she mainly exchanges gossip with and whom she does not consider to be her friends. Outside of the immediate neighbors, social networks of the Sosas in the colonia are with people who loan money.

The Sosas do not participate in any of the political groups within the colonia and they do not attend the tequios, school meetings, or the juntas. Sr. and Sra. Sosa are very open in their disapproval of the two political factions in the colonia, and they do not actively support either faction. The majority of the Sosas' compadres live outside of the colonia and the Sosas consciously use their compadre relationships as a means of economic security. Elena uses her compadres as customers for the food she sells and to introduce her to new customers.

Besides actually helping the particular godchild that the compadre sponsors, the Sosas obtain aid for the whole family through having a compadre give the family large quantities of used clothing.

Alberto is the nominal head of the household and when he is present he attempts to act as the main authority. He orders the children about and demands that Elena serve him. When he is not obeyed, he becomes quite annoyed (this tends to be often) and he takes his frustrations out in slapping or kicking one of the older boys. Elena does not take a submissive attitude in her relationship with Alberto; she is a strong person who is very vocal about her own views and how the household should be managed. She expects the older children (ages 7-15) to work around the house washing dishes, sweeping, or going to the store for small items, and the older children who can obtain a paying job are expected to work outside the house and to contribute to household expenses. Both Alberto and Elena are upset with their oldest son (who is fifteen) because, even though he has a job as an aid to a truck driver, he never gives any of his money to funds for the general needs of the household. In contrast, the oldest daughter worked in a drug store in the center of town and with her earnings before she was married she bought the family a bed, a blender, a radio, and a sewing machine for her mother from the government pawn shop.

As much as Alberto, Elena is an authority figure within the household. She supervises the children and sells her food items to supplement the family's income, Actually, Alberto and Elena make few decisions jointly, and the pattern is for one to decide upon a particular course of action and then inform the other about it. For example, Alberto may decide that work is slow in the city and that he needs to go to the coast for a month to work. When he has made this decision he informs Maria Elena so that she knows and can help prepare whatever he needs for the trip; however, he does not ask her approval. Elena follows the same pattern. For instance, she will decide that she wants to go on a religious pilgrimage to ask the Virgin of Oaxaca for aid, and she will not ask her husband's approval, only his help in preparing for the trip.

The children exhibited a normal amount of conflict among themselves; however, they seem to be close to each other, and the younger ones tend to interact with each other more than with peers outside of the family. Though this is one of the poorer families in the colonia, as a unit they are a strong family. They enjoy each other's company and do many things together. On Sunday, Alberto will take the boys for walks in the colonia or down by the river, and Elena always takes several of the children to market with her. The whole family frequently will go to the coast to visit Elena's relatives, or go to local fiestas near the city. Though the family unit

is strong and there are points of tension, these are generally because of their lack of economic resources. For instance, the younger children wear just second or third-hand clothing, many times the children cannot do school projects because of their lack of funds, and their diet is limited and of poor quality. Alberto is prone to periods of depression over the lack of work and the resulting lack of money to maintain the household. Elena is plagued by the fear of death from childbirth (she has had two miscarriages in the last three years).

In many ways, the family exhibits characteristics of the culture of poverty. The two strongest traits are their lack of future time orientation (also, they see the future as negative because they will be old, their children will have left the house, and there will be no one left to help them), and a total distrust of any type of government or institutional structure. The Sosas do not blame themselves for their lack of resources but the system that they feel is stacked against them. As Elena expressed it, "Why do we have to pay for the things that God gave away free?"

Sra. Victoria Lopez and Family - Matrifocal Family Type

Sra. Victoria lives on the road above the Sosas in the lower part of the first section of the colonia. She lives with her three children in a one-room bamboo structure with mud plaster walls. She has a small outside patio area with a good number of potted plants and a small animal pen in which she keeps chickens and turkeys. She has one son, age fifteen,

from her first husband who died some ten years ago, and two small boys, ages five and seven, from her second husband who abandoned her two years ago. Victoria has few material possessions and lives on a 200 peso monthly allotment which she receives from her second husband's wages.

Sra. Victoria was born in the village of Chapalco in the state of Puebla near the Oaxacan state border. She is in her late thirties. Her oldest son Victor is now in secondary school, and her two small boys go to the primary school in the colonia.

Victoria came to the city of Oaxaca with her first husband who died. Later she met her second husband in the city, and it was with him that she moved to the colonia. She has been living in the colonia for about five years. At the beginning of the investigation, she was living in her second house because the first had been destroyed during a rainstorm when the house above hers slipped off its foundation on top of her own house. The accident destroyed most of her possessions, although many of them were replaced by the owner of the above house. Also, at this time she was having marital problems, and her second husband had just left for work on the coast with another woman. He is employed by the department of public works as a road construction worker, and he had legally claimed his two children from Victoria as his own so that he could get government health care. When he left Victoria, she went to

the local ministro público (somewhat like a District Attorney in the United States) with a complaint against him and to find out if he could be forced to support his children. Last year this husband returned and attempted to re-establish living relationships with Victoria, though they have never been legally married. He stayed in the house a few days, but after talking it over with her oldest son and, remembering the hardships of living with him before (he was a heavy drinker and Victoria was constantly forced to pawn items such as her only pair of earrings to feed the children), Victoria decided to ask him to leave and not to return.

Victoria's closest ties in the colonia are among her immediate neighbors in her section of the colonia. This involves an exchange of information and confidences between Victoria and her neighbors, and in some cases they loan small sums of money to each other. Victoria is highly respected by others in the colonia because of her strong character and because of the fact that she is rearing her children on her own. In the past she was quite active in colonia politics; she was a strong supporter of Sr. Valesco's faction and generally went to all the juntas and tequios. She has served a cargo on the parent school organization and she generally accepts a position to serve as a madrina for school celebrations. Currently she has become disillusioned with the political activities in the colonia and feels that all the political factions do is collect money for the leaders and that nothing

gets done for the whole colonia. The main incident that generated her distrust was a school bazaar given to benefit the school and to buy new supplies. Each parent was to bring a food dish that would be sold. Victoria was involved and bought some food items for sale; what upset her was that when the bazaar was over the president of Valesco's faction (that faction had sponsored the bazaar) took the proceeds for each stall and the remaining food to his house and nothing has been seen of it since.

Victoria has one set of compadres in the colonia and several in the city. The majority of her compadres are in her village. The few of her compadres that she still visits with are not better off economically than she is and they tend to be more friends than any kind of economic insurance, though she can count on their support in times of need. Victoria has no immediate relatives in the colonia itself and, although there are relatives of her second husband living in the colonia, she has nothing to do with them. Her first husband also has relatives that live in the center of the city; however, they do not attempt to see or communicate with Victoria or Victor. With her own immediate relatives, she does not have close contact either. As a matter of fact, she has had a macabre experience with her mother. About five years ago Victoria's mother went to a civil hospital near her village and claimed the body of a female who she said was her daughter Victoria. Her mother took the body back to the village, announced Victoria's death, held a

traditional wake and nine-day rosary, and had the body buried as her daughter. A year after this event, Victoria was traveling to the city of Puebla to obtain a copy of her son's birth certificate and she stopped on her way to see her mother. When she entered the village she was met with screams of horror,

*Celebrants in a home fiesta - family altar at the rear. Zaachila, Oaxaca, 1969.*

for the villages literally thought that they were seeing a ghost. After everyone was calm, the sequence of events was described to Victoria, after which she decided not to see her mother.

Since then she has had no contact with her village.

