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# The working people of the United States-Mexico border in the region of northeastern Sonora, 1886–1986

Heyman, Josiah McConnell, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1988

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# THE WORKING PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES-MEXICO BORDER IN THE REGION OF NORTHEASTERN SONORA, 1886-1986

by

JOSIAH McCONNELL HEYMAN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in partial fulfillment of the the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1988

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## Abstract

THE WORKING PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES-MEXICO BORDER IN THE REGION OF NORTHEASTERN SONORA, 1886-1986

by

Josiah McConnell Heyman

Adviser: Professor Eric R. Wolf

Other disciplines have studied working classes as aggregate populations of labor. Anthropology contributes the ethnography of particular persons and their relationships under the power of wage labor. This dissertation develops tools appropriate to an anthropology of working classes. The subject is the industrial working population of the U.S.-Mexico border. The current border working class is set in the context of a century of industries in the region of northeastern Sonora. This spans the formation of an industrial working class in the mines, their uprooting during the Depression and repatriation years, migration to the border city and to U.S. labor sites, and the recent emergence of a border working class in maquiladora assembly plants. The historical sequence also involves the effects on Mexican lives from changes and restrictions in U.S. border policies. The ethnographic study concentrates on a small group of interlocked life histories including male and

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female, and older and younger generations. Methods developed or applied for the anthropological study of working classes include the analysis of bilateral kinship data to demonstrate branching along lines of labor markets and other institutional resources such as U.S. legal immigration; the tracing of alternative paths taken at key historical breaks in family histories as data for the wage structuring of life-patterns; and the study of material culture in the industrial, consuming context in order to delineate of gender-tied bodies of knowledge and the history of households and the division of labor. The ethnography of Agua Prieta working people includes an analysis of their involvement with multiple power domains, including the U.S. border structure, labor and factories, and Mexican party politics. A conclusion is drawn which provides a hypothesis for a comparative anthropology of working classes: wage labor individualizes choices among alternative life courses and propels labor market-seeking options at key historical junctures.

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

Working people sell their time and effort for a wage, and use this money to purchase most of the items of daily use. They have to sell their labor to buy subsistence because they own no significant amount of productive property. They have relatively weak power over basic conditions of their lives. Though this definition in the abstract is uniform, the phenomenon of wage-based populations have occurred many times and places in the world. Their ways of life have differed considerably with respect to who works and what they do, how pay and consumption are arranged, what population originated and how it was drawn together, and other vital questions. For this reason Eric Wolf speaks of plural "working classes" (1982: 358). The potential for anthropology comes because working classes do vary by time and place.

Anthropology is relatively new to the study of working classes. However, its traditional manner of study--combining detailed ethnographic fieldwork with questions posed from eclectic, worldwide comparison of cases--suits the challenge presented by diverse working populations. The method of anthropology applied to a working class is described by Sidney Mintz for his ethnography of the sugar "factories in the fields" on the southern coast of Puerto Rico. Mintz starts with the suggestion that "the

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conceptualization of a rural proletariat, at least with regard to plantation communities, can arise out of the study of specific populations and their lifeways." He then goes on to posit several types of residence groupings, which also relate to differences in job rank, domestic arrangements, origin in slave versus interior, migrant populations, and even participation in the sugar-workers' union. Mintz makes the point that "the class position of these rural proletarians did not impart a sufficiently firm homogeneity to the persons involved to allow the observer to ignore intragroup or individual differences of many kinds." Still, Mintz concludes, "from the perspective of the core features of the rural proletarian category, the people in these three hamlets showed considerable uniformity" (all quotations from Mintz, 1979: 176-179).

An adequate anthropology of working classes will analyze particular persons and groups of people who live within the power of wage labor. This is different from a macro-sociological approach which views working classes as the forces of labor aggregated by capital at a certain location or time. Viewed in the large scale, working people are defined and studied according to their central industrial occupation, the basic class structure, the broader sequences of historical development. Ethnography, by contrast, exposes the patterns of daily labors and the organization of persons who make up the working class. The goal for an anthropology of working people is to unearth

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recurrent phenomena of waged life which disappear in the aggregate view. In this manner the results of ethnography can challenge or renew the basic definitions of working classes with which we began.

This dissertation uses life histories of working persons interlocked in households and bilateral kin. These people now reside in Agua Prieta, a small industrial city located on Mexico's border with the U.S.. The region surrounding Agua Prieta, northeastern Sonora, has a century-long history of massive industrial installations, starting with gigantic copper mines and recently emerging in Mexican border assembly plants, so it is well-suited for an ethnography of working people.

However, there are a number of conceptual problems in translating the history of industries in Sonora and their amassed populations into the ethnography of interwoven lives. One problem is that the industrial history itself is complicated, that each period has had its own characteristic workers and communities, and that in between there was a period when major employers were closed and people sought work in diverse and scattered manners. Another problem is that the core industrial workforce does not exhaust the activities and persons in the working class, and these alternatives proved to be important. Lastly, paid industrial labor for periods of time proves to be solely one of several working class phenomenon characterizing these lives: life-long career patterns in the wage labor

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environment, industrial skills and material goods, access to cash and credit, and so forth.

Each of these appear as problems for the simple definition of "working class". Yet they also appear as spurs for the creation of ethnographic frameworks which are capable of giving order to complicated material, and opening up the perception of previously unknown phenomena. The first framework is the chronology of major industrial populations in the region in terms of a typology of periods of working class experience. It addresses the broad contours of historical change and types of industry. The second framework starts from the literature on "reproduction" of daily existence in wage-based contexts which shows that all working people combine waged and non-waged activities in the same households. This framework poses a series of questions about historical changes in these activities and the relationships among men and women. The final framework explores tools for the study of individual life histories and their combinations in kin relationships.

## Historical Framework

The historical framework defines a chronological series of wage labor markets, and the flows of people into them; it delineates the groups emerging over time of working people in the border region of Sonora. In Europe and the People Without History (1982), Eric Wolf points out two processes

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through which working classes attain diversity. First, the history of global capitalism has not been uniform; rather, it staggers between epochs of breakneck expansion and terrible depression--that is, periods when people were drawn into the labor force, and periods when they were expelled. Each of these global periods has had its own patterns of organizing technology, work, and even flexibility or inflexibility in the application of power.

Secondly, diversity has come from the manner through which populations were brought into the work life--the patterns of kin recruitment and the organization of the working class communities, the attractions of cash and consumer goods and the violence of taxes, forced expulsion, and forced cyclical return. Wolf argues that the complicated characteristics and roles of working populations--men and women, young and old, racial segregation, ethnic and religious affiliations--do not only exist prior to the recruitment of the laborers, but are built up and adhered to in the very processes through which people come into or hold onto pieces of the wage economy.[1]

There are several exemplary studies in labor history and cultural anthropology which have treated the sequence of events when people enter industrial, wage based life. E. P. Thompson, in The Making of the English Working Class (1963), describes the initial encounter with massive factory work in Britain. He posited that, in the course of forty years, the first generation which entered with pre-industrial political

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traditions and loyalties gave way to a generation forged as a politically self-conscious class. In the more complex history of the U.S., Herbert Gutman (1977) described a pattern in which each entering generation of immigrants went through its own formative process, and came to its characteristic culture and politics several different times in American history.

David Montgomery (1979) turned from the topic of beginnings to the question of change and response among already established workers (his research treated the introduction of industrial "Taylorism" to machinists, who responded using their traditions of "workers' control"). Montgomery's work is important in that it directs us to look not only at the encounter of the preindustrial with the industrial, but also at wrenching transformations contained within industrial history.

June Nash (1979) has developed an especially powerful chronological model for the ethnography of labor based on the ideas of Karl Mannheim about historical generations. She used oral histories of successive generations of tin miners to show how each generation of tin miners built their social and political world-view in the national situation of Bolivia during their epoch as young men. This model links the objective sequence of historical events with the patterned memories in oral recollections with which ethnographers work, and these crystallized points of view in

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turn with collective actions, rituals and politics, observed in the field.

There are a number of specific propositions brought up in these studies.[2] My purpose, however, is more schematic: in order to construct a historical framework that can make sense of Northeastern Sonora, I have abstracted from this literature a typology of changes and continuities in working populations. Working class "formation" refers to the period during which people first encounter wage labor in industry, and also wage-based consumption. Working class "transformation" refers to the periods during which established wage working populations undergo fundamental rearrangements of their labor and lives. "Crystallization" is a term that describes process in which a stable production base enables the maintenance and elaboration of a particular way of life. These are terms, or labels, which point out the occurrence of change or stability with respect to wage work and consumption. They are pointers, or guides, for where to look, not final analyses. They are not full-scale models with substantive content, which must be added using the particular global and local place and time.[3]

Let us, then, place the scaffolds of this framework on the history of northeastern Sonora. (Chapter 2 presents a more detailed synopsis of the regional history.) Prior to modern industry, the peoples of the Sonoran frontier were transformed by European institutions and immigrants, leaving them with a characteristic village land tenure, gender

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division of labor, and repertory of skills. The Sonoran material demonstrates the value of traditional anthropological studies of these practices to the study of modern working classes. Upon the closing of the Apache frontier in 1886, however, aggressive capture of land and resources by Northamericans and Mexicans "uprooted" the frontier settlements.

In the same region, gigantic copper mines--Cananea and Pilares de Nacozari--and their associated complex of railroads, smelters, and timbermills, provided thousands of wage paid jobs. Along with the wages came consumer goods and residence, not in valley farms, but in new company towns in the heights of the mountains. Working class formation starting in the 1880s and accelerating in the first decade of the twentieth century is the subject of Chapter 3, and alternative forms in that era the subject of Chapter 4.

Mine employment, subject to brief, severe depressions, was high until 1929. After that year mine employment no longer was dynamic and expanding, thus ending the formative period. In the decades before 1929, working class issues had begun to coalesce around inequality in company town and pay policies between foreigners (primarily Northamericans) and Mexicans; during the 1910-1920 revolution, northern Sonorans, both peasants and miners, actively lined up behind revolutionary chieftains, many of them from Sonora. However only with the onset of the depression did permanent mine unionization take hold, and only among the minority of

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miners who did not exit during the 1930s. Those Sonoran miners who survived the shutdowns--basically those at Cananea, as well as the Douglas smelter and other operations in neighboring Arizona--were able to "crystallize" the mine community well into the 1980s.

However, in most places the mine community was rudely shattered in a series of mass layoffs beginning with in 1930 and culminating in the final closure of Nacozari in 1949. They can be said to have been "uprooted" rather than allowed to "crystallize". To this uprooting was added the massive repatriation of people from the U.S. to Mexico described below. The process of uprooting and the search for new homes is the subject of Chapter 5.

From their initial refuges in farm villages, ranches, and prospecting camps, these people made their way to new urban, working class ways of life--some going, among the alternatives, to expanding cities on the U.S.-Mexico border like Agua Prieta. The period since 1940 can be summarized as a series of "transformations". The transformation began with a period of transition made possible through diverse and interesting combinations of men's and women's, local and migratory, U.S. and Mexican work.

Since 1965, a new industrial phase has begun, as employment in the maquiladoras has grown from small plants to dominate border cities. The maquiladoras are predominantly U.S. owned factories, where poorly paid young women (with an admixture of young men), put together parts

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of televisions, seat-belts, or disposable hospital garments, for American consumption. The recent return of a dense industrial working class is the subject of Chapters 6 and 7, focusing on Agua Prieta in the last two decades.

The typology of formation and transformation helps to clarify differences between periods in Sonora when the working class tended to be homogeneous and when it was characteristically heterogenous. For example, the large corporate mines systematically employed male wage-earning heads of household, lending a certain uniformity to that period, although alternative forms existed (see below). This period saw the growth of labor unionism. In turn, the transitional period saw the breakup of mass employment and outflow by varied routes; in the border city many worked on principles of individual clientage rather than mass labor. During this fragmented period, working people overflowed the boundaries with small businesses in cities and peasants in the countryside. Involvement of working people with powerholders during this period was correspondingly individualistic. The characterization of "working class" as a population concentrated around an industrial system is particular to certain periods of history, and we must search for alternative models to study working classes during more heterogeneous eras.

To make a complex history yet more complicated, we must also consider the history of the U.S.-Mexico border in this region, which has a chronology with somewhat different

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rhythms, and powerful repercussions (again, see Chapter 2 for more detail). The Sonoran working class was created specifically by "border" processes--the penetration of railroads, the influx of U.S. consumer goods, the organization of immigration laws--thinking of the border not only as a boundary, but in broader terms.

Until the 1880s, the U.S.-Mexico border was a zone of conflict between Anglo Americans, Mexicans, and Apaches. The current Arizona-Sonora borderline was formed in the mid-nineteenth century by the Mexican-American War and the Gadsden Purchase. The removal of the Chiricahua Apache both freed the mines and rail towns of Arizona for rapid development, and opened the border area for free passage by Sonorans. This was an era of large, and largely uncounted, population flows across the border. Until 1929, there was no effective restriction in numbers or enforcement of legal or non-legal immigration from Mexico. Thus I label this the "open border" period. Since the open border working population coincided, both in dates and occupations, with the formative Sonoran working population, it is discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

1929 witnessed the first real visa closure, followed soon by the massive repatriation of people of Mexican origins to Mexico, coinciding with the mine layoffs in Sonora. Chapter 5 begins with an analysis of family histories during the repatriation. After World War II began, however, the strong U.S. southwest resumed its

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attraction of laborers from Mexico, including (during 1942-1965) a mechanism for temporary contract labor, the "Bracero" program. Migratory employment in the U.S. southwest came at a time when families were searching for income in border cities like Agua Prieta. The role of U.S. employment during the period of transformation is discussed in the middle of Chapter 5.

Throughout the period, however, the bulk of immigration has proceeded outside the formal control of the nation-state. The U.S. has responded by steadily escalating the means of legal and forcible restriction at the border. Because of the combination of legally restricted immigration and contract labor, and physically constrained border-crossing, I refer to the period since 1929 as the "controlled border". This term does not mean to imply that the U.S. government has complete power over border immigration, but it usefully contrasts with the fluidity of the earlier period of border history.

The U.S. border system will be viewed as an instituted series of power actions which control access to very valuable resources: legal residence, temporary or permanent wage work. In Chapter 6, on Agua Prieta today, the ethnographic effects of decisions over these instituted resources--or extra-legal ways around the system of control--will be studied in the lives of Sonorans through the technique of kinship analysis described below, which relates bilateral kin branching to instituted resources.

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Besides constituting periods of local and national history, the mine enterprises and the maquiladoras of Sonora are representative of two periods in global economic history. Since in each era industrialists sought to establish designs for labor and community organization, and since they resemble forms found far from the U.S.-Mexico border, exploring patterns discerned in other ethnographic studies will further our understanding of the local material. For example, the mine towns of Cananea and Nacozari were a local manifestation of a global pattern occurring around the turn of the twentieth century, in which the world's industrial centers sought raw materials, agricultural and mineral, in the rest of the world, and developed huge, technologically sophisticated but economically isolated productive operations, in the process creating new wage laboring populations (Furtado, 1970: 47-49; Zapata, 1977 describe this pattern in Latin America).

Although I do not know that anyone has written about it as a recurrent, worldwide policy, it appears that western corporate executives of the time used a similar social "template"--company housing, company stores, racially isolated white management versus regionally recruited workforce, direct interference in or colonial control of local politics, etc.--in widely dispersed places: South American mines (DeWind, 1975); Southern African mines (Van Onselen, 1976); Appalachia (Eller, 1982); and the Canadian and U.S. West (Knight, 1975; Byrkit, 1982).

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Some of the characteristics of this period were captured in A. L. Epstein's label "unitary structure" (1958: 122-124), by which he means to convey not that the mine towns were harmonious, but rather that the extension of the mine enterprise through every aspect of production and daily life brought about the situation in which all community issues--not just workplace issues--become labor/company issues (on the surface, or indirectly).[4] Another consideration is the ecology of this industrial form: the enterprise is more or less fixed upon the location of a particular natural resource, and cannot readily shift, hide, or escape the consequences of its labor policies (without denying that, over time, embittered labor relations may lead to withdrawal by disinvestment).

The maquiladoras are a manifestation of a new cycle in the world economy which has been called "the new international division of labor", a fancy label meant to indicate industries that are no longer just limited to sources of raw materials, or outmoded manufacturing for local markets, but advanced production of goods consumed, not locally, but in the wealthy areas of the globe (Frobel, Heinrichs, and Kreye, 1979). An increasingly sophisticated ability to centralize knowledge and spread out operations has facilitated the placement of manufacturing in dense population centers of poor nations, where an unusually hardworking, lowly paid workforce is to be obtained among young women.[5]

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Once again, centralized corporate policies structure different localities with recurring characteristics, a process that Nash (1983) has perceived clearly in her discussion of multinational "harmonization". Production is not fixed upon the location of a natural resource, as it was in the mines, and indeed, mobility is valued in a competitive, cost-cutting world. Local production zones host more than one company and no one company is fixed to the locality; unlike the mines, not everybody works for one company. Although maquiladora employment may predominate, this is only a selected portion, young women, out of a heterogeneous city.

In this situation there seems to be no reason for the foreign corporation to directly control land, housing, or stores. The home company can exercise hidden power through raising or shutting off the flow of material and the level of production, while the position of local "personnel manager", often a national, chooses and motivates a labor force by offering or denying piecerates, better tasks, and job offers in a situation of tremendous poverty. In Chapter 7, we find that the costs and conflicts of urbanism, low buying power, and economic cycles are diverted to domestic politics in the host nation, while necessary arrangements for investment are negotiated behind the scenes, at higher levels, preserving an illusion of non-intervention.

These are systems of power to which working people relate. The study of working people's lives has valuable

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information to provide about working class action, or inaction, although it cannot in itself explain higher scale questions of national and international politics. The ethnography emerging in the historical framework here will help inform our understandings of the northern Mexican and border working class, from the era of pioneering mine strikes to the maquiladora factories of the 1980s.

## Gender and Generation

This dissertation analyzes the working classes around the variable forms of gender and family generation. This is fundamental since Sonoran history has brought a transformation from male miners to female maquiladora workers. The perspective originating with Tilly and Scott (1978) and well applied to the border in Fernández-Kelly (1983), regards working women (and by extension, working men) not as fixed wage-earning roles, but through specific context of family economies and parent-child relations. However, women as part of the working class do not start with their entry into wage work outside the house, nor can we assume that housework was "traditional". Long before the maquiladora era, housewives (my most important informants) went through vast changes as part of the history of the border working class.

The second framework addresses those activities which are integral to working classes, but which are overlooked in a history concentrating on workplaces located outside the

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house. Wage labor is found everywhere, but it is nowhere complete (Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1984). All households which receive an input of wages must also have persons performing tasks that "reproduce" (Rapp, 1983) the household and its workers, such as caring for children, feeding workers, or gathering gossip information, and otherwise making useful the pure cash or purchased commodities that wage earners bring in. Most of this work is done by women (for reasons explored in Mackintosh, 1984)--although some reproductive tasks, such as house repair, may be a male domain--and for that reason unpaid women's activities should not be ignored in working class ethnographies (following Nash, 1980). This perspective also makes us aware that male activities extend beyond work for others. What are some of the phenomena which, without this perspective, would be missed?

There is a great need for empirical studies of just how groupings of male and female activities are formed. Olivia Harris (1984) argues that the gender division of labor is not inherent and that it changes over time. This dissertation explores the historical changes in the gender division of labor from the initial European reshaping of Indian life, through the introduction of appliances from the U.S. in mine company store, to the arrangements of the working family in Agua Prieta today.

An important body of ethnographic evidence about the gender division of labor is the material culture of industrial consumers and producers, with particular

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attention to the utilization of the new technologies and skills by either men or women. Material culture is viewed here not only as a series of objects but as sets of relations to cash or credit, of skills, and of forms of household production. The dissertation follows the specific histories of appliances in individual and household histories, and utilizes this evidence to reconstruct the organization of women's and men's work in the past; in particular, appliance histories shed light on inheritance and skill-learning relationships between mothers and daughters. In conjunction with the study of material culture, the dissertation explores the history of Sonoran working classes seen as consumers: access to cash and credit, different purchasing arrangements (contrasting company stores and border city shopping), and the history of real wages.

In a parallel manner, we cannot take the household as a given or "natural" unit (Harris, 1984); in the several periods households contain complicated and historically changeable alignments of persons who bring in or spend money, often in quite unequal manners. Following upon the feminist theoretical breakthroughs, there is a great need for empirical work on the histories of individual households (also note the call for "household histories" in anthropology by Anthony Carter, 1984). The chapters of this dissertation are based on a series of specific household histories.

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For example, the analysis of the 1940-1965 transitional period revolves around the combinations of wages remitted by husbands working seasonally in the U.S. and wives who (while working in the house and their own small businesses) managed investments of remitted money in the recently settled border household. The characteristic tensions--cooperations and conflicts--of husband and wife can be analyzed to demonstrate the underlying organizational relations of this form of wage life, following the method well developed in British social anthropology (Firth, 1964: Chapter 1). Households depending on maquiladora wages or male wage earning miners versus widow-headed households will be approached in a similar manner: utilizing the ethnography of personal relations in the household to discern the basic structure of wage life during different industrial periods.

The most general point is that working class households consist of combinations of activities spanning more than one labor market (primary, secondary, etc.) or relationship of production (pure or classical industrial employment, marginal wage labor involvement, self-employment, unpaid reproductive work, etc.)[6]. Working class ethnography cannot be treated as the study of aggregated masses of persons existing only in the form of uniform wage labor. An approach which stresses the characteristic relationships will prove more adequate.

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## Life Histories and Kinship

Useful as the chronology for Sonora of industrial periods proved, when I attempted to select family histories as case studies--each one to an industrial period--I found that only with considerable cutting and hammering could the family histories be made to fit the typology. The chronologies of families only partially coincided with "great dates" of history; important members found no role (especially the generations of women not considered prior to the maquiladora period); and the sequence of periods was not always completely represented in single family histories. Some families had members who worked in the mines but not (or less so) in the maquiladoras, and vice versa. Some had come to the border in the 1940s and others in the 1970s.

Rather than consider the family histories through a given sequence of occupational stages, I turned to the analysis of the actual sequence of moves in the given family history--when, who, and how--utilizing the dates in economic history as an informative context (a modification informed by Bourdieu, 1977; Rosaldo, 1980). Direct analysis of family processes was more honest to the evidence collected than would have been a presentation of these stories as evidence for a succession of "working classes" in northeastern Sonora. Changing the level of analysis had a beneficial effect, furthermore, on the validity of conclusions: whereas particularistic life history data offer only uncertain exemplification for macro-historical

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generalizations,[7] they form a rich and powerful body of data for cause and effect in lives of small groups of people.

The basic data are interlocking histories of differing individuals--men and women, parents and children--related both inside households and in wider (but still shallow) bilateral kinship (see the Appendix for details on the selection of relevant kin). The data include information on work and activities, both paid and unpaid, and location (residence). The method emphasizes chronology, the reconstruction of dates and sequences of events and the alternatives taken at key times. The detailed attention to chronology facilitates coordination with broader historical periods. The names used in the histories are psuedonyms.

The manner of presentation keeps the histories of family groups together as blocks, at the expense of repeating observations of phenomena found in other family histories. The purpose of this is to concentrate on the interlocked processes of individual lives, work, and activities, to analyze kin relationships, and especially to follow the chronological sequence of occupational and residential moves. To these family histories are appended digressions on historical processes which are not otherwise sufficiently described.

It is worth clarifying the level of abstraction at which the life histories are narrated. Mintz, in his well-named chapter "History within History" from Worker in the Cane (1960: Chapter 8), develops an interesting double

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analysis of working class formation: at one level social historical changes in Puerto Rican sugar plantations, and at the other level psychological changes in Don Taso Zayas' life history in an environment of social transformations. I also have tried to do double histories, but rather than concentrate on the level of psychological validity for one person, I concentrated on the allocations of numerous persons relative to resources (wages, purchased items, residences on the two sides of the border) during different periods. The life histories are my construction from multiple interviews provided by the informants, rather than their own statement of their life histories; at times I will indicate explicitly their viewpoints. More information on the process of constructing the histories is provided in the Appendix.

One cannot do life histories without some concept of a culturally patterned sequence of life stages. In anthropology, this has come out of Meyer Fortes' idea of the "developmental cycle" of domestic groups, which is usually inferred from synchronic distributions and applied as if it were constantly recurring (1949). However, in the situation of non-recurrent change, we need to methodologically distinguish "life-cycle time" and "historical time", while combining both in order to analyze life histories (Elder, 1978; Hareven, 1982). The method also follows Roger Sanjek's (1981) point that men and women have very different

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developmental cycles, even though they are linked in the cycle of the domestic group.

The developmental cycle approach clarifies some of the contradictory appearance of non-wage work in working class lives. In several cases workshops of older men, in themselves part of the informal sector, appeared in life history perspective following youthful wage labor and the learning of industrial skills. Likewise, for women, home-based businesses emerged from housework with age, while work outside the house was concentrated among young, non-married women. At a more general level, the dissertation proposes that a new pattern of life careers has emerged in Mexico since the emergence of wage work at the turn of the century.

Kinship data were used to detail the processes of emergence and breaking-up of working classes. In Pul Eliya (1961), Sir Edmund Leach shows how kinship is created over time by recognizing or losing ties, and that the basis of this process lies in organizing access to resources. Leach specifically treats formal, named groups in a situation of controlling access to land and water. But his insights that "kin" are created and lost over time remains very useful in the context of urban workers, producers, and consumers, who do not control most of the major resources, but who do group themselves (informally, without names) to gain leverage in the institutional contexts of resource power.