Within her household, Victoria is the ultimate authority, though Victor tries to guide and discipline the smaller boys. Victor works as an apprentice carpenter while going to school. He receives a wage of 35 pesos a week which Victoria allows him to keep to meet his school expenses. Victor is a very serious young man and does not associate with many other young boys and girls in the colonia. He spends the vast majority of his free time either studying or in making furniture for the house. Victoria has had a difficult life and has received few if any positive rewards. She has little money with no real chance to obtain more, she has not had good luck in her relationships with men, she works very hard in her various occupations (tortilla making, washing clothes, and sewing), and she receives low wages. Somehow she sees life as positive and worth living and she rarely complains about her life, taking each day as it comes.

The Cruz Sisters - A Non-residential Extended Family Type

The Cruz sisters, Francisca (age 25), Josefina (age 21), and Juana (age 20), live in neighboring houses in the higher part of the second section in the colonia. Francisca is married to Arnolfo Casanova (free union marriage), and they have four children. Arnolfo is a Masatec Indian and Francisca is a highland Zapotec Indian. Both left their villages in their teens to find work in the city, and it is in the city

that they met. They set up a household in the city with her family, later moved into the colonia, and have lived in the colonia for six years.

Also living in their household is Arnolfo's brother and his six children. Arnolfo and his brother sell ice creams on the streets in the center of Oaxaca and their wages average 20 pesos a day (each). The family lives in a large, one-room, adobe house with little furniture and no lights or water. Arnolfo's brother and his children all live in the same room as Arnolfo's family or in another smaller room when there are visitors. The room is constructed near the larger house. In each house there is little furniture and no lights or water.

Francisca's sister Josefina lives in a bamboo structure next to Francisca with her two small children (ages 3 and 1 1/2). She has no husband (the children each have different fathers), and she does domestic work in a home in the center of town. Juana also has two small children about the same ages as Josefina's, although both of hers have the same father, a lawyer in Oaxaca and who keeps Juana as his mistress. Juana lives in an adobe house, with an adjoining cook shack. Juana lives with her mother who works in the same household as Josefina and her fourteen-year-old brother. Juana and her mother, though they reside in the same house, do not share expenses, and each maintains separate household budgets. They only cooperate economically during certain holidays, such as

during Christmas or all souls day, when they buy decorations. Juana's only income is the amount of money that her boy friend gives her to support the children.

The idea that family and household structures, such as nuclear, matrifocal, or extended, represent development stages rather than static ideal types is well illustrated by the household of these three sisters. All of the sisters didn't arrive in the colonia at the same time, so at first there was the nuclear family structure of Francisca and Arnolfo, which became a residential extended family with the addition of Arnolfo's brother and six children. Josefina represents a matrifocal residential unit, Juana and her mother and brother represent a matrifocal, vertically extended family unit, and the three sisters together can be seen to represent a matrilineal horizontally extended family. It should be stressed again that none of these units works in corporate fashion. For example, when one of the sisters borrows food from the other, she pays for it, and Arnolfo's brother pays Francisca ten pesos a day to cover the food expenses for his children. Although there is no economic cooperation between the three sisters and their mother, they tend to be very close and do things together, such as going to the market or attending a particular fiesta. The sisters will also babysit for each other when it is necessary. Arnolfo does not like Francisca's family and does not like the sisters to be around their home when he is present. The only time that the sisters or mother

will come into the house is if one of their relatives, such as their grandfather, is visiting with Francisca. Francisca has expressed tensions about the relationship between herself and Arnolfo over her sisters, and she says that at times he has beaten her and that she often thinks about leaving him.

Josefina has not as yet set up a household with a man, although she has had two children. She supports herself on her earnings and she receives no help from the fathers of the children. Juana, as stated before, is a mistress to a lawyer in Oaxaca and he supports her and the two children. He tends to visit once or twice a week during the day. She has registered both children in his name and has had them baptized as his children. She is aware of his legal wife and family in town, but verbally classifies herself as his wife. Juana's two sisters think that she is lazy and that she should get a job to support herself.

All three sisters are young; however, they see themselves as older and do not see that their lives will change much in the near future. They hope that their children will be able to have better lives than themselves. This value is expressed by Arnolfo, who hopes that his oldest son will get a trade such as a welder or an electrician so that he can have a more secure life than Arnolfo has had.

## Conclusion

In this conclusion I will present an analysis of the colonia's social relationships in terms of the opposition

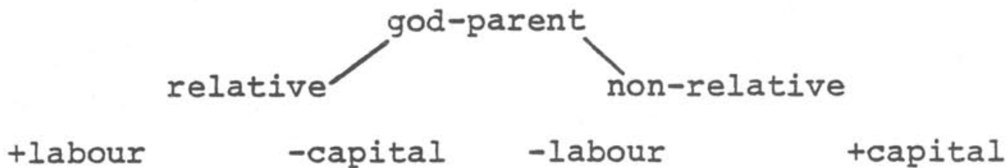
between a surplus of labour and capital. It should be emphasized that although the structure of this opposition is inherent in the organization of a capitalist economic system, it's particular content would be determined by the social history of the group that one is studying.

In terms of giving of a fiesta for a particular event households are in fact faced with the opposition between labour and capital. Fiestas are organized and conducted through the use of surplus of labour. A household will use its own labour and that of relatives and friends to prepare for fiestas. This generally takes the form of women working as a unit to prepare the food needed for the fiesta. However, this is only a potential surplus that is dependant upon a surplus of capital to provide for the fiesta itself. This can be attained by saving capital from the household allotments or through the use of surplus provided by a particular micro-enterprise that a household may be involved with. Most households are organized around one of the main wage earners and several secondary sources of income. Thus the difference between the ideal for a fiesta and how they are actually performed is related to the amount of surplus capital available to the household. If the Cruz family wishes to give a fiesta for one of their children's saint's day, they would have the necessary surplus of labour, however, unless they could also generate the needed capital they would have no means to use the labour. The ability to give a fiesta and how close that

fiesta meets the preconceived standards is controlled by the amount of capital a household has. The reason that many households do not meet these standards is because of the low exchange value of their labour when they "sell" it to produce capital. Thus the poor find themselves in the position of having no structural means for the transformation of potential labour into the needed capital for a fiesta. This is not to say that they do not have a fiesta, but only that this contradiction controls the scope and quality of the fiestas.

Fiestas are also important because they demonstrate the structure of the god-parent and friendship relationships in the colonia. Residents stated a preference for a non-relative over a relative as a god-parent for one's child. Emphasis was on attaining a "well-to-do" person as god-parent, so that in times of need they could be called upon for help. This decision is relative to the nature of the opposition between labour and capital. That is one's immediate relatives will have the same general material base as oneself, and is a potential surplus labour would be of no help. Further, if the relative could convert his surplus labour into capital he or she would need it for the maintenance of his own household. What makes a person "well-to-do" from the viewpoint of the colonia residents is that these people do have a real surplus of capital. If one can generalize from the Sosa interaction with their "well-to-do" compadres, the exchange is an asymmetrical one. That is, the "well-to-do" compadre

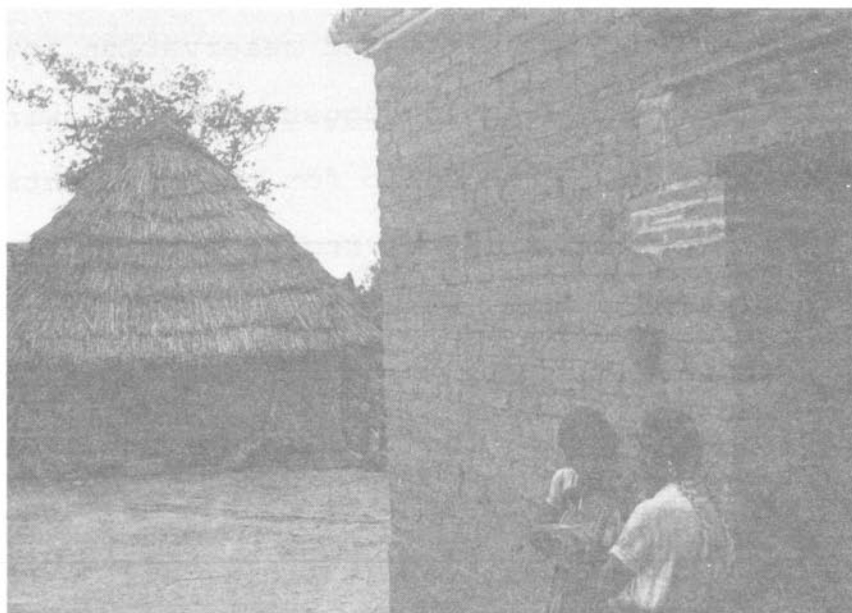
will give capital in time of need, where as the poor compadres are expected to give their surplus labour when it is needed by the other. This relationship can be diagrammed as follows:




How does one explain the expressed reservation towards friendship in the colonia? I would suggest the following pattern of friendship dyads. Friendship for the residents of the colonia implies a strong bond of mutual reciprocity. This involves the ability to give aid, with the most important aid being monetary. Therein lies the basis for the restriction of friendship. One can fill one's friendship obligations through a surplus of labour (which in fact people do), but they are unable to meet any request for financial aid, without depriving their own households of needed capital. The problem seems to be resolved through the use of the compadrazgo system. The lesser god-parent relationships are used to structure personal relations that might be labeled as friends. Thus, one's surplus of labour is controlled by being kept either to one's own household or that of one's compadre. Also one's surplus of capital is also controlled in the same fashion. Thus the restrictive quality of friendship bonds is not related to an attitude or world view such as the "image of

the limited good" (Foster 1967). It is, in fact, related to the actual limit of goods (surplus) and the constructuring of those limited goods through the use of the compadrazgo system.

Looking at the three case histories I would like to propose the following form of analysis. It again should be stressed that the analysis I am making is bounded by the



*Extended family house compound.*
*Matatlan, Oaxaca, 1968.*

material and social conditions of the residents of the colonia itself though it does provide tentative suggestions or hypothesis on the general nature of urban poor social organization. Looking at each of these households from the view of the nature of their potential sources for surplus, each household represents different responses to those conditions, and provides us with

insights into the relations between development cycles within households and how they are related to changes in the material base of those units. In terms of the opposition between a surplus of labour and capital, I would redefine these households as follows:

1. A nuclear family represents a household unit in which there is an internal division of labour, in which the male is expected to produce what capital is needed for the household, and the female is expected to provide the needed labour to maintain the household. However, this structure involves a series of internal contradictions. The male attains his capital through the process of alienating his labour - either through wages or by the production of a commodity product (metal stoves or leather goods) which he sells in a market over which he has no control. He can in no way attain the full worth of his labour because of the structure of profiting which is dependent on the accumulation of surplus value. Thus the male adult member of the household sells his labour at a low exchange rate that he has no control over; however, in this process he reduces the options open to him to fulfill his role within the household. Thus females must develop two strategies: Extending credit networks (both inside and outside the colonia) and creating small enterprises such as fruit stands or selling clothes. These micro-enterprises seem to be involved in producing a certain degree of equality among males and females within the household since they both contribute

the needed surplus for household maintenance.[2] In fact, several households in the colonia have maintained themselves during periods of male unemployment through these enterprises. This also illustrates the nature of internal stratification in the colonia, for it is the wives of those husbands with higher paying jobs who have the most profitable enterprises. The nuclear households are the major form of household organization in the colonia because it provides the best means for generating adequate surpluses of both labour and capital needed for household maintenance.

In the colonia an extended household generally involves the link of several related siblings each maintaining his own residential unit in the colonia. However, more importantly, extended families increase the potential surplus of labour for households but not the surplus of capital. In the case of the Cruz household, Arnolfo's brother brought into the household six new members who could add to the surplus labour needed to maintain the house, however, he only increased the capital base by 10 pesos daily. In terms of the colonia, extended households mirror the contradiction of labour and capital; that is they have no means of converting the increase of labour over into the capital needed to support all of the members. Thus one finds extended families who do not act in a corporate fashion because of the lack of material base for such behavior. Again the nature of these social relationships is not dependent upon attitudes or that the residents

are city people but upon a change in the division of labour that necessitates capital and not labour to maintain households.

In terms of matrifocal structures, I maintain that they represent a development stage in which the necessity to produce a surplus for the household - both in terms of capital and labour - is performed by one person. Historically this situation has been the role that many females have found themselves in because of infant care needs; however, what is important is that there is no logical reason for this role being dictated by sex. This definition of matrifocality calls into question any assumption about the weak nature of females or that absence of males from the household as a casual feature in understanding lower class life styles. In terms of the colonia, matrifocality means that one person instead of two has generated the needed surplus for the household. I would maintain that this is the reason for the low occurrence of this type of household structure in the colonia. There are no welfare agencies or assistance programs in Mexico as in the United States, where the situation is reversed; that is, one person (again generally the female) can in fact generate more of a surplus alone than with another adult member in the household.

What I have attempted to do in this conclusion was to gain a different view to the nature of social relationships among the urban poor by relating them to the material condition that the poor have adapted to and structured for their survival. It is the major premise of this paper that the poor in a

capitalist commodity market system find themselves in structural contradictions in attempting to generate some form of surplus wealth to maintain themselves. I suggest that patterns of fiesta, godparent, friendship, and household structures can be understood from analysing them as a means that the poor create for dealing with these contradictions. Though this analysis is derived from the social conditions and the history of the residents of the Colonia Linda Vista, it does provide some new suggestions for understanding the nature of social relationships among the urban poor.

## NOTES

[1]This opposition between labour and capital came from hearing a paper on this process in a Mestizo village in the valley of Oaxaca (Corbett 1974).

[2]A recent work of L. Dahlsten demonstrates sexual equality in related internal household affairs, and public behavior (Dahlsten 1975).

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# THE POOR "VISITORS": AN ASPECT OF OAXACAN TOURISM

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Las comunidades de Oaxaca han cambiado durante los últimos 25 años y uno de los mayores factores determinantes ha sido el turismo. Sin embargo , una clase de turismo denominada localmente "turismo pobre" no es bienvenida por la población local mientras que al turismo rico se le hace sentir muy bienvenido. Los "visitantes pobres," a menudo denominados "hippies" o "freaks" en las comunidades de habla inglesa, fueron estudiados para determinar su orígen nacional y sus razones para elegir Oaxaca como lugar de turismo. Se proporcionó cuestionarios y se entrevistó tanto a los turistas "ricos" como a los "pobres" de Oaxaca. Las informaciones resultantes de esta investigación revelan que los turistas pobres son jóvenes y de poco dinero, mientras que los turistas ricos son de edad media o viejos con cantidades modestas de dinero para gastar. Lo que es muy revelante es el consenso general de que mientras que los "hippies" constituyen una fuente de diversión, no son queridos por la gran mayoría de la población urbana y rural de Oaxaca.

Since the opening of the Pan-American Highway more than 25 years ago, the city of Oaxaca has been experiencing an increase in tourism. Within the last decade, tourism, like the national development plans, has contributed to producing notable changes in the economy and social structure of Oaxaca.

The immigration of retired foreigners, families and personnel of federal dependents working in the state, and the continuing exodus of peasants from the interior of the

state into the city of Oaxaca in search of employment, have helped multiply the population and change the demography of the city.[1]

Actually, Oaxaca is more of a corporation than the serene, isolated city of 20 years ago. This is evidenced in the increase of realty speculations: Where once were pastures or cultivated lands now are _fraccionamientos_ (plots of real estate), factories or stores. Colonial houses are being remodeled for sale or rent. The grand old central market has been moved into the suburbs of the city. Oaxacan artistic expressions are also being commercialized: "Mayordomias" are pushed out of their traditional context and promoted for tourists; _zarapes_ (blankets) are sold with labels printed in English (exporters request designs); a huge amphitheatre has been constructed for the presentation of the so-called "guelaguetzas de los lunes de cerro." Hotels are reserved years in advance for the traditionally festive month of July.