The kinship data in collected genealogies were analyzed by asking who had been forgotten, or about whom detailed

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knowledge was lost, versus who was well-remembered. This provided evidence of bilateral branching. In turn, the patterns of splits in bilateral kin were related to locations and institutions providing key economic resources. Examples of these are mine company employment offices, U.S. border bureaucracies and laws which convey legal residence or work contracts, or inherited land. Thus this study pays considerable attention to persons beyond the household, and since the kinship events which may have led to branching may have occurred at a distant time or place and brought lasting effects among persons who rarely see one another, even beyond the routinely interacting kin network.

In turn, the kinship analysis provides data on the processes by which persons flowed in key historical moments given in the historical typology. The formation of the mine working class is explored through kinship evidence about the problems of access to land, splits in the process of partible inheritance, and the ready leverage of siblings into expanding mine wage labor. On the other hand the collapse of mine employment, as well as repatriation from the U.S., is seen through the kinship analysis of diverging routes taken out of these locations. The elements within a bilateral grandfamily provides a tool to explore the differing segments and interests of the working people in 1980s Agua Prieta. These are three cases which apply Wolf's injunction to study the specific manner in which working classes have been brought together.

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The dissertation employs several strategies for the analysis of family histories which emphasize dynamics--that is, changes over time--in contrast to the situation of families in a given industrial period. The strategy of "key junctures" arises from the dramatically fluctuating history of industrial employment in northeastern Sonora and of U.S. border policies. At points which can be clearly dated (such as the closing of mines), catastrophic changes in the larger context forced families to set off in different, often many branched, directions than those that they had moved in before. An example would be repatriation from the United States after years of steady residence and work: would a family go to a rural village to farm, or look for scarce wage work in a mine town, or stay near the border and return as soon as possible? Where would they be a year later? Ten years later? I call these discontinuities and alternatives "key junctures"; they help relate the chronology of the "macro" political economy to the specifics of family histories.

In order to apply the analysis of key junctures, the history of the working class has to be seen not only as the history of work, of employment, but also as the history of unemployment, and more generally yet, the history of insecurity. Insecurity points to the losses of livelihood both by plant closures, and also by lack of pensions, lack of unemployment compensations or inadequate ones, poor safety and health in the mines, and deaths of breadwinners.

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These can be traced in Sonoran history, albeit not through an adequately quantitative demography, and by specific events in family histories related to them.

The idea of studying the results of key family junctures comes from an argument by Rayna Rapp (1983). She is concerned with the question of how wage-dependent families "reproduce" themselves, in the sense of keeping themselves going over time. She suggests that we cannot assume that people do reproduce themselves, especially in the context of a shifting wage economy which constantly threatens to undercut survival. Rapp has already defined the "family" as an symbol to recruit members to bring in earnings and do unpaid household work, and thus she suggests viewing the "family" over time as an attempt, constantly altering roles of men and women, older and younger, to keep continuity in a changing environment.

Working with Rapp's model, the dissertation will emphasize the alternative "paths" chosen at the times of crisis in the industrial economy (especially in conjunction with the kinship analysis). What was the movement, in location, employment, and access to cash money and consumer goods: toward or away from wage-labor life? Did Sonoran working people follow the pattern, described by Laite (1981) and Roberts (1978) for industrial workers of the Andes, of returning to well-prepared rural nest-eggs (notably, in the case Roberts documents, a rural retreat in response to large-scale layoffs in a factory)? Or, in contrast, what

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factors brought people to seek wage or cash-based alternatives, particularly in the border cities?

The paths taken at key junctures provide us with insight into underlying elements of working class life which only become visible in moments of stress or change. An example is the analysis of repatriated families in the 1930s which asks why there were conflicts in families over rural versus urban relocations, and demonstrates how industrial skills of both genders and work-seeking male life-cycle patterns underlay the conflicts. Basic elements of working class lives were exposed although explicit U.S. employment had been lost.

Another strategy for exposing underlying dynamics will be the analysis of alternative forms; that is, families and activities which are not part of the predominant industrial complex of a period, but which are equally products of these historical periods of working class life. The widows whose husbands who had died from the mines were an alternative--but equally characteristic--form of the mine working class. They manifested patterns of that era not openly seen in the prototypical male mine wage-earners. The study of these households illuminates the emergence of female businesses using skills of the early industrial appliance era, and in coordination with this, distinctive inheritance and learning relations of mother and daughter. These relationships and skills, which appeared to be marginal to the mine working class, proved to anticipate activities, more widely spread,

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during the subsequent period of uprooting and movement to the border cities.

## Conclusion

The histories of a few lives in a region of Mexico near the U.S. border can inform us about phenomena of more widespread nature, found wherever people have to work for a living and buy nearly all their daily needs. A concentration on people's choices among alternatives of work and location upon the impact of "key junctures" is one method with promise; another is the analysis of bilateral kinship to relate branches of kin with institutionally structured resources. The purpose of this ethnography is to document the specific answers to these and other questions among border working people, and more generally to demonstrate the utility of these tools for the anthropology of working classes.

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1. For this reason, Wolf's analysis of working class complexity should not be tied down to the specific model of labor market segmentation (developed for the case of the United States), though he has made productive use of this model to open up the topic of work and differentiation; populations may not be neatly aligned with labor market boundaries, but we may still find it productive to see how recruitment to work (paid and not) and access to cash or purchases is organized through social relations like kinship, rural and urban relations, gender, old and young, group loyalties, etc., and as a consequence bring about alignments of interests, affiliations, submission, and oppositions that we recognize as "groups".

2. For example, Thompson, and especially Gutman, are concerned with preindustrial activities and understandings applied by working people to their new factory discipline.

3. These terms refer to chronological periods, rather than "generations", following Glen Elder's important distinction between generation as a kinship phenomenon, and cohort as a group of people who contemporaneously enter a historical period (1973). This clarifies the treatment of my ethnographic data, since generations in families overlap distinct chronological periods in northeastern Sonora.

4. It is worth clarifying that Epstein states that "unitary structure" does not mean that there are no cleavages among the workers or in the community. My use of Epstein's valuable characterization of company towns does not mean that I accept his arguments as a whole.

5. For the explanation of this selection of a labor force, see the summary of Fernandez-Kelly's analysis in Chapter 4.

6. I am indebted to June Nash for pointing this out to me.

7. This refers to my ethnographic case-study method, and I leave aside here the aggregate life-history method as used by Balan, Browning, and Jelin (1973).

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# CHAPTER 2

# HISTORICAL SYNOPSIS OF NORTHEASTERN SONORA AND THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER, 1886-1986

This is a historical synopsis of northeastern Sonora from 1886 to the present. It begins with a justification of the regional definition and the starting date. It then summarizes from the secondary sources the general patterns of northeastern Sonoran history in order to provide information needed to understand family histories presented subsequently.

## Regional and Chronological Definition

The fieldwork was set in Agua Prieta, Sonora and to a lesser extent, in Douglas, Arizona (located on Map 1). To understand people's histories, however, three geographical foci are useful. The region "northeastern Sonora" is demarcated by the Sierra Madre Occidental to the east, the district of Sahuaripa to the south, the Rio San Miguel to the west, and the U.S.-Mexico border to the north (Map 2). The first focus is the villages in mountainous northeastern Sonora, most of which are descended from settlements of the indigenous Opata, consolidated under the Jesuits. There is a certain geographical coherence to this zone--strings of small irrigated agricultural settlements run north-south

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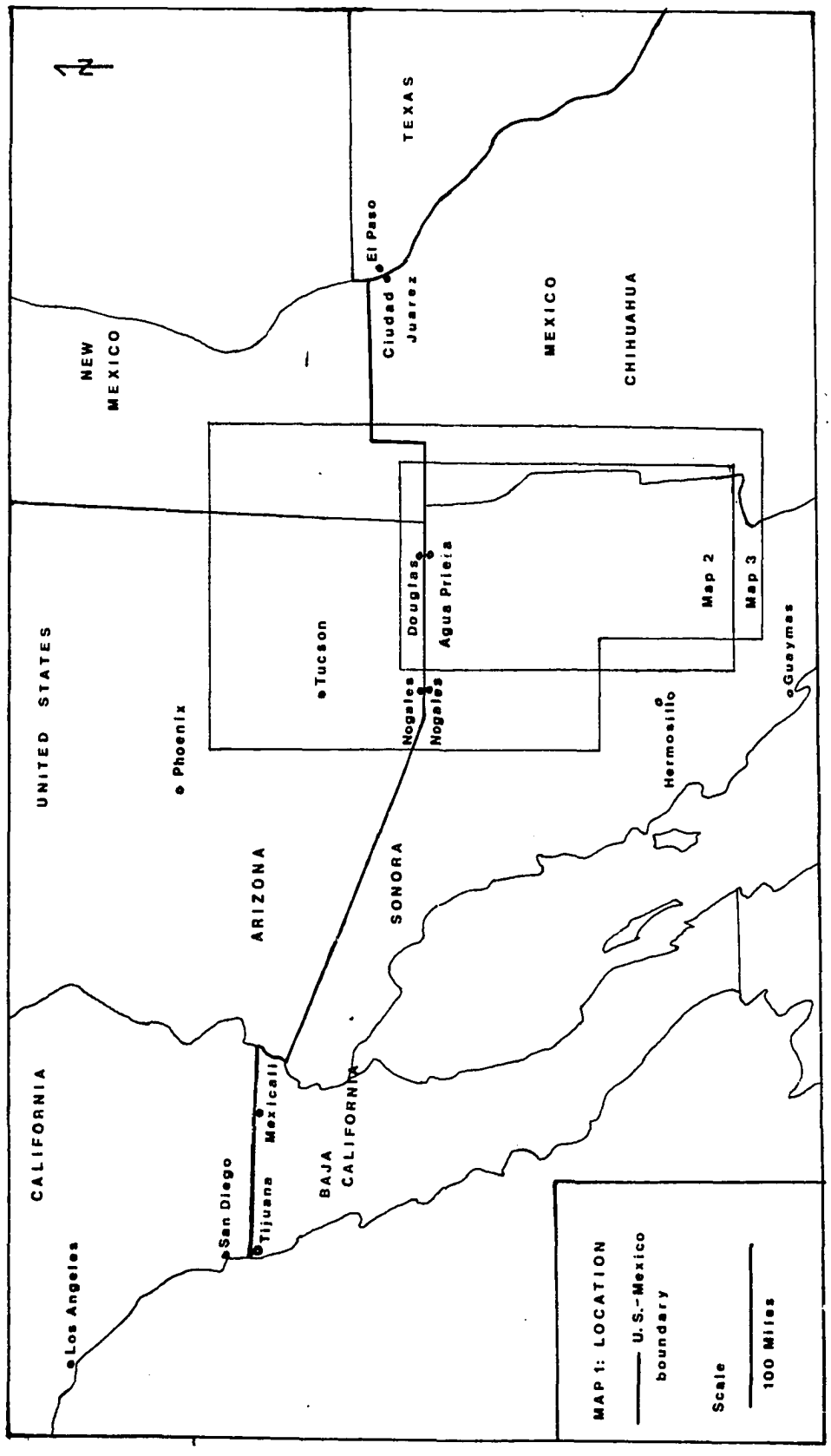