The Federal interest in developing the commercial potential of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, as well as the state's preoccupation with its poverty and desire to attract capital have opened Oaxaca to national funds and foreign capital. Tourist facilities which have multiplied are non-taxable and duty-free.

The new Oaxaca of today, influenced greatly by the Mexican Tourist Commission's programs and politics, has a

new brand of tourist: one that does not come by plane or use the facilities or services offered to tourists from which the tourist industry thrives. Locally, this form of tourism has been classified as "turismo pobre." In particular, the term "poor tourists" is generally referring to those individuals usually young, from the United States, and who stay for periods of time on the beaches, pueblos and in the city of Oaxaca itself. In their country of origin, they are usually referred to as "hippies," "drop-outs" or "freaks." In their country, as well as in Oaxaca, they are characterized by their appearance of dress, travel and use of drugs.

It is not the intent of this paper to examine the causes of the social phenomena which produces hippies in their native country, it is to analyze rather superficially, who they are and what effects these migratory groups have on Oaxacan society of which they have become a segment.

During the summer of 1973, questionnaires and interviews were administered to tourists in the city of Oaxaca. One questionnaire was administered to those tourists visiting the regional museum, during the peak season, to find out their length of stay. Forty intensive interviews were conducted with persons that could be classified under "turismo pobre" by their appearance. Interviews were also administered to retirement age foreign tourists and persons seeming to fall under the category of "rich tourism." Opinions were also gathered from laborers and students. The final outcome of

this survey will be a formal case study.

Of the forty interviewed, only twenty-five met the characteristics which we were looking for.[2] Of them, twenty-one were from the United States, especially from the states of Texas and California; the rest were from Canada or Europe. The average age was 26.6 years old; three were Jews, six were Protestants, seven were Catholics and nine claimed non-association with an established religion. Ten of these people had been living in this style for an average of six years. With the exception of a few, most had been to other states in Mexico and other countries. Their average length of stay in Mexico was seven months; some had only been there for two weeks and had the desire to stay longer, even up to three years.[3] Four had dropped out of high school; four others had completed college; seventeen had dropped out of college. Nineteen identified themselves as being from the middle class, three from the upper class and three from the lower middle class.

Usually they had entered the country with sufficient money to prove that they could sustain themselves during the length of their visa (usually a six-month visa). Once in the country, they ate at a minimum level so that their length of stay may be the longest possible. Some lived in small groups or in communes which were self-supporting; others were crafts-people who would sell and/or exchange products here; others were seen associating with Mexican hippies, living off of what

others would give them or mutually stealing from themselves. Usually the majority left Mexico, worked for a period of time and returned with their savings. The average savings brought to Mexico, from the twenty-five interviewed, was 13,685 pesos ($1095.00 U.S.A. currency) per person which, if computed with their average stay of seven months gives an average of 1,966 pesos ($160.00 U.S.A. currency) monthly.[4]

The reasons for leaving their country of origin were like those reported in studies about the counter-culture movements in the United States.[5] What they disliked about Oaxaca the most was the very things they were attempting to escape from: the police, middle-class and the high population density of the United States. The conditions of poverty and machismo in Mexico were also disliked. Women resented the way they were treated in Mexico. They were aware of the peasants' poverty and the economic differences between social classes, which led them to criticize the existing bourgeoisie in many forms.[6]

What they liked most was the different culture in Oaxaca, especially the indigenous one, the different pace of life, the scenery, more personal liberty, the availability of marijuana and hallucinogenic mushrooms.[7]

The interviewees enjoyed staying in the community of San Jose Pacifico a hallucinogenic mushroom center, on the Pacific Coast beaches at Puerto Angel and Puerto Escondido, Huautla de Jimenez another hallucinogenic mushroom center, and a commune

in Ocotlan. There were a few small groups and couples living in the city of Oaxaca and neighboring pueblos. Valley towns rich in artistic crafts were very appealing to them, especially Mitla and Teotitlan del Valle.

The people they associated with, aside from their colleagues en route, were the peasants. Their opinions about the rest

*Sidewalk cafes bordering the central plaza.*
*Oaxaca, Oaxaca, 1972*

of society were drawn heavily from their current living experiences. A young 23 year old American, who was dedicated to curing peasants until the police chased him out said: "I get along with the simple people, the peasants, be they Indians or Mestizos. They are protective and treat one as on equal. The rich bourgeoisie are too preoccupied thinking if

they are better or worse than one, and any interchange with them has been of no value." "The peasants," said a 26 year old crafts buyer, "treat me with less 'cultural insecurity' than those of the middle class." Women agreed that the peasants treated them as persons and not as sexual objects. A 30 year old woman who had lived the past three years in Oaxaca and married to a Mexican, described their experience living with the peasants: "In the pueblo where we lived six months, there was an air of hostility. We were robbed various times. There was never a true integration." This relationship between her and the pueblo is similar to the relationship between the Ocotlan commune and the pueblo: they have never been accepted by the pueblo, who see them as rich, and some, including authorities, have attempted abuse on the foreign women.

The same informant goes on to give the following opinions about the commune:[8]

"There we lived inside the walls of the old hacienda, a group of ever-changing Americans, Mexicans, Canadians and a few Europeans. The objectives of the commune were to work the land and live the most isolated we could from the 'system.' We had a good relationship with neighboring families, but their friendship with us was alienating them from the rest of the pueblo. We were frequently asked - invited - to be padrinos - but, I am afraid it was done as a measure in the hopes of money

rather than true friendship. It was there that I had the worst relationship with the peasants. I suspect that this had to do with the number of strange people that suddenly made themselves permanent elements in the pueblo. The fear of a group (of people) is always greater than that of an individual."

The opinions and attitudes of the society with respect to the "hippies" reveal diverse interests and ideologies. The peasants who go to the market at the end of the week to shop and listen to music find it amusing and unusual to see the hippie attire and conduct in public. Even though the presence of hippies has given the city of Oaxaca an air of internationalism which has been exploited by the bourgeoisie class, the exploiters disapprove of their way of life and see the hippies as undesirable elements in the pueblo.[9]

The most direct action taken against the hippie tourists came from the commercial sector. The Oaxacan Association of Motels and Hotels decided not to serve the hippies. By placing signs in English and Spanish at entrances to hotels and restaurants prohibiting "Jipis," they attempted to attract "rich tourists." However, some tourist facilities still served them. This local discriminatory measure was cited by the national press. They also printed the opinion of the Delegate of Tourism when he declared that it was neither legal nor illegal to discriminate in regard to this type of tourist.[10] An agent from the Ministry of the Federal Public was quoted as saying that the discriminatory measure was not illegal:

"What we need is the tourism that leaves economic aspects (capital), they (the hippies) just eat in the markets."

The attitude of Oaxacan students was one of indifference and hostility. The attitude of the hippies on politics and their identification with the proletariat or peasantry in Oaxaca frequently led the students to indiscriminately identify as enemies all North Americans. Some saw the hippies as a new form of imperialist infiltration. Two university professors proclaimed the necessity of getting rid of the hippies because they perceived them as "imperialistic mercenaries" whom, during a revolutionary confrontation, would convert themselves into soldiers and defend their lands and properties that they believed were their own.

"Wherever there are hippies, there are drugs," exclaimed an agent from the Ministry of the Public. He noted that 90% of Federal offenses in Oaxaca were due to the use of drugs.[11]

The national campaign against the planting of marijuana has directly affected the peasants. Although the principle profiteers in marijuana are the intermediary figures, the ordinary peasants have found an economic supplement in the production and cultivation of marijuana and/or hallucinogenic mushrooms. Similarily, in Huautla de Jimenez, the small businessmen and owners of rooming houses (pensiones) have been the principle elements affected by prohibitions on hippie tourism.

The opinions and complaints of society against the hippies

were made known to them during the interviews. Although a great majority came from the middle-class of the United States, they insisted that they did not represent the values of their culture and their presence in Mexico was not due to an "imperialist infiltration" or cultural imperialism. On the contrary, many explained that the peasants were benefiting from them, economically, and by the interchange of ideas and contrasts in value systems.

"We are of greater economic help to the peasantry than are Mexican tourists," a 23 year old American bricklayer commented. A 40 year old American woman responded to the questions rather violently: "This is pure shit!" The small businessman is a real burden on the peasantry, not the defenseless hippies.... the hippie is not buying land or opening stores."

It was also asked in the interviews whether their lives had any political implications. In various answers, a sense of individual realization was expressed rather than interest in external affairs such as politics. "To me it doesn't matter what effect I produce on other people. The only one I want to influence is my husband," said the 40 year old woman. A 23 year old woman, living on a farm, said, "There I feel like I'm living in the days of cowboys and Indians, which I find very amusing. I would like to influence the surrounding people by making them aware that they are civilized and that it never occurs to them to cut

our heads off over dog fights." The preoccupation with one's family was also expressed by a 22 year old mother who had a 3 year old daughter and was living with a Mexican hippie: "I suppose that my life has political implications, but rarely think in these terms ... the three of us are happy. Sometimes we trip on mushrooms, which is really incredible, especially when the three of us do it together!"

The search for one's self as the principle objective of life and the fatalistic attitude on the events of reality, which they believe cannot be changed, are recurrent themes in most of their answers. The same 22 year old mother said, "I have heard much about the drop-out scene, but I think only of myself and how to find my path. First, there has to be harmony within one's self before you start influencing others." "My interests are the occult," said a 24 year old Canadian woman. "I read palms, astrology. I do not believe in the spirit and the possiblility that we can stop reincarnation and and escape into nirvana. That is the only way we can avoid all this shit. I believe in working within the soul. I do not believe in political change."

Another 22 year old Canadian woman also confessed the impossibility of trying to change things. "My values are anarchistical, everyone has their own individual lives, but I see ourselves as a species are not quite ready for real anarchy. So, what you have to do is reflect your own perceptions and wait until everyone is doing the same, and pray

that the system does not lead us to total destruction before a new and better structure can appear."

Others believed that their mode of life, the abandonment of material values, was sufficient in causing social change,

*Central plaza or <u>zocalo</u>.*
*Oaxaca, Oaxáca, 1972.*

and their way of life definitely had political implications. In this way, the peasant's values and customs would become overt and conscious change for the better would occur by confronting hippie values and customs. Overall, the problem with the peasants is "showing them humanitarian criteria,

re-educate them in non-material values," a 21 year old Swedish male concluded. A 26 year old American woman, dedicated to buying and reselling crafts, expressed a similar posture: "I feel that my existence is affecting a change when it questions values and customs in the United States, as well as Mexico. If it is certain that we are not doing anything of social importance, why are we so feared by the system? Woe is me! What have I merited to not be served in a restaurant?!"

Of all of the people interviewed, only two people took a theoretical stance or a position of compromise about the problems of the hippies "new residence." One was a 36 year old American who was dedicated to filming peasant life so as to make them aware and conscious of their exploitation. The other was an American social worker who helped with the survey and will publish her own observations. It was interesting to see her suffer and change when interviewing the life styles of the hippies. At first, she showed great interest when interviewing them and spoke enthusiastically about the hippies and the lack of completely understanding them. She ended up disillusioned with the hippies. She was disgusted with the complacency of their lives and their ignorance of surrounding problems.

The presence of hippies in Oaxaca and the study of their effects invites reflection over possible themes of study, some of which are conclusions of this particular study.

- The causes for these migratory currents must be looked for in their country of origin. In the case of the United States, the displacement of numerous unemployed persons to other countries is an economic discharge.
- The intensity of persecution for illegal drugs in Mexico is greatly due to the pressure generated in the United States against illegal drug traffic and consumption.
- The measures taken by Mexican police and national guard against those that produce and consume drugs has affected people with just the appearance of being a hippie.
- The planting of marijuana and cultivation of psilocybin mushrooms on a small scale in some communities is only due to a necessity to supplement their economy.
- The increase in economy that "rich tourism" represents to Oaxaca does not necessarily benefit the state's peasantry.[12]
- "Poor tourism" in Oaxaca benefits the poor sectors of the population.
- Competing foreign craftspersons and communes with economic ends, have a negative effect on Oaxaca's peasants and craftspeople.
- There is no substantial evidence that the

presence of hippies detracts "rich tourism." The expensive and luxurious tourist facilities are not used by hippies.

- The reaction against hippies in Oaxaca comes from a provincial moralism and from the eagerness of fast and substantial profits by large business concerns.
- Discriminatory measures against "poor tourism" in public places reveals the inconsistency of the politics of the Mexican National Tourist Commission: People who are permitted entrance at borders are denied the services offered to other tourists.
- The main interest in large immediate profits by businessmen, together with lack of controls in the tourist industry by the government, are causes resulting in lack of professionalism in restaurant service and fixed unauthorized hotel rates.
- A social integration with the "new residents" is not foreseen. In the field, they are accepted only at an individualistic level, and definitely they will not integrate with the bourgeoisie, whose values the hippies are rejecting.
- Finally, their presence in peasant communities seems to be helping, indirectly, the political-

economic system, which is oppressing the peasant. Similar to other religious groups such as the Bahai or Jehovah's Witnesses, the hippies, with their attitude of ignoring circumstances external of their immediate selves, of wishing a change in values and traditions at the individual level, and their waiting for a solution to social problems, in the future world of universal brotherhood, are not emperically influencing the conscious of the exploited classes, with whom they are living.

## NOTES

[1]Population of the city of Oaxaca:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1950 | 49,953 |
| 1960 | 72,370 |
| 1970 | 99,535 |

Source: Secretary of Industry and Commerce, Mexico. General Population Census. Recent data from anthropologist, Jon Jacobi, demonstrates that the large increase of immigrants from Mixteca Alta, in the city of Oaxaca, has occurred within the last ten years. Personal communication.

[2]The following indicators were considered in the probe: the abandonment of a stable mode of life, length of time living this type of life, amount of money they possess, time in Oaxaca, places where they live, people with whom they associate, means of transportation, use of drugs, and ideologies. Herein they will be referred to as "hippies" or "poor tourists."

[3]During the Holy Week of 1973 (April 15-23), a period of heightened tourism, 524 answers were obtained from foreign tourists. It was learned that 66% of them were spending two to four days in Oaxaca. During this same period of time, 2,000 answers were obtained from national tourists, of whom 52% were spending two to five days in Oaxaca.

The same length of stay was typical of foreign tourists during the April 23-30, May 25-June 10 periods. The total number of national and foreign tourists for the aforementioned dates was 5,616.

The average length of stay for foreign tourist in Mexico during 1971 was 13.2 days. Source: Directory of General Statistics S.I.C. Departmento de Tourismo, cited in Estadisticas Basicas, 1973, Departmento de Turismo, Mexico, p. 17.

[4]In 1970, the per capita expenditures of national and foreign tourists was $258. Source: Estadisticas Basicas, 1973, Departmento de Turismo, Mexico, p. 47.

[5]For example, Lewis Yablonsky, The Hippie Trip, Penguin Books, 1973; Wm. L. Partridge, The Hippie Ghetto, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1973.

[6]During the months of May and June of 1973, 3,277 interviews were conducted with tourists in the city of Mexico by

students of the National University. Contrary to answers obtained in Oaxaca, what disgusted the tourist in the city was: the smog, street peddlers, poverty, the dirtiness and the noise. Source: Turismo Extranjero-Mercado Negotable. Facultad de Comercio y Administracion, UNAM, Mexico, 1973, p. 17.