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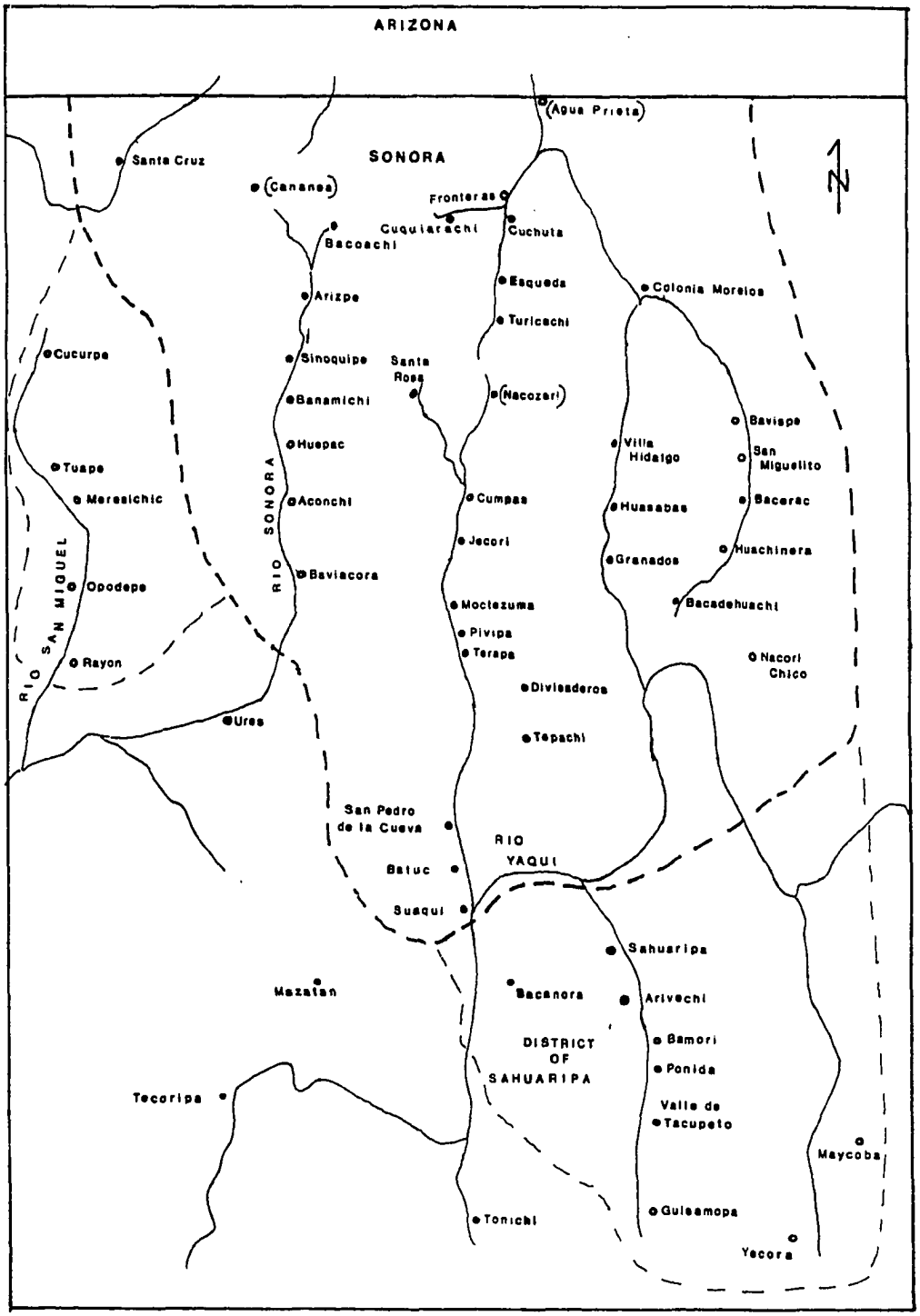


MAP 2: Regional Definition; Rural Towns and Villages

— — — — NORTHEASTERN SONORA

— — — — ADJACENT ZONES

o SETTLEMENT

(Cananea) NON-RURAL LOCATION

SCALE 30 MILES

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along river valleys, in the midst of harsh desert and tremendous ridges (Map 2).

Second, there is a pattern which was formed by the mine, railroad, and cattle exports, economies which were relatively isolated from the rest of Mexico and even the rest of Sonora (Map 3). This area of Sonora was emptied northward through Agua Prieta and Douglas. This pattern found a counterpart in the copper zone of southeastern Arizona centered on Tucson. The routes of people back and forth between Mexico and the U.S. form a third pattern, the geography of immigration that changed over time as U.S. policy was altered. In terms of immigration, the relevant border counterpart of Sonora was much wider, encompassing the booming lowland desert cities and agribusiness of California and Tucson, as well as nearby mining areas of Arizona (Map 1).

In terms of time as well as area, the working population of Northeastern Sonora is clearly defined. 1886, the year when the Apache leader Geronimo surrendered, begins the historical period of industrial development. Geronimo's surrender marks the effective end of the Apache wars, removing their violent constraint on construction of mines, settlements, cattle drives, and the movement of people. This date closely corresponds to other steps initiating regional development. In 1883 General Luis Torres became governor, initiating the epoch of the Porfiriato in the case of Sonora. The political wars and anti-Americanism of the

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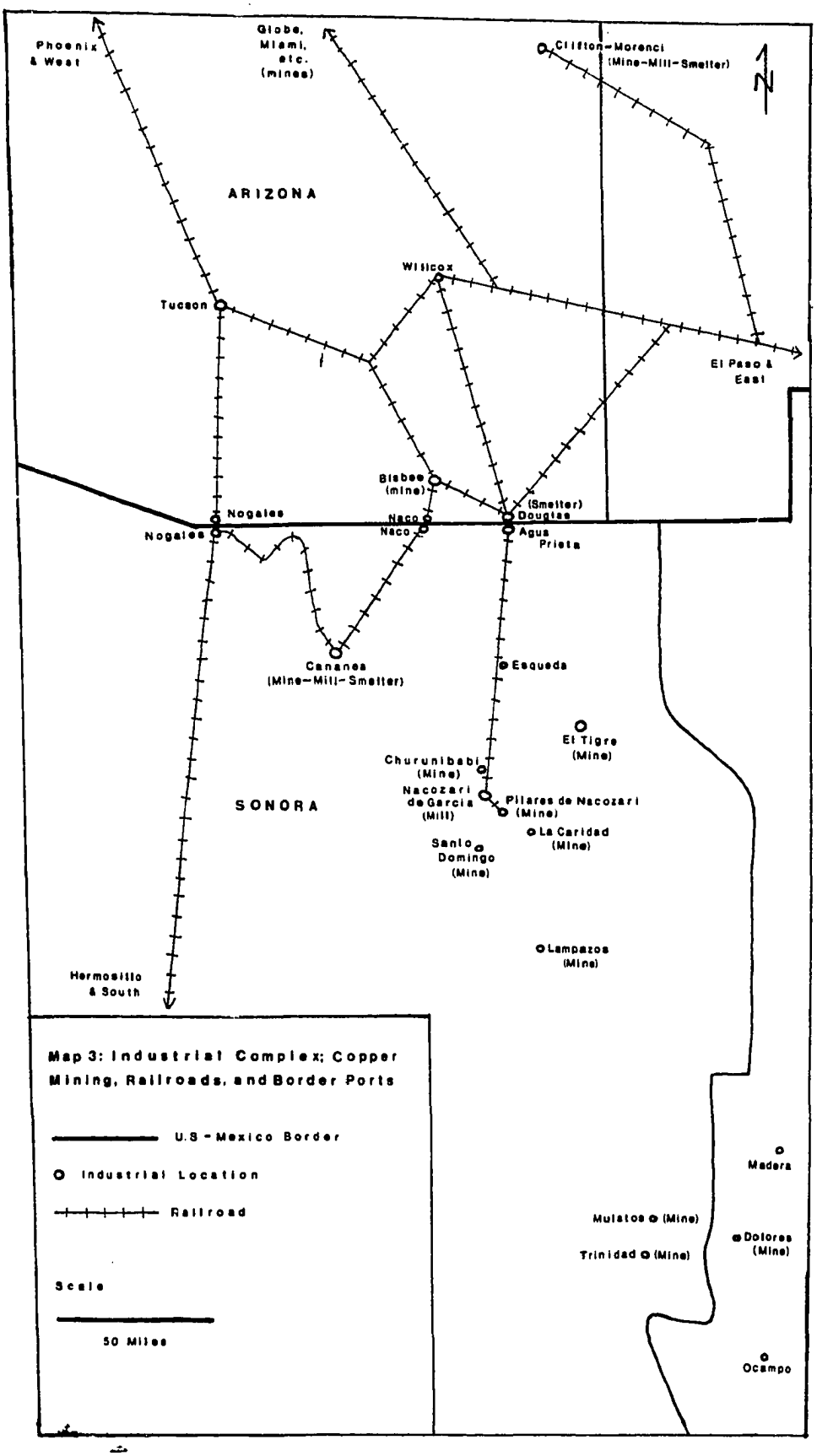


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nineteenth century had ended, and Mexican resources were opened to foreign ownership. The 1880s marked a sharp break with Sonora's isolated frontier past.

## Northeastern Sonora before 1886

Certain aspects of history before 1886 are helpful in understanding the subsequent development of a wage laboring population, although it is not possible here to do justice to the history of that era.[1] The Opata, an Uto-Aztecan people, and affiliated groups inhabited northeastern Sonora. They have disappeared as a recognized group (Johnson, 1950; Hinton, 1959; 1976; Owen, 1959; Spicer, 1962). Their descendants now partake in the non-indigenous, northern Mexican (mestizo) cultural stream. Hrdlicka (1904) found that in the Rio San Miguel valley the Opata did not wish to distinguish themselves or speak the language; his visit in 1902 (Hinton, 1983) coincides with period of working class formation, though the relationship between the two processes is unknown. However, Owen (1959) found in his study of a small rural town in the same area that indigenous ancestry was recognized and that present-day stratification included an element of attributed social race: certain families were known as autochthonous, were poorer, and generally had less status in the town. However in Agua Prieta (and as best I can reconstruct for mine towns) the attribution of "race" or descent played no social role, even among the families who recalled they had Opata ancestry.

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It is helpful in understanding twentieth century Sonoran working people to know about legacies in cultural repertory which Europeans, Jesuit missionaries, and secular ranchers and miners brought to the Opata villagers of highland Sonora (following Spicer, 1962; 1969). Chapter 4 looks at the imposition of European allocations of tasks and technologies to women versus men (in particular agricultural tasks). This includes the penetration of Spanish horsemanship and cattle ranching technologies in Sonoran male work and recreation. Chapter 5 deals with another Spanish technological tradition strongly held among Sonorans: prospecting and mining using non-industrial techniques. Also, in order to understand the rural end of Sonoran proletarianization, we must know that the Jesuits, according to Thomas Sheridan (1983: 53), reorganized indigenous settlements and initiated community land tenure whereby agricultural bottomlands, though held by individuals, can be inherited or sold only to persons locally accepted as bilaterally related to residing families, and leaving upland pasture to be used in common.

In order to understand the emergence at the turn of the twentieth century of a laboring population which was not involved in cultivation--the topic of family histories in Chapter 3--we need to go back to the previous century to explore the start of loosening Sonoran villagers from community lands. One process was the shift from Opata to mestizo identity, and another was the invasion or

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elimination of community land tenure.[2] Outsiders then as now in highland Sonora have been in conflict with insiders over community restrictions on land access; a specific conflict comes when cattle ranchers struggle with small farming peasants who own a few cattle over grassier pastures at higher elevations (Sheridan, 1983).

Beginning in the mid-eighteenth century, the valleys of Sonora were overrun by Europeans and Mestizos, a process facilitated by the Bourbon reforms and the expulsion of the Jesuits (Radding, 1981; Balmori, Voss, and Wortman, 1984: 83-84). Spicer gives details on the numbers of settlers, and he notes that "no important part of Eudeve or Opata territory was without Spanish inhabitants" (1962: 97, also see Escandon, 1985: 264-267). Cynthia Radding de Murrieta argues that beginning with the orders of Juan de Galvez (1769) to split up community lands and culminating in the 1828 state law to individualize land titles, a sustained assault on the community holdings brought about the first steps of the mestizaje of the Opata (1984: 80). The two largest rural towns in northeastern Sonora underwent this change. The once indigenous village of Oposura became the Mexican town of Moctezuma; and nearby Cumpas was fully Mestizo by 1840.

However, when Apache warfare worsened after Mexican Independence many of the "outsiders" retreated from northern Sonora, leaving Opata villages,[3] some of the local Mestizos, and a few frontier elite families to fight the Apache

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(Balmori, Voss, and Wortman, 1984: 94-100). The mid-century state civil wars and the war of the French intervention were as destructive as Apache raids. Some Opata village leaders were allied to the losing sides in the Indian rebellion lead by the Yaqui Juan Banderas, and others during the French Intervention.[4] The chaos seems to have limited erosion of community land control.

As the Apache threat gradually weakened in the 1870s and 1880s, non-indigenous outsiders surged back to the Sonoran highlands, again implanting ranches on community lands (see Dunnigan, 1969: 42-43, 49-52 on the Yecora and Maycoba Pima areas). The Opata seemingly quite willfully assimilated themselves. It was an era when visible Indian identity was dangerous because coastal Yaqui dispersed among Sonoran haciendas were hunted down, killed, or enslaved. The arriving Mestizos and former Opata villagers appear to have merged into a new population directly before and at the same time as the beginning of industrialization. There still remain many questions about this process, and these speculations are hardly certain. Nevertheless, the point which we will keep in mind as we interpret the Hernandez family history in Chapter 3 is that the change in Opata identity and assaults on community land tenure shortly preceeded or were simultaneous with the start of mine wage labor.

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## The Current Boundary and Southwestern U.S. Development

Underlying the changes in Sonora starting 1886 was the emergence of an international "border" between Mexico and the U.S.: the seizure and purchase of Mexican territory which established the boundary as it exists today, followed by the economic development of the area on the U.S. side. Mexico's north edge had been a frontier against nomadic Indians until the 1845-1848 military confrontation with the expanding United States. The final form of the boundary along which Douglas and Agua Prieta would lay was established in 1853 with the Gadsden Purchase, sold by General Santa Ana for ten million dollars to pay debts.