[7]In the same study cited in note no. 6 above, what the tourist enjoyed the most was the people, climate, scenery, folklore and culture, op. cit. p. 10.

[8]This commune merits study. It was founded by two women, one Mexican and an American and offers an optional mode of life. Also, this commune seems to have problems regarding cohabitation and authority, a feature which characterizes USA communes as well. Regardless of the idealism expressed by commune members, racial and sexual discrimination was observed.

[9]This moral attitude was also observed in 1972 in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas. There, a municipal order was issued that authorized the police to ask the hippies for identification. When asking the influential ladinos their opinion on such a measure, most of them approved of it. The justification for such a measure was that the "outrageous" hippie customs were a bad example for the "indios" who have "conservative" customs. It was ironic to hear businessmen being concerned with the morality of the Indians.

[10]Excelsior, January 21, 1974. cf; other similar opinions.

[11]It was referring only to the use of marijuana.

[12]Cf. Daryd Greenwood "Tourism as an Agent of Change: A Spanish Basque Case," Department of Anthropology, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1971. Greenwood proves that the economic increase produced by tourism is not at the local level.

# THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF ZAPOTEC INHERITANCE[1]

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Al definir la "aldea" y el "hogar" como las dos unidades estructurales de mayor importancia en la sociedad Zapoteca, Downing encuentra que la primera es estable y bien definida, mientras que la segunda es inconstante y más amorfa. Se sugiere que las leyes que gobiernan la herencia, puedan ser responsables, las líneas de descendencia no son reconocidas. La herencia puede redefinirse como un intercambio social resíproco, en el cual los progenitores proporcionan la tierra sobre la cual sus descendientes organizan sus hogares, y los descendientes proporcionan alimentos, vestimento y techo a sus padres. Agregado a otros intercambios entre padres e hijos (hogar a hogar), se ha creado un sistema de alianza que perdura a pesar de los cambios en el número y composición del hogar, contribuyendo así a la solidaridad de la aldea.

Two questions pervade the study of inheritance: one economic, the other sociological. The former concerns the impact that inheritance of property has on wealth distribution (Wolf 1966; Nash 1966, 1968; Downing 1973). The latter concerns the influence that inheritance has on the relations of peoples, groups, institutions, or societies. An example of this sociological query and the topic of this paper is

"what are the consequences of inheritance on social solidarity?"

Leach (1961), Goody (1962, 1969, 1970) and Collier (1971) have probed this sociological problem and discovered that inheritance may have both positive and negative impacts on social solidarity in societies with discrete, corporate kin groups. For example, Collier has shown that inheritance in a Zincantan hamlet reinforces lineage solidarity when property is transfered through males, but may also reduce lineage solidarity if property is transfered through females or by sale.

It is uncertain, however, if inheritance reinforces, weakens, or has no effect on social solidarity in societies lacking corporate kin groups, i.e. groups that persist beyond the lifespans of their founders. I wish to argue that inheritance does effect social solidarity in such a society. Investigations among the Zapotec Indian-peasants in southern Mexico show that inheritance is an important element in an elaborate sequence of social exchanges. These exchanges structure alliances between households. Overall, this alliance contributes to the solidarity and continuity of the Zapotec's maximal societal group, the village, by structuring the interactions of their minimal societal groups, households.

## Zapotec Societal Structure

Societal structure refers to "discrete groups . . . without an individual (ego) as a point of reference (Pospisil 1964:399)." In the Valley of Oaxaca, Zapotec societal structure consists of two primary groups: villages and households.

Villages are the basic building blocks of Zapotec regional organization and approximate what Wolf (1957) has identified as "closed corporate communities." The following characteristics of Valley Zapotec villages are relevant:

1. Villages are nucleated settlements surrounded by agricultural fields and have a clearly demarcated territory. Within this territory, agriculture lands are usually held by households that may hold several non-contiguous parcels.
2. There are strong intra-village pressures to prevent these lands from falling under the control of peoples from other villages.
3. Village membership is achieved by birth with the provision that at least one parent be a village member.
4. Villages are heavily endogamous. Intra-village marriages account for over 95% of all marriages.
5. Each village has a hierarchy of political, judicial, and religious offices (<u>cargos</u>) which are periodically and reluctantly occupied by villagers without compensation.
6. Most social interaction occurs within the boundaries of a village and between members of the same village.
7. Zapotecs deemphasize the past in their kinship system by showing no emphasis on ancestor worship, little veneration of the dead in their burial customs, and placing minimal importance on tracing geneaologies

beyond the third ascending generations from ego.

8. Sibling relations are extremely brittle. Brothers often take opposing sides in political disputes and ignore each others' personal and financial troubles. In contrast, parent-child relations are extremely strong; violating this bond is considered a serious moral transgression.

9. Finally, and most important for this argument, Zapotec villages are corporate groups that persist far beyond the lifespans of their members. In Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca, Taylor (1972) contrasts continuity of Oaxacan Indian communities with those of North Mexico.[2]

> The history of land in colonial Oaxaca represents a significant departure from the North Mexican model . . . the degree of change in the Valley was different, and the effect of the rise of the hacienda on Indian tenure less severe. In much of the viceroyalty Indians lost a good deal of land, as millions fell victim to epidemics and haciendas surrounded, and in some cases completely overran, their towns. In contrast, Valley caciques and pueblos retained a considerable amount of land, certainly more than enough to meet their basic needs and keep them independent of Spanish landowners. (Ibid:195).

The continuity of village lands and organization has continued through the Independence period into modern times. Compared to North Mexico, the Revolution of 1910 was of little consequence to villagers in the Oaxaca Valley.

> The Revolution in the countryside was essentially a struggle for land and economic independence, not for political freedom. Valley towns, firmly rooted in the land, had never really lost what Zapata and his followers were fighting for. Thus, they showed relatively little interest in the revolutionary cause (Ibid:199).

Neither conquest, revolutions, epidemics, famines, droughts, floods, haciendas, nor changes in market demands for major cash crops (wheat to caster beans to chick peas) have destroyed the basic integrity of most Valley Zapotec villages.

Just as villages form the basic elements of regional organization, households are the primary units whose membership consists of persons sharing a common kitchen. Like other Mesoamerican households, Zapotec households are "multi-purpose units" (Nash 1968:318); that is, units of socialization, production, consumption, daily interaction, and to a less extend, ritual. Although production is usually based on subsistence agriculture, many households also have non-agricultural specialties (Vargas Baron 1968, Plattner 1965) or supplement their income by working outside the village.

The household is a point of reference for rights and obligations of villagers to the community and to one another. Selection of positions for the civil-religious-judicial offices is made with reference to households, not individuals; only one adult male in a household is obligated to serve at one time. Village taxes are collected from each household, regardless of its composition. Levies for village projects, such as electrification, village fiestas, building

of public water systems, and government matching funds are divided equally between households. Likewise, compadrazgo obligations occur between households. The important credit institutions of guelagetza, ayuda, and tequio (Beals 1970) are rights and obligations of households and an individual's reputation, prestige, and wealth are measured with reference to his (or her) household.

Despite their overwhelming importance in Zapotec societal structure, households are not corporated groups, i.e. they do not persist beyond the lifetimes of their founders. A pattern of patri-neolocal residence results in newlyweds establishing independent households after a brief period of patrilocal residence with the husband's parents. This sequence continues until all children are married and the youngest inherits the natal housesite. Shortly thereafter, parents begin a pattern of multi-local residence, living for a short period of time in each of the households of their married children. The beginning of the parents multi-local residence or their death terminates the rights and obligations of their household. Conversely, the establishment of a neolocal residence by their children begins a new household.

Some indication of this volitility of households was achieved by recensusing household composition in two villages: Diaz Ordaz (Downing 1973) and San Miguel del Valle (Klug 1965). Between 67 and 40 percent of the households were

found to have structurally changed in less than two years. This definition of structural change excludes shifts in household composition due to either the birth and death of a household member.

In summary, villages are highly stable societal groups which have maintained their integrity for at least four hundred years. They endure despite radical alterations in the political and economic atmosphere of the region and the nation. In contrast, households are mortal and show considerable metamorphosis within a short span of time. This contrast may be considered a major problem for valley ethnologists. What principles or organizations account for village solidarity? What endures?

## Zapotec Inheritance and Social Exchange

Previous answers proved unacceptable to the social context of the Zapotec problem. Goody (1962) and Collier (1971) found that the solidarity of a social group, such as a village, could be changed by forces influencing the solidarity of its corporate descent groups, such as lineages. Unfortunately, Zapotecs lacked corporate descent groups. Others had argued that succession, the transmission of political office might account for social solidarity, but Zapotecs did not consider succession a salient criteria for political office. Leach's (1961) work in Pul Eliya would seem the most relevant to this problem; he had looked for the basis of solidarity in a community where neither descent nor succession

were crucial principles of social organization. He reasoned that the principles of inheritance and a system of land tenure relationships give continuity to what he called "compounds," which were territorial groups that shared common rights to land. Here again, Zapotecs do not retain any compound-like pool of land tenure rights in tact beyond the lifetime of the household's founding couple, i.e. estates were fragmented at inheritance. Nevertheless, I suspected that Leach's explanation would be the closest answer, and, with modification, it might be argued that inheritance, as a set of principles, maintains Zapotec social solidarity. I was half right.

The rules of Zapotec inheritance were formulated by comparing normative statements to actual behavior. This comparison generated three rules:

(1) All heirs receive relatively equal portions of an estate,

(2) the youngest son inherits the natal house and housesite, and

(3) one's heirs are one's children.

The first rule concerns the bilateral appropriation of property and is of significance here only insofar as the sex of the heir slightly skews an otherwise mathematical equal division of an estate (Downing 1973:140-171). The second rule insures the undisputed transfer of a particular parcel of property holding ritual significance and need not concern

us here. The rule that one's children are one's heirs, however, requires further discussion.

Barring unforseen circumstances, parents share the role of testators at inheritance. The division of property is usually a gradual process occuring while a couple is alive and during their twilight years. Similarly, heirship is shared by the testator's child and the child's spouse. Zapotecs emphasize that transfer of inheritance involves reciprocal obligations between testators and heirs, that is, parents and children. Testators provide their heirs with property and heirs reciprocate by providing testators with "food, clothing and shelter" throughout their dotage. Thus, in contrast to a strictly economic exchange, inheritance is what Mauss (1925) would call "obligatory" and "interested." Furthermore, Zapotec inheritance meets Blau's (1964) criteria for a social exchange: (1) the exchange is vaguely stated and implies unspecified obligations on the part of the recipient, (2) it entails an element of trust that others will fulfill which are often unstated obligations, (3) it strengthens or creates feelings of obligation, gratitude and trust, and (4) the benefits of this exchange have no common medium by which it may be evaluated. In brief, inheritance is a social exchange between parents and their children; testators (parents) exchange land for the return gift of superannuity, i.e. food, clothing, and shelter from their heirs (children).

TABLE 1 HIGH FREQUENCY EXCHANGES BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN THROUGHOUT THEIR LIFE

| DISTINGUISHING CRITERIA | Nursing infant | Toddler until first year of elementary school | | Elementary school children | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| APPROXIMATE AGE | Birth - 2 yr. | 2 - 7 | | 7 - 13 | |
| SEX | ⚥ | ♂ | ♀ | ♂ | ♀ |
| ZAPOTEC LIFE STAGE | BIDO BEZ | BINI'NI GIU'WE | BINI'NI CA'APE | BINI'NI RO'O | CA'APE |
| EXCHANGES FROM CHILDREN TO PARENTS | Negligible<br>(perhaps social approval) | "Carry things around the house<br>"Obey parents<br>"Care for younger siblings | "All the exchanges of young, male toddler plus:<br>"Help mother in kitchen with small tasks | "All the previously mentioned things and feed animals<br>"Run errands to other households and store<br>"spying on other households<br>"household tasks outside the house | "All previous exchanges plus:<br>"heavier kitchen duties<br>"run errands to other households<br>"spying<br>"wash clothes<br>"household tasks inside the yard |
| EXCHANGES FROM PARENTS TO CHILDREN | "Food, clothing, shelter, socialization and affection. Curing expenses. | | | | |
| | "Baptismal expenses shared with godparents | | | Help with housework<br>small allowance for sweets | |
| RESIDENCE OF CHILDREN | IN HOUSEHOLD OF ORIENTATION | | | | |

POSSIBLE "MARKER EXCHANGES" ARE UNDERLINED

CYCLES

| Unmarried Persons | | Married Persons (young) | | Married Persons (older) [with all children married] | | Dead Persons |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 - 20 | | 20 - 60 | | 60 + | | Deceased |
| ♂ | ♀ | ♂ | ♀ | ♂ | ♀ | ♂ |
| SOLTER | CA'AP RO'O | BINGUL | UNA' GUL | BINGUL DO'O | NANGUL DO'O | TUGUL |
| "All previous exchanges plus:<br>"Herd animals to send money home if working outside the village<br>"spying, but decreasing<br>"errands to market outside of village<br>"represent household at fiestas<br>"work in fields | "Make tortillas<br>"go to mill if accompa-nied by elder female<br>"send money to parents if working outside the village<br>"represent household at fiestas | "Post-marital residence with his parents<br>"assist in parent's fields<br>"curing and burial expenses of parents if they die | "Help her husband's or her own parents if they give a fiesta<br>"share all exchange relation-ships of her husband | "Food, shelter, and clothing<br>"burial expenses | "Food, shelter, and clothing<br>"burial expenses | "Burial obliga-tions on "Day of the Dead"<br>"pay out-standing debts with help of other siblings |
| "Send to secondary school outside the vil-lage, if child doesn't work<br>"teach him to farm | Teach her household tasks<br>less frequent, send to secondary school | "Pay costly marriage ceremony<br>"food, clothing, shelter for sons and their wives while they reside patrilo-cally<br>"help children and wives establish new household | "Dowry<br>"if parents wealthy, may give land to daughter and son-in-law at this time | "Pass inheri-tance<br>"give advice on cargos, cultiva-tion<br>"assist in socializa-tion or care of grand-children | "Pass inheri-tance<br>"give advice on ritual cooking<br>"care for grand-children periodical-ly | If an unmarried child died before his parents, ritual obliga-tions on "Day of the Dead" |
| | | BRIEF PERIOD OF PATRILOCAL RESIDENCE, THEN MOVE NEOLOCALLY, EXCEPT FOR YOUNGEST SON. | | IN HOUSEHOLD OF PROCREATION | | |

Inheritance is not the only social exchange between parents and children. In proper perspective, it is only one element in a series of exchanges. These exchanges involve parents and children interacting in <u>roles other than</u> testators and heirs.