This purchase severed the geographic unity of southern Arizona and Sonora. It lopped Tucson, the northernmost Hispanic settlement of Sonora, from the rest of the state, and placed a border directly in the midst of Sonora's Apache frontier. The boundary would not initially stop Sonorans from their movement northwards--indeed, around 4,000 came to Tucson in the twenty years between 1860 and 1880 (Sheridan, 1986: 76-77). But, in the long run, divided zones called "Arizona" and "Sonora" would arise, overlapped by peoples and natural resources, but diverging in citizenship and economic power. The manner in which the boundary sliced Mexican from American segments of lives and kin is a major issue in the study of family histories.

During the period 1853 to 1886 the border was a zone of conflict, a label which indicates that the border as an

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economic and population entity did not yet exist, while the control of territory and the rights of peoples to occupy them was sorted out among Apaches, Hispanic Sonorans and Arizonans, and Anglo Americans. It is impossible to go into the details here, but the excellent study by Joseph Park (1961) describes the nationalistic resistance to attempted or threatened U.S. annexation of Sonora which was a heritage that the northern Sonorans carried into the turn of the century industrialization. Meanwhile, the U.S.-Apache wars, which brought U.S. army camps, cattle ranches to supply them, and ultimately the railroad, cleared southern Arizona and highland Sonora for passage unhindered by Apache raids, and prepared the full economic transformation of the area.

The techniques and organization of industrial copper mining came earlier on the Arizona side. This history informs subsequent Sonoran history, and it shows the emergence of a major U.S. labor market for immigrants from Mexico beginning in the 1870s. Until the 1870s, copper had not been as important a metal as silver and gold; the use of electrical wire brought a mass demand for it. Improvements in copper concentrating and smelting permitted the mining of massive low-grade ores, and this in turn brought a change in mining organization and skills which required very large mines and huge, largely unskilled mine labor forces (more detail is provided in Chapter 3).

The composition of the labor force in different regions of Arizona[5] was determined by the balance of a three

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cornered struggle between Anglo miners determined to drive out lower paid Mexican workers and establish union power, the mine companies which would do anything to break the power of the Western Federation of Miners, and the Mexican[6] miners who fought for better pay within a "dual wage" system (on Arizona, see Park 1961; Barrera, 1979: 42 describes the racial wage system generally). The southern tier of mines, especially Clifton-Morenci and the Douglas smelters, and to a lesser extent Bisbee, were heavily staffed by workers of Mexican extraction. Other massive economic sectors in Southern Arizona--cotton farming and railroads--employed similar labor strategies (see Sheridan, 1986 on the railroad and the urban labor market of Tucson).

In the creation and movement of an immigrant labor supply, railroads were basic. In the analysis of Lawrence Cardoso (1980), railroads which linked the interior of Mexico to cross-western U.S. networks initiated immigration patterns. Railroad construction within Mexico provided new jobs that pulled workers away from haciendas and sharecropping at much higher cash wages, while at the same time making movement to the U.S. border much easier. At the border, Mexican immigrants were met by employment agencies or corporate recruiters, many of them also seeking railroad track workers for maintenance crews in the vast U.S. west.[7] Southern Pacific, for example, had recruiting offices at Tucson, Willcox, Arizona (due north of Douglas on the main line), and El Paso. After spreading through the network,

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laborers abandoned track crews in great numbers because of the low pay, heavy work, and isolated poor living conditions (Garcia, 1981).

The Southern Pacific railroad completed, in 1881, linked southern Arizona with California to the west and El Paso, the major port of entry for Mexican immigrants, to the east. Connecting railroads were run down to Sonora: the main west coast trunk south via Nogales in 1887, and after 1900 branch lines to the mines at Cananea (via Bisbee) and Nacozari (via Douglas). These two branches penetrated the mountainous interior of Sonora, and brought ore, commerce, and people across the border (see Map 3).

The context of an immigrant labor flow was an "open border" from the closing of the frontier in 1886 to the major visa reductions for Mexicans in 1929.[8] Before 1917 there were no significant requirements to immigrate from Mexico, and even after 1917 legal immigration was quite simple (immigrants from Mexico needed two birth and marriage certificates, a certification of good conduct, good health, and a fee of eight dollars, eighteen dollars after 1924). The 1924 National Origins Act, that blunted European immigration, did not place the Western Hemisphere in its quota system. The Border Patrol was created to prevent Chinese immigration through Mexico, and it did not become effective in restricting Mexican immigration until it was doubled in size in 1930. Undocumented immigration was little restricted from 1917 to 1929, and even those who were

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caught faced no legal penalty--they were told to pay their fees and reenter legally (the summary of border policies is taken from Hoffman, 1974).

The development of the U.S. side of the border informs us about three elements of family histories at the start of the industrial wage labor period. There was a large wage labor market in the industries of Arizona, which preceeded by a few years that of Sonora. Populations in the two states were linked by railroads penetrating Mexico from the U.S. The movement of persons between the two nations was easy, and essentially unrestricted. The result, as described in Chapter 3, was a characteristic cross-border family form before 1929.

Land Encroachment in Sonora During the Porfiriato

During the period 1883 to 1910 in Sonora community lands, water, and desert resources were forcefully encroached upon. This period in Sonora--the epoch of Governor Luis Emeterio Torres and his political group--corresponds, of course, to the era of Mexican President Porfirio Díaz, when speculation and development tore apart existing claims on resources. An understanding of this process is necessary for kinship histories in Chapter 3 which analyze paths out of the countryside into the work force of the great mines.

The national "Ley Lerda", providing for the individualization of title to corporately held land, was

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passed in 1856 but the brunt of its application occurred in the late nineteenth century. Figueroa (1985: 156) lists towns in the Sonoran sierra affected by this law: Arizpe, Fronteras, Banamichi, Huepac, Sinoquipe, Moctezuma, Tepachi, Bacerac, Bacanora, Sahuaripa, Valle de Tacupeto, San Pedro de la Cueva, Bavispe, Cumpas, Huasabas, Tonichi--a list including most of the important rural towns in the region. As Figueroa notes, though the mechanism for distributing titles seemingly was fair, in reality a fundamental cultural bias pervaded the assignment of land: when indigenous inhabitants were even mentioned in land records, it was to complain that they were not getting their fair share.

New technologies and markets in the final decades of the nineteenth century encouraged cattle ranchers to capture open pasture land from village commons (and the Apache constraint to ranching had ended, as described above). Even before copper mining spread to northern Sonora, Arizona's mine, railroad, and urban boom encouraged the export of cattle and agricultural goods in the Moctezuma and Arizpe districts (Gracida, 1985: 45). When the big mines arrived, and mine towns grew topsy-turvy, Balmori, Voss, and Wortman found that haciendas grew supplying cattle to slaughter and wheat to numerous flour mills (1984: 109-110). Needing more pasture for cattle, ranchers found that barbed wire allowed better management of herds and enabled encroachment on community pasture, a process Sheridan documented for Cucurpe (1983: 68).

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Among the invaders of the Sonoran countryside were Northamericans and Europeans. To take one striking example from the early anthropological literature, in the Rio San Miguel village of Tuape, Ales Hrdlicka (1904) obtained his information on the remaining Opata from two resident Americans, James G. Chism, "actually the jefe político of the village", and Dr. E. M. Alderman, Mr. Chism's companion, a doctor and miner (1904: 72). As a whole in 1910 Sonora had a greater proportion of foreign residents than any other state in Mexico, and it was second in absolute numbers (Balmori, Voss, and Wortman, 1984: 247).

The transfers of land from many hands to one hand was accelerated when U.S. copper mining companies arrived in Sonora. The largest of all was the latifundium assembled by William C. Greene on the grassy high pasture and timbered ranges surrounding his mine, Cananea. He bought part of the estate from the widow of General Ignacio Pesqueira (the mid-nineteenth century governor of Sonora), the source from which he acquired the mines themselves. Greene also used the land claims process to pressure the descendants of frontier military colonist Jose María Arvallo to sell the land grant "Ojo de Agua". This gave Greene's companies control over the bountiful spring that was the source of the Rio Sonora. Partly diverted north, away from the farming villages of the river, Ojo de Agua provided 1,500,000 gallons a day to the mine and town of Cananea. Similarly Greene made claims to 37 units of the land grant given to

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the community dwellers of Santa Cruz; he obtained over 5,000 hectares from them. In all, Greene absorbed the astounding quantity of 261,653 hectares (440,000 acres), divided into the seven ranches of the Cananea Cattle Company, as well as water and timber land for the mine company[9] (Aguirre, 1958: 30-32, 117-118, 166-169; Sonnichsen, 1974: 98; Gracida, 1985: 48; Peña and Chávez, 1985: 276).

The Moctezuma Copper Company, Phelps Dodge's branch at Nacozari, also had a ranch of 35,000 hectares, "La Apurica", providing timber, meat, and leather (Radding, 1985: 275). The large cattle ranches did not employ enough persons to make up for the ones they displaced. Despite their great size, all seven ranches of the Cananea Cattle Company employed only 70 regular cowboys, and with extra seasonal help, at the most 200 men (Peña and Chávez, 1985). On the other hand, nearby mine work was expanding.

Let us look at some of the specific mechanisms by which restricting access to desert resources undercut rural livelihoods. Fencing cut off shared pastures and made the villagers' small herds of cattle less viable. Farmers who lost access to river bottom lands or water had to plant temporales (rain-fed plots in ravines) which were much more vulnerable to dry years in the desert. In an unlucky year, these farmers would have to leave the land. Community residents not only lost river-bottom farm land but also access to a range of zones basic to their way of life. Sheridan (1983: 95-99) found that villagers today gather

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herbs, greens, and cane from the river zone; mesquite wood, wild chile, and cactus fruit in the lower desert zone; edible acorns and agave (for liquor) in the oak scrub zone. For instance, small wood gathers who sold cut firewood to townspeople--an important livelihood for Sonorans even today--had to obtain special written permission to enter Cananea Cattle Company lands, and if caught, their tools and ropes were destroyed.

The new industries may have caused enough environmental damage to have injured some farms, and thus have driven the farmers into the very arms of their polluters. A current study of the Douglas smelter found that it released enough sulfur dioxide and heavy metals to damage crops in Agua Prieta and Fronteras municipalities (Williams, 1986). Phelps Dodge has quietly paid crop damage compensation in these areas since the late 1940s. While the smelter smokestacks were lower before the 1940s and thus the smoke spread less, only in the forties was a "Cotrell plant" installed which recovers some of the valuable metals from the smoke and lessens somewhat the toxicity. The Cananea area also suffered from a smelter, and the copper company has allowed acidic and metalliferous leaching from its tailings into the Rio Sonora and the Rio San Pedro. The Nacozari concentrator has similarly polluted the Rio Moctezuma.

There is some anecdotal evidence that, in the early years, the mines deforested substantial areas, although more

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evidence is needed. The El Tigre mine used oak in the furnace used to dry the ore in the concentrator, one worker there recalled, and they contracted crews to cut wood for firewood and mine timbers on their lands. Morris Parker, an American mining engineer who visited Pilares de Nacozari in 1902, later recalled that all energy came from firewood; "thus the countryside for 15 to 25 miles in all directions was entirely denuded of trees, and later along the railroad for 40 miles north as far as Cos, an equidistance on either side" (Parker, 1979: 79). In combination with the overgrazing produced by intensified cattle ranching, deforestation has caused worsened erosion and more violent flooding. Floods which rip out fields and bury others under rubble, as Simonelli (1985) witnessed in Baviacora, force some farmers to leave the land.

Riverine farming and small herds of cattle formed the core of highland Sonoran subsistence, but there were other diverse occupations characteristic of the Apache frontier: hunters/rustlers of wild cattle on the open frontier, gold prospectors, gunman and Apache fighter, and horsebreakers. As the frontier closed, land was sold and fenced off, and herds of wild animals finished, it seems likely that less such work was to be found. However, very little is known about these occupations.

Transportation is one case in which there exists some information on displacement. The railroad from Agua Prieta to Nacozari (1901-4) caused the disappearance of carriages,

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teamsters, and blacksmiths in the Fronteras area (Aguilar Camín, 1977: 98). The Cananea-Naco railroad replaced 900 horse teams in 1902 (Sonnichsen, 1974: 75). However, the expansion of the mines undoubtedly created many of these jobs in the first place; Henry Leon of Douglas recalled that his grandfather drove a horse carriage between Cumpas, Sonora and Tombstone, Arizona, key towns at the very beginning of the mine boom (interview, Douglas, January 16, 1986).

Friedrich Katz has effectively summarized the changes in northern Mexico before 1910 as the shift from "frontier" to "border" (1981). When the Sonoran "frontier" was closed, a population was cut off from diverse elements of rural livelihoods. Where could they go? This was the creation within northeastern Sonora of a zone fundamentally tied--in economics, in communications, in way of life--to the U.S. side of the border.

## The Industrial Mines in Sonora

The largest agent of change to "border" life was the industrial mine. Sonorans had always been miners. The nature of the occupation changed dramatically around the turn of the century, however. Prior to the industrial copper era, the most important mines were located in the far southern District of Alamos (though Cananea was worked periodically throughout the nineteenth century and Nacozari had been a major colonial silver mine). These mines were

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primarily non-industrial silver mines. As late as 1894, the average number of miners in Sonoran mines was 92. Southern mines were, overall, in decline by the 1880s--silver coinage at the Alamos mint declined after 1884--despite some investment from Britain and the U.S. in this zone (Gracida, 1985: 39-40; Figueroa, 1985: 92).

J. J. Gracida's chronology indicates that in 1885 mining in Sonora was almost paralyzed. He states that mine production restarted in 1886-1887, with the defeat of the Yaqui leader Cajeme and the Apache leader Geronimo, disappearing yellow fever, the consolidation of state political power by Torres, and the completion of the west coast railroad from Nogales, Arizona, to Guaymas on the Gulf of California. In 1892, legal concessions suspended the "regular working" clause, thus enabling mine investors to stake out huge claims in hope of future development. The ownership of the subsoil was permitted to foreigners. Sonora received 7.3 percent of the foreign investment in Mexico during the Porfiriato, ranking third among states and making a particularly dramatic impact in this sparsely settled state (Bernstein, 1964: 27-28; Gracida, 1985: 39-40; Figueroa, 1985: 154).

When mining recovered, it was no longer in the southern silver district, but in the copper zone in the northeastern corner of the state adjacent to the U.S. border. It was this area where the first complete working class formed in Sonora. Chapters 3 and 4, the life histories of the mine

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working class, revolve around a few key industrial mine locations: Nacozari, Douglas, Cananea, El Tigre. The history of each location is examined. These summarize three bodies of information about the structure of the formative working class: the history of capital investment in the major mines, the numbers of workers as evidence for the size of the formative working class, and the physical and social structure of the new company cities.

Nacozari was located due south of Douglas and Agua Prieta. In the nineteenth century prospectors washed gold placers at Nacozari Viejo, the original settlement. By the early 1880s numerous Americans were operating small claims and one pair ran an adobe smelter from which they shipped crude copper blister on muleback to Guaymas, and from there to Swansea, Wales. From the era of the first foreign prospectors, still working with standard Mexican technology, greater corporate capitalization emerged.

In 1887, most of the deposits around Nacozari were acquired by the "Moctezuma Concentrating Company" of Jersey City. After several transactions, the Nacozari properties were transferred to the Guggenheim Copper Company (later ASARCO), which installed initial mine workings and a rudimentary smelter. Guggenheim in turn sold Nacozari to Phelps Dodge, and Phelps Dodge invested[10] in a substantial complex: the mine itself high up in Pilares de Nacozari, the mill and concentrator several miles away at Nacozari de Garcia, a narrow gauge railroad between them, and the two

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new towns (see below). When it reached full operation by 1905, the mine itself had 2,000 workers, and we lack figures for the other operations. Nacozari, a railhead, mill, and supply center, also stimulated other copper mines in the region: Lampazos, Churunibabi, Santo Domingo, Transvaal Copper in Cumpas, and the rich silver-copper-gold mine at El Tigre, bought by the Lucky Tiger Gold mining company of Kansas City in 1902 (Leland, 1930: 2-3; Bernstein, 1964: 59-60; Gracida, 1985: 92).

A railroad line, started in 1900 and completed in 1904, ran from the U.S. to Nacozari. It halted at the mine and had no connection with the rest of the state. Where the railroad crossed into Mexico, the town of Agua Prieta grew to serve customs and export businesses. On the U.S. side of this border crossing, Douglas, two smelters were built, one for the Calumet and Arizona company of Bisbee, and the other a Phelps Dodge smelter to serve their Nacozari and Bisbee mines. The foundations were laid in 1901, and by 1906 the "C & A" smelter was fired up, followed shortly by the "Copper Queen" (Dumke, 1948; Jeffrey, 1951).

The Douglas smelter complex was central to both mine sites, Bisbee and Nacozari, and the open desert basin offered plentiful land and a surprisingly good water supply. But we must also consider that a location directly on the border was desirable to Phelps Dodge executives, like Walter Douglas, who were acutely aware that Mexican immigrant labor was paid less than unionized Anglo-American labor (see

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Byrkit, 1982: 64-67 on Walter Douglas' strategy for fighting unionized labor). The two smelters employed 1,700 in 1913 (Jeffrey, 1951: 25).

Cananea, like Nacozari, was long an exploited ore field. After one period of mining in the early nineteenth century, it was resuscitated in 1876 by General Ignacio Pesqueira, the "Sonoran Strongman" of the Rio Sonora/San Pedro frontier (Acuña, 1974). However, Cananea fell into neglect after Pesqueira died, and his widow sold the site in 1896 for 15,000 pesos to William C. Greene, the adventurer from Arizona. However, when Greene went to Wall Street for costly mill upgrading at Cananea and his overweening Chihuahua project, his ambitious manipulations were "one-upped" by two representatives of the Amalgamated Copper (Rockefeller) interests, and the Cananea mines passed into their hands (the ranches stayed in the Greene family), eventually forming part of the Anaconda corporation.

The Cananea Consolidated Copper Company installed, expanded, and rebuilt by 1907 several multi-level mines, a mill, concentrator, and a smelter around Cananea, as well as a railroad line to the nearby U.S. border port at Naco, adjacent to Bisbee. The mines were in full production by 1903, and in 1906 had 5,360 Mexican and 2,200 foreign (American) employees--without exaggeration, a massive installation (information on Cananea's development is summarized from Aguirre, 1958; Bernstein, 1964; Sonnichsen, 1974; and Meyer, 1980).

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The strike of June, 1906 in Cananea is famous as one of the first labor actions in Mexico. The underlying causes of the strike are of some interest. The Mexican miners at Cananea, paid a base wage of 3 pesos a day, were the best paid workers in the Republic--and Cananea was the most expensive town in the nation--but Mexican employees were quite aware that they were paid less than half that of the American miners, and that they wanted these dictatorial American foremen partly replaced by Mexicans. As Park astutely observed, the Cananea strike was an extension of the three-sided battles of Arizona, yet with far different political consequences. Other grievances characteristic of company towns centered on forcible expulsions from houses as the town was built, and being obligated to consume at company stores.

When a .50 peso paycut and an obligatory contract system tied to American foremen were imposed, the miners went out on strike lead by the well-educated weighmen/paymasters Manuel Diéguez and Esteban Baca Calderón, who belonged to clubs receiving the radical literature of the Partido Liberal Mexicano (see Cockcroft, 1968). The events of the strike are summarized, from polarized points of view, in Aguirre, 1951; Sonnichsen, 1974; and Meyer, 1980. Suffice it to say that numbers of strikers were shot by Company officials and that later armed "volunteers" from Phelps Dodge in Bisbee were deputized by the Sonoran governor to cross into Mexico.

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In reality, the force of workers' power was more effectively demonstrated in later 1911 strikes at Cananea, and consolidated in the formation of the union in the early 1930s (see below). In political terms, though, the 1906 strike is justly regarded as a major event leading to the Mexican Revolution, since leaders and participants--Manuel Diéguez, Juan Cabral, Esteban Baca Calderón--were early figures in the Madero's rebellion against Díaz, and generals in the ultimate triumph of the Sonorans. The 1906 strike was a meaningful symbol of nationalism for Mexicans, since an armed U.S. force was allowed onto Mexican soil by Sonoran state authorities, and the activities of the government in repressing the strikers showed their complicity in foreign interests--during these events, the sentiment of nationalism was turned against Mexico's own government.

Surrounding the giant mines, cities, large by the scale of the era, were implanted in what had been a very thinly populated frontier, where the Spanish tradition of town life was barely represented by the church and the defensive walls around the town or ranch center. The change seems all the more profound when we consider that Cananea and Agua Prieta/Douglas were located on the northernmost extreme of Sonoran settlement. In 1891, Cananea had 891 people; in 1901, 3,500; and in 1910 14,800 people lived there, when it was the largest city in the state. Nacozari, which in 1900 was a prospectors' camp so small that it was not censused, by 1910 had 4,000 people and this figure, I suspect, did not

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include the separate mine site of Pilares de Nacozari (Aguilar Camín, 1977: 111-113).

The change was qualitative as well as quantitative, for the mine towns were entirely new settlements in different places from the traditional villages whose names they took. Nacozari Viejo lay at the base of the mountains, where the Rio Moctezuma disgorged; the developers of the copper mine decided in 1895 to relocate at a goldwashing camp, Placeritos, more central to the mine complex, which became Nacozari de Garcia. Pilares de Nacozari was an entirely new company town in the heights of the mountains above the mine head. Corporate Cananea was placed on top of the famous mesa, above "Cananea Viejo", which became a refuge for disabled and retired miners, small prospectors, and other working people marginal to the mine itself.

The new cities were company towns in the precise sense of the term. Cananea was owned by a "Cananea Realty Co.", whose 90 percent owner was William Greene, and which was chartered for virtually all functions, including land, cattle, transportation, water, factories, hotels, etc. The Cananea Cattle Company controlled the slaughterhouse and meat supply; the bank was the Cananea Mercantile Bank; and the largest store by far was the Cananea company store, with annual sales of 140,000 pesos in 1906 (Aguirre, 1958: 36 ff., 157). Phelps Dodge's control of Nacozari did not differ except in detail.

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Douglas was not strictly a company owned town; rather, it was a commercial venture with insiders' profits set up by Phelps Dodge executives and their partners, including James S. Douglas, Ben and Lewis Williams, W. H. Brophy, John Slaughter, L. D. Ricketts, etc., with parts farmed out to various persons, such as the utility companies to the Williams, and the Bank of Douglas to Douglas and Brophy (see Jeffrey, 1951, who describes this in detail). Agua Prieta, initially a small border settlement to serve Douglas, always had a more open, heterogeneous character.

Mine companies before the 1910 revolution controlled the political and civic life of these cities by paying the salaries and costs of municipal government. The Lucky Tiger Mining Company (El Tigre) received its mining concession in exchange for paying the costs of the town school and police force, and a similar agreement was made with Phelps Dodge at Nacozari--agreements that made sense for serving towns in remote places, but which had the obvious effect of tying the municipality to management (Aguilar Camín, 1977: 113). The first mayors of Cananea were chief officials of the company, and Greene cultivated relations with erstwhile independent Mexican officials (see Balmori, Voss, and Wortman, 1984). With the rise of the mine union in the 1930s, the companies would have their civic monopoly challenged, especially at Cananea, but the pattern of town political organization by industrial units--company or union--was set from the beginning.

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Although the changes in northeastern Sonora were focused on the mine centers, the entire region of northeastern Sonora was reoriented toward the U.S. border as a consequence of the developing copper and cattle export economy. Agua Prieta, which barely existed in 1900, by 1910 was a thriving border port: it moved ten times the value of exports of the port of Guaymas, primarily copper and cattle (Ruíz, 1986). In this pattern, the alignment of the railroads was particularly crucial: one line ran directly from Agua Prieta to Nacozari and stopped; the other ran from the border at Naco to Cananea, and though a linkage was later added from the latter to the main west coast trunk line, both lines were essentially meant to direct traffic between the mine entrepots and the U.S. border. Each railhead then pulled in mine and rural products from further in the Sonoran interior, and in turn provided consumer goods and ranch supplies imported from the U.S..

Though detailed research has not been done, there appears to have been a redirection of commerce from European or California imports via the port of Guaymas then on mule to the interior, toward a pattern in which Douglas was the commercial keystone of the region. Charles Gildersleeve's recent research on commercial geography shows that Douglas has a trade zone far into northern Sonora, past Cananea and Nacozari, surprisingly further than larger border centers such as Nogales, Arizona (1978: 199). In my fieldwork I was struck by how strongly northeastern Sonorans were oriented

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to Douglas. The U.S.-orientation of work and consumption is a key social fact for the discussion of alternative paths taken during the transitional period (Chapter 5).

There is evidence for the disruption of rural livelihoods in the period after 1886, and substantial evidence for the formation of an industrial working class. This evidence remains, however, at an aggregate level--the numbers of new miners, for example. We still lack a sense of the processes by which people moved from the one to the other. These are the processes which an anthropology of working class formation addresses in Chapter 3.

## Northeastern Sonora in the Mexican Revolution

Northern Sonora was one of the focal points in the beginning of the Mexican revolution. While it is not possible to detail the events of the conflict in this region (see Aguilar Camín, 1977), certain patterns can be observed. At the very earliest stages of the revolution, rebel bands formed out of the heterogeneous population of highland Sonora--discontented miners from Cananea, farm villagers, and prospectors, cowboys, teamsters, and bandits from the desert interstices. Recruits and bases of operation in Mexican neighborhoods in Arizona mine and smelter towns were particularly important--including Douglas and Pirtleville[11]. In the early years of the Sonoran working population, neither Sonora or Arizona, nor miner or peasant/cowboy could be readily isolated (see Aguilar Camín, 1977: 131, 134-136,

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144 for cases; also the information on 1906 PLM activities in Douglas, Cockcroft, 1969: 146-147).