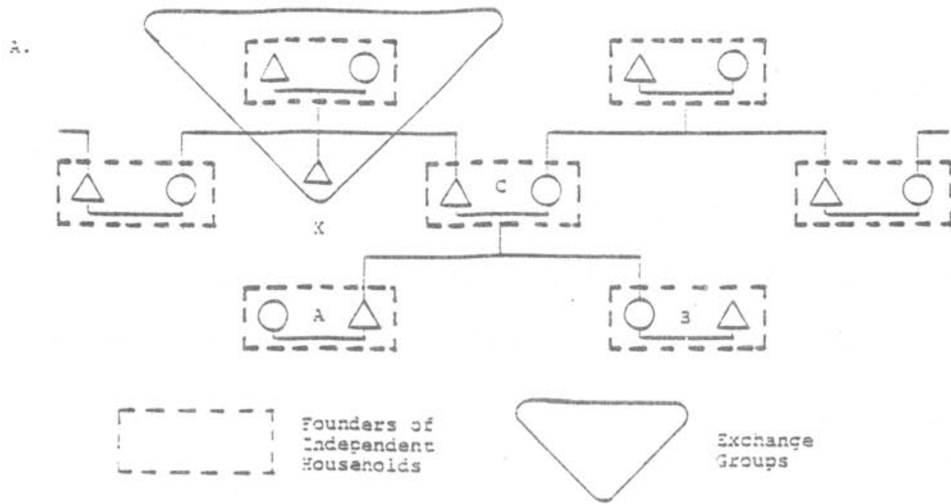
Table 1 summarizes the high frequency exchanges between parents and children throughout the life cycles. The distinguishing criteria used in this chart was derived from the Zapotec life stages (Merida Blanco, personal communication 1967). The table also lists the approximate ages at which a person is referred to by these terms. These stages are not based on chronological age, rather they signal behavioral patterns. One stage shades into the next. Although it would be impossible to list all the interchanges between these two pairs for one stage of the life cycle, these data demonstrate that inheritance is only one of many social transactions taking place between parents and children.

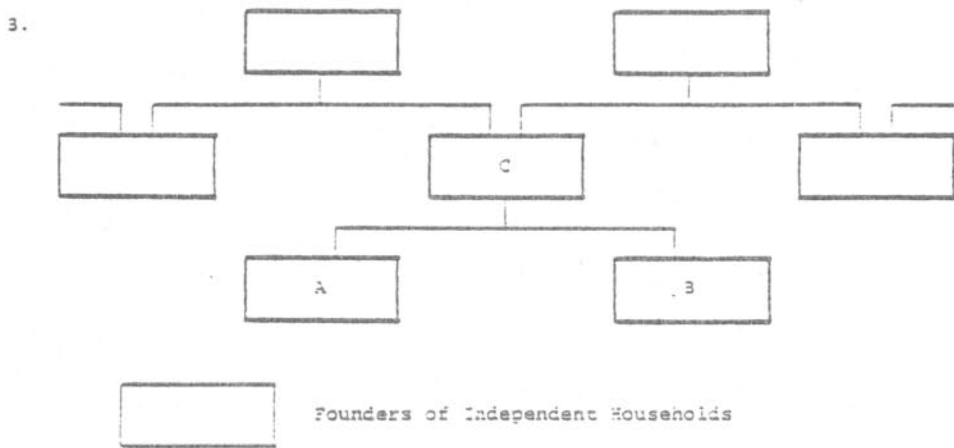
In other words, inheritance is a part of a larger social process involving most village households. Phrased in terms of societal groups, this social exchange is between a household established by parents (testators) and households established by their children and these children's spouses (heirs).

The Aggregate Pattern

The multifarious exchanges between parents and their children (and their children's spouses) create an alliance structure among Zapotec households. Figure 1A shows an idealized kinship diagram. Married couples who have established their own households are outlined with a dashed line. Unmarried persons (marked X on the figure) merge into their parental household as members of its exchange group. Couples are linked on this diagram because they form an exchange unit from the perspective of other, similar groups in the community and hold joint tenure over the household's property. Figure 1B simplifies this picture and shows the exchange groups, excluding unmarried persons that have not established their own households. And figure 1C indicates the directions of high frequency exchanges between households and may be interpreted as indicative of direction of alliances resulting from frequent exchanges.[3]

This simple alliance model is consistent with the preceeding summary of Zapotec social organization. The three inheritance rules are sufficient to recreate the directionality of rights and obligations through time. Also, the model shows greater stress on parental as opposed to sibling obligations. And lastly, the model indicates that relations between alternating generations should be weaker than those between adjacent generations, a prediction consistent with the Zapotec's de-emphasis on descent reckoning, ances-



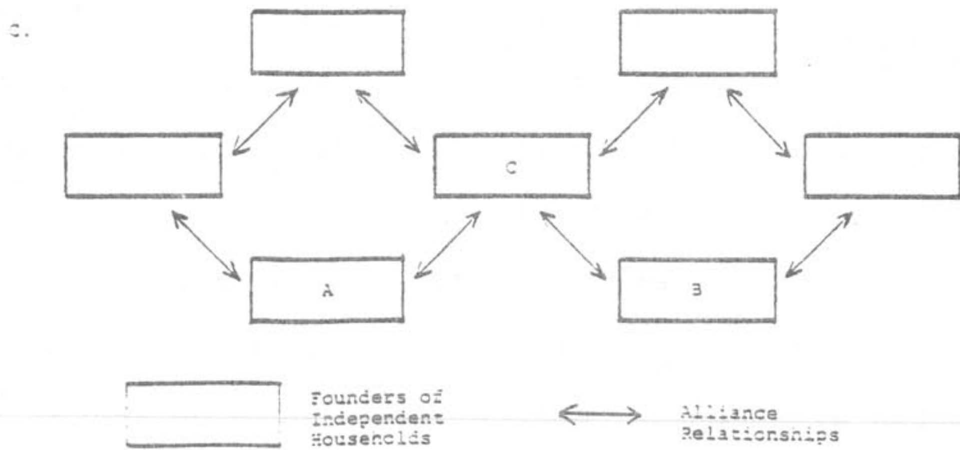




FIGURE 1 EXCHANGE ALLIANCES OF ZAPOTEC HOUSEHOLDS

tor worship, and burial customs.

Social Solidarity

Earlier, the question was raised: what endures? Part of the answer seems to be that this system of alliances between households regenerates a basic structure of independent households with specific obligations to one another through time. This system of dyadic alliances between households contributes to the diachronic continuity of Zapotec societal structure wherein a household may be withdrawn or added to the village without any basic change in the community structure. Interpreted in terms of the alliance model, the disappearance or addition of a household affects only a few strands in the network that binds many households into one tight structure.[4]

In retrospect, I would like to express my frustration with the current ethnological status of the key concept in this report, social solidarity. I have done nothing more than indicate that inheritance is an element in a sequence of high frequency social exchanges between parents and children and, thereby, contributes to village solidarity. It is impossible to give precise measure to the importance of inheritance within the exchange network shown in Table 1. It is equally impossible to compare the precise contribution of this alliance network with that of other institutions which have been credited with contributing to village solidarity, e.g. the civil-religious-judicial heirarchy, compradrazgo, or

a multitude of regional factors external to village institutions. An urgent need exists for general, overarching models of social solidarity that compare the relative importance of different social behaviors.

## NOTES

[1]Paper presented at 72nd Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, New Orleans, November 30, 1973.

[2]Taylor analyses the historical factors effecting this continuity, including a peaceful, bloodless Conquest; Spanish disinterest in the Valley; and the strength of community life at the time of Conquest.

[3]This final diagram represents an extremely simple model of the alliance structures which I feel is applicable to most Zapotec villages. Unfortunately, it fails to make allowances for other, less intense inter-household exchanges such as compadrazgo, guelagetza, and tequio. Elsewhere, Beals (1970) has discussed these inter-household exchanges using data I provided him for Diaz Ordaz. None appear frequent and intense enough to overshadow the importance of this alliance system.

[4]The only danger would come from a complete loss of exchanging households in either the first ascending or first descending generations. In this case, a household would be pressed to maintain its economic viability.

This latter situation is protected by an inheritance that is analogous to the extension rule in cross-cousin marriage, i.e. rule that redefines the referent. This rule states that a couple without descendents may form a "parent-child" like relationship that would allow the surrogate parents to trade their inheritace for super-annuity with another household.

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