From the first steps of Madero's uprising, however, the Sonoran part of the revolution was run by men with a connection, sometimes marginal, to Sonoran elite families--Maytorena, Elías Calles, Obregón Salcido, Bonillas, Pesqueira, etc. (see Balmori, Voss, and Wortman, 1984). Their particular genius, besides the military mastery of Obregón, was organizing and financing the revolution (see Aguilar Camín's excellent discussion). This was not a unified clique, however; bitter personal rivalries culminated in the war for Sonora between Plutarco Elías Calles and José María Maytorena, allied with Obregón and Villa, respectively, at the national level.

In this process, the people of northeastern Sonora were an important source of armed men (when Huerta killed Madero, the anti-Huerta state government in Sonora armed 200 men in Nacozari, 350 in Agua Prieta and Fronteras, 220 in Moctezuma, etc.). Yet we cannot say that Sonoran workers fought as a class; rather, they seem to have split into groups each following a revolutionary chieftain. Besserer, Novelo, and Sariego (1983: 24) state that this pattern characterized miners in Mexico generally (in contrast to organized groups of urban workers). For example, while Maytorena offered to support the miners of Cananea after Calles sent 300 troops to repress strikes in 1914 (Aguilar Camín, 1977: 407), Calles had a "Batallón Pilares" recruited

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among the miners of Pilares de Nacozari and their kin in nearby peasant villages. In Chapter 3, one case of an officer in the "Batallón Pilares" will allow a reconstruction of how one worker became a follower of a revolutionary chieftain, a specific case which adds to our knowledge of Sonoran workers and peasants in the Revolution.

The Sonorans who were the final victors of the revolution concentrated on shattering the political monopoly of Porfirio Díaz' clique, and replacing it with themselves, and their proposals for social reform were limited to the distribution of unused land to promote private agriculture and the arbitration of disputes between labor and capital. The absence of a popular program in the Sonoran part of the revolution (even at a time when there was considerable mine labor unrest and unofficial seizures of land in highland Sonora indicates limits on our understanding of working class politics (Ruíz, 1976).

On the other hand, in the civilian areas we see the first important steps toward labor power though no lasting union emerged. The background to this is that during the revolutionary decade there was very severe inflation and shortages of food and other consumer goods. Worthless paper money was passed out by all sides. On the other hand, with the exception of brief disruptions in 1912 and 1915, the copper miners worked steadily until 1919 (production had dipped from 1914 to 1916, but it boomed after the U.S. entered World War I). The Maderista revolution encouraged

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miners to question authority, and in June, 1911, a wave of strikes brought the first real improvements for Cananea workers: the reduction of the workday to nine hours and a pay raise to 3.50 pesos daily (Bernstein, 1964: 98-101).

In 1912, there was formed in Cananea an "Agrupación de Mineros", part of a PLM inspired miners' union. 21 leaders were arbitrarily fired and public meetings were prohibited, resulting in a strike. The strikers were forced back to work by Generals Benjamin Hill and Manuel Diéguez (a 1906 striker!). They did obtain free water, cheaper rent, and contributions to a workers' hospital (Radding, 1985: 245). In 1914, workers at Cananea surrounded the mine manager's house in protest of an act of the company to form an "investigative bureau" for employees; Calles responded by sending 300 troops (see above; Aguilar Camín, 1977: 407-408). As usual, much less is written about labor activities in Nacozari than in Cananea. One incident is reported in which "IWW agitators" were expelled in July, 1917 from Nacozari by the Sonoran governor at the request of Phelps Dodge (Radding, 1985: 272). Judging by the date and the phrasing, this may have been a branch of the July 12, 1917 expulsion of over 2,000 union sympathizers, few of them wobblies, from Bisbee (Byrkit, 1982).

The revolution induced a population flow from rural Sonora to the mine cities and the U.S.. Inflation and shortages plagued the mine centers, but employment was relatively strong until 1919, and more importantly,

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conditions in the countryside were horrific. Oral history of Rio Sonora villagers assembled by Cynthia Radding (1985: 265-266) testifies to the terror of bands of wandering hungry soldiers, combined by natural disaster in the form of floods in 1914. The later years of the revolution--1916, 1917--saw outright starvation and smallpox epidemics in the Sahuaripa district (and presumably elsewhere). During the last years of the revolution there were frequent reports of uncultivated lands in highland Sonora (Radding, 1985: 274). Sonorans also fled to the U.S. Cardoso argues that the revolutionary period brought the full formation of the Mexican American border town population that was both near Mexican origins and American wages (1980: 49).

These trends inform us about the changing context of family histories. Just as the giant industries and railroads in the 1890s and 1900s induced the first steps of labor migration, the 1910s and 1920s saw crystallized permanent settlement in working class areas, and the emergence of repeated labor protests. The devastating warfare, inflation, starvation, and disease of the war years appears to have strengthened the tendency toward permanent urban settlement, and Chapter 4 will specifically emphasize the role of widowhood and family insecurity as a process of proletarianization in the long run.

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## The 1920s

World War I was a tremendous boon for the metal industries, and after the war ended, U.S. copper companies unloaded their stocks causing a short but severe depression from 1919 to 1921. Cananea and Nacozari, appendages of U.S. companies, both closed in January, 1921, and demonstrating a remarkable coordination of actions, both reopened in June, 1922. El Tigre, which remained open, increased production by 16 percent yet cut wages in the 10 to 30 percent range (Bernstein, 1964: 130-133). At Douglas, the smelters hit their wartime peak in 1918, when workers were hired from Mexico, but by April, 1921 both smelters were closed for "repairs"; they reopened after nine months (Jeffrey, 1951: 111-113). As if massive layoffs were not bad enough, during these years (1918-1920) the terrible Spanish flu epidemic hit Sonora, with particular virulence in crowded and wartorn towns of the northeast.[12]

Copper production recovered after 1922, but only in the major mines, while small mines either fluctuated with the production of minor ores (fluorite, antimony, manganese) or suffered a sustained decline in silver prices. Small mines that produced silver and gold had to sell their ore to the Douglas and Cananea smelters, yet they were not able to compete with the production of silver and gold as a byproduct of copper extraction at the very same smelters. As a result of these processes the wage economy strengthened in the major mines--Cananea, Nacozari, El Tigre--and their

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border ports--Agua Prieta, Naco, Nogales--while the small mines disappeared that had been important sources of intermittent cash wages for the dozens of peasant municipalities in which they were scattered (Ramírez and León, 1985: 19-25).

Immigration to the U.S. was extensive during the 1920s. Cardoso estimates, for the statistics collected then were faulty, that approximately one million persons of Mexican origin were added to the permanent U.S. population, and this does not include temporary immigrant workers (1980: 94). Legal border crossing was simple until 1929, and undocumented entry was little prevented during this decade. 65 to 70 percent of the entrants in the 1920s were young men (Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Inquiry as summarized by Cardoso, 1980: 82). The men I interviewed told me that earnings in the U.S. in the 1920s were much better than in Mexico, and indeed, Manuel Gamio (cited in Peterson, 1975: 10) found that the cost of living in Mexico during the 1920s was higher than in the U.S.: corn was more expensive, and much of it was imported.

Easy immigration was cut off suddenly in 1929 by visa restrictions, an action that took place before the first signs of economic crisis. Most Mexicans who had been welcomed previously to the U.S. as laborers were reclassified as "likely to become public charges" and thus not permissible immigrants (Hoffman, 1974: 32). In the same year the border patrol was doubled and made effective. 1929

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signals the end of the "open border" period and the first steps toward the "controlled border". This change in the nature of the border had a profound effect on life histories, a process seen in diverging kin branches analyzed in Chapter 5.

## The 1930s: Repatriation, Mine Closings, Labor Unions, Land Redistribution

The depression of the 1930s was a profoundly disruptive period in northern Sonora, with echoes lasting into the 1940s, 1950s, and even 1960s. There were four major processes at work: the repatriation of persons of Mexican origin from the U.S.; the closures of mines and massive layoffs in Sonora; the emergence of miners' unions among the remaining miners; and the agrarian reform of the Cárdenas years. These processes were simultaneous and intertwined, but for the sake of clarity we must separate them and consider each in order.

When people lost jobs upon the crash of 1929 and 1930, many of them left directly for Mexico. As the depression worsened in 1931 and 1932, a decentralized but vigorous campaign tried sought to expel the population of Mexican origin from the U.S. Abraham Hoffman (1974: 126) estimates that approximately a half-million persons left through 1935. A relatively small portion were legally deported, but most were coerced into "voluntarily" departing, through various means which included offering transportation to go back to

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Mexico while simultaneously threatening to cut families off the aid rolls in the U.S., reinforced by fear of legal deportations. Not only did young men who had come as temporary labor immigrants leave, but also families that had permanently settled in the U.S. were uprooted, often without regard to their legal visa status or the U.S. citizenship by birth of the children.

The concentrated force of the repatriators hit Los Angeles and the Midwest, but Arizona also was part of this sad history. Paul Taylor (1933, IV: 45-47) using official counts of exiting visa bearers (and my interviews imply that many persons left without registering), found that 18,520 persons left Arizona in 1930-1932, 6,064 of them for Sonora. From the perspective of those coming into Sonora, 17,760 total persons arrived--including those above from Arizona and another 2,353 from California.

In the case of Douglas, when the two smelters were merged in 1931, the old Copper Queen smelter was closed and the larger C & A smelter was taken over by Phelps Dodge. Only 450 workers were kept on, and though there is no number for those laid-off (or "retired"), the total must have been over a thousand (Jeffrey, 1951).[13] Oral histories collected in Douglas repeatedly state that Phelps Dodge preferred to keep Anglo American workers and laid workers of Mexican origin off first (Heyman, 1986). Phelps Dodge and the Southern Pacific gave free transportation on the railway back into Sonora. The Douglas Chamber of Commerce, inspired

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by the example of Los Angeles, planned an attempt to send 180 families to Mexico, but cancelled it when it was pointed out that if the economy ever revived, they might not have their workers back again (Hoffman, 1974: 123).

Mexico absorbed this influx though its economy was equally depression-racked. In Sonora the repatriates either went to mine towns where they felt at home or to rural areas where relatives might be able to make room. More than 2,000 returnees in 1930 from the mines of Jerome and Miami, Arizona, stated in crossing into Mexico that their intention was to go to the mine towns of Cananea and Nacozari. In 1934, three years after the mine closed, the municipal president of Nacozari reported that rumors of reopenings were still attracting people (Ramírez and León, 1985: 60). Upon finding that mines in Sonora were as equally stopped as their own, Arizonan repatriates had to join the mass of persons working as prospectors and tailings-pickers on the edges of the giant mines (see the discussion of Cananea below and El Tigre in Chapter 5). As for the rural villages, in 1931 Hewes (1935) found that Huepac, a typical highland valley municipality, was full of unemployed copper miners from Arizona.

Chapter 5 contains an extensive examination of the histories of repatriated families: how they had lived in the U.S. and Mexico before, why they left, where they went and why, and later, what paths they found out of their retreats of repatriation. This material tells us not only about

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repatriation but also the relationships and conflicts that wage work, commodity ownership, and industrial skills place in families. In this regard the miners laid-off within Sonora in the 1930s went through very similar changes.

Copper's price began to fall in May of 1930, and it remained depressed until 1937. Sonora's production in 1932 was one-sixth that of 1929 (Ramírez and León, 1985: 58-62). Multinational copper companies with large-scale mines in South American and Southern Africa overproduced the reduced industrial market. Faced with this, in the fall of 1931 L. D. Cates of Phelps Dodge organized meetings of eighteen men who controlled 91.9 percent of the world's copper production, and they agreed to curtail production (Jeffrey, 1951: 119-120).

Phelps Dodge closed Nacozari on September 21, 1931. The company had reduced the number of shifts in 1930, and tried to lay workers in September, 1930, but the union at Pilares and the federal labor inspector fought that action off until 1931. When the mine closed, the labor inspector demanded 45 days more work or the legally mandated three months indemnity (worth 225 pesos at 3 pesos a day wages), while Phelps Dodge management offered indemnities between 35 and 50 pesos and free transportation out of Nacozari. The conflict reached the state governor, Rodolfo Elías Calles, who told workers to accept the company's offer, while he offered lands to "colonize" on the coast at Cajeme, which 128 families accepted.

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Altogether, 2,000 workers were fired; and others lost their livelihoods in the commerce of Nacozari de Garcia. The magnitude of the exodus can be measured in the 6,800 railroad tickets distributed by Phelps Dodge, which does not include those who departed in other directions by mule train, also provided by the company. Nacozari remained closed until 1937 (Jeffrey, 1951: 117; Ramírez and León, 1985: 60-61; Chávez and Peña, 1985: 255; and the account by the wife of the mine manager, Horton, 1968: 183-194).

Nearby El Tigre cut wages 10 to 25 percent in 1930, causing protests about which details are lacking. In March, 1931, the mine threatened to close and again complicated negotiations ensued, bringing in this case only a partial shutdown--firing 200 of about 400 workers. The mine was kept going in an irregular manner until 1937, but the company put in no investment and "ate up" the capital. In 1937, the Lucky Tiger corporation suddenly abandoned the mine rather than pay indemnities for an orderly lay-off. The miners' union received in lieu of indemnities the mine, plant, and company town to run as a cooperative; despite which they had to pay the company for the property. This in combination with the run-down state of the operation caused the cooperative to fail by 1940 and the mine was abandoned to former workers and outsiders to salvage for a few years more (Bernstein, 1964: 201-211; Ramírez and León, 1985: 60-61). The abandonment and gradual decline of El Tigre are the setting for a major history presented in Chapter 5.

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Agua Prieta, though not a mine town itself, suffered a collapse in exports; at the same time the workers who commuted across the boundary to work in the Douglas smelters lost their jobs. In 1932 Agua Prieta shipped one-thirteenth of the exports of 1930; not only had copper greatly fallen, but a 1929 tariff effectively blocked cattle exports to the U.S. The Sonoran border ports did not recover until World War II. As for Cananea, unlike the other mines, it never completely closed shop; but more than half the labor force of 1,700 was laid-off between 1930 and 1932, as well as temporary construction laborers. The history of lay-offs at Cananea is closely connected to the union movement there, so the details are deferred until that section (Ramírez and León, 1985: 56-57, 59-62).

Small mining and prospecting grew in the 1930s for the obvious reason that many miners and repatriates were thrown about the state to scrape up a living. Some idea of the numbers of prospectors wandering about might be gathered from the 1940 gold rush at El Mezquite, in Cucurpe, where over 5,000 people came from all over the state (Sheridan, 1983: 218; interviews with Ramón Romero, Agua Prieta, 1984-1986). State and federal policies helped this sector: since 1931 the Mexican government had been accumulating gold reserves, thus inducing speculative gold buying; and first the state government of Rodolfo Calles and later the Cárdenas government put pressures on large mine companies to open up tunnels and ore-buying for small miners.

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World War II brought the reopening of mills of graphite, molybdenum, and tungsten. Small boomlets occurred throughout the post-war period, such as fluorite in Esqueda in the late 1940s, and manganese in Magdalena in the late 1950s, but at the same time medium sized mines exited other rural municipalities (U.S. mine companies had abandoned Cucurpe completely by the 1950s, according to Sheridan). Gold washers, tunnel scavengers, and minor mines of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s were very important as recourses after industrial mines closed, but these activities were short-lived, undercapitalized, and attuned to brief upsurges in metal prices (Bernstein, 1964: 182, 189; Ramírez and León, 1985: 62, 65-66, 127). Chapter 5 will examine small mining: its work arrangements, technology, economy, and place in life histories after the collapse of the grand industrial sector.

Phelps Dodge reopened Nacozari in 1937 with 1,500 men. Nacozari remained open for 12 years until it closed for good in 1949. An exodus similar to the first was organized: 1,500 workers were laid-off, indemnified, and given transportation out; up to 10,000 people exited, the entire town of Pilares de Nacozari was depopulated, and the houses were removed by the company. Other mines nearby--Santo Domingo and Churunibabi--also disappeared within a few years. The last echo of the collapse that began in 1929 was heard in 1965, when the railroad branch that ran from Agua Prieta to Nacozari was abandoned by the Southern Pacific to

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the Mexican government railroad; most of the 55 workers were retired with compensation.

Cananea, unlike Nacozari, remained in existence, but it stagnated until the 1980s as a source of employment. Cananea began the first steps of a new type of production in the early 1940s, when new concentrating methods and the start of open pit extraction of lower grade ore enabled total copper production to renew its increase, but with a declining labor force per unit of copper (Bernstein, 1964: 241; Chávez and Peña, 1985: 259; interview with Ruben Villa, Agua Prieta, February 28, 1986).

The collapse of the Sonoran mining industry in the early 1930s can be attributed to the depression, but the continuing decline was attributable to the policies of U.S. mining companies in Mexico. Bernstein found that Mexican copper companies achieved fewer benefits from falling costs and more efficient technology than they should have, since U.S. parent companies adhered to restrictive production levels of the U.S. copper export association. He noted that U.S. mining companies in Mexico were scared by the mine unions and the Cárdenas government's enforcement of labor laws, and especially by the show of power in the 1938 oil expropriation (despite the fact that Cárdenas deliberately protected mines from similar action demanded by the miners' union). In the good markets of World War II, mines did not expand, preferring to "salvage whatever they could." Bernstein concludes that in the post-revolution period, the

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Mexican mining industry did not significantly develop new zones or techniques--they lived off the developments from before 1910 (Bernstein, 1964: 77, 161, 184-185; the revamping of Cananea should be noted as an exception to this pattern).

The consequence of these political and economic decisions was the breakup of most of the concentrated populations of industrial miners in Sonora during the 1930s and 1940s. As we shall see, many of these people went to the border cities. In Chapter 5, I will examine people's memories of the shattering of a way of life, and ask how this experience cut them off from the class relations among miners. The surviving exception was Cananea, and there a curiously reversed process took place: the 1930s witnessed the rise of the miners' union, and more generally the consolidation of working class institutions.

A miners' union "Nueva Orientación" was formed in Cananea in 1930. The union grew in grounds cultivated by neighborhood "Grupos Culturales" which had spread Mexican versions of anarcho-syndicalist thought among the miners (a previous attempt at union-building in 1926 was undermined by the Cananea company which fired persons involved). The "Nueva Orientación" union was formed in response to the first layoffs of 1930; Cananea had proposed 585 layoffs, and "Nueva Orientación" forced the company instead to reorganize tasks and reduce days worked per month to 16. However, the company also fired union leaders, and it created a "white

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union." Again in cutbacks of 225 in December, 1931, "Nueva Orientación" forced the company to deal with labor officials to pay an indemnity (the company promised three months but only paid one) and promising first rehirings. In 1932, political manuevers at the level of the Sonoran governor (Rodolfo Calles) forced "Nueva Orientación" to merge with the "white union", forming the union "Martires de 1906", and the company finally signed a contract in July, 1932.

In 1934 a national miners' union (S.I.T.M.M.S.R.M.) was founded at Pachuca, Hidalgo, but it did not initially reach Sonora. In 1935, the Cananea union once again struck over employment policy--the company's failure to rehire laid-off workers instead of others--and the company was forced to sign a contract restoring workers and increasing wages. A national strike in 1936 offered the opportunity for the Cananea union to affiliate with the national miners' union. President Cárdenas offered to mediate in the strike, and when the mine companies refused his offer he acted in favor of the strikers to impose a closed-shop union. But in 1940, with the mine union pushing for the nationalization of mines, Cárdenas skillfully reversed his favors (and avoided another crisis with the U.S.) by forcing the miners' union to settle for wage increases. In this manner Cárdenas firmly entrenched union power in the mines, yet made the national union subservient to the political rulers of Mexico.

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In the analysis of Besserer, Díaz, and Santana, the union local "Section 65" in Cananea was riven by three splits: the first caused by the forced merger of the radical and company unions; the second between those oriented toward the rehiring of unemployed versus those oriented toward the improvement of the employed; and third between political "reds" who came from the 1930s radical Lombardista unionists and the Communist party, versus "whites" associated with the conservative post-Cárdenas governments, especially the Aleman government. Despite government interference with the national miner's union in the Aleman administration (1946-1952) Section 65 was relatively independent in the 1950s and 1960s. More recently, there have been serious confrontations between miners associated with the left PSUM party, and union bosses who control the Cananea municipal PRI (government party). (This material is summarized from Bernstein, 1964; Besserer, Díaz, and Santana, 1980; Besserer, Novelo, and Sariego, 1983; Peña and Chávez, 1985).

Because research has concentrated on Cananea, little is known about the labor movement at Nacozari or smaller mines. There was a union "Sindicato de Obreros de Pilares" affiliated with the CROM labor confederation in the 1920s, and like Cananea, this union was energized in 1930 by reductions in shifts and a blocked closure attempt in 1930. The struggle conducted in Pilares over indemnities owed in the 1931 shutdown is recounted above. However, in the very period when the Cananea labor movement consolidated itself,

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Nacozari was closed. In 1937, the reopened Nacozari, Pilares, and Santo Domingo mines became part of the national miners' union. El Tigre also operated as a section when it was a cooperative. Ultimately all these sections disappeared.

A different sort of labor movement occurred in 1930s Sonora, one based on unions of the unemployed (in various guises--unions of Oficios Varios (diverse trades), firewood cutters, prospectors, and Veterans of the Revolution--the marginal occupations that Sonorans resorted to in those years). At Cananea, the company used a deliberate strategy of lay-offs to cull those who would have to be paid silicosis indemnity. The unemployed formed a "Sindicato Nueva Orientación de Oficios Varios" allied with the then-radical ("Lombardista") CTM, which in the state of Sonora was waging a struggle against Governor Yocupicio.

Because of a persistent conflict with the Cananea Cattle Company over access by prospectors to gold placers and to timber by firewood gatherers, this union formed a major part of the struggle in the 1940s and 1950s to expropriate the Cananea ranches, becoming part of the Lombardista Union General de Obreros y Campesinos Mexicanos (UGOCM) union. Jacinto López of the UGOCM lead a campaign of squatter invasions in 1957-1958, brutally repressed several times, but culminating in forcing the expropriation of the ranches of the Cananea Cattle Company. However, the Department of Agricultural Reform punished the UGOCM by

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using lists from the rival CNC (Confederación Nacional Campesina) to assign ejido memberships (Peña and Chávez, 1985: 273-279). In the long run, the UGOCM concentrated its energies on the agro-industrial coast of Sonora (see Sanderson, 1981); and the labor movement of the unemployed, characteristic of the 1930s, faded as people moved into the booming border cities in the 1950s and 1960s.

Because the miners and repatriates were shipped into the Sonoran countryside it is important to learn about the economy of rural highland towns in the 1930s and beyond to interpret their activities during this period (Chapter 5). Unfortunately, there is very little published work on the agrarian reform in highland Sonora which would tell us how much room was opened in the countryside for returning repatriates and miners. Virtually every municipality in this area of Sonora has some ejido (see the list in Sanderson, 1981), many of them distributed in the 1930s and early 1940s. But the questions of adequacy for that period--quality of land and water, numbers of persons inscribed, etc.--are unresearched, let alone a study of agrarian politics and the potential involvement of repatriates and unemployed copper miners.

Some ideas may be garnered from the case of the 1935 ejido of Banamichi cited by Sanderson (1981: 81-82), in which 103 persons were included and 74 left out of a grant with 216 hectares of irrigated fields. In nearby Huepac, Hewes (in 1931) reported that the agraristas had 378 acres

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of land irrigated with incomplete river flow (he does not report the number of persons involved but they had about three hectares of land apiece; 1935: 288).

Histories of the upper Rio Sonora valley indicate that haciendas that owned great chunks of the irrigated river bottom were already breaking up or being invaded by the late revolution, and essentially disappeared in the 1930s (Hewes, 1935; Simonelli, 1985; Valencia, 1986). Simonelli's research on Baviacora indicated that sharecropping contracts were replaced by petitions for small parcels, but Owen (1959) found sharecropping in "Marobavi" in the Rio San Miguel. During the 1930s Simonelli found that in Baviacora only two men were producing cattle and three growing corn and beans to sell. Growers took wheat to be milled in exchange for a share--and how much I do not know--and the rest went for food. Likewise Hewes found that in the 1930s Huepac was feeding itself and selling a little cheese and dried meat to Cananea and Nacozari (1935: 292). Thus there appears to have been little in the way of a cash economy in the 1930s highland villages.

Upland cattle ranches do not seem to have been broken up in the same manner as river bottom lands. Cattle are the main way to earn cash in highland Sonora, by selling cheese and calves. Thus persisting or worsening inequalities in pasture (documented by Sheridan for Cucurpe, 1983) causes over-grazing in the community pastures and insufficient access to the main source of cash income (causing

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malnutrition, Baer, 1984). There is next to nothing known about peasant access to the cattle-cash segment in the 1930s; commercial export of cattle to the U.S. was nil in the early 1930s, yet it surged in the late 1930s. However, in 1947 the U.S. imposed a ban on live cattle imports from Mexico because of hoof and mouth disease (not present in Sonora), and passage of cattle was definitely restored only in 1954 (Machado, 1981).

The other small source of cash in highland villages was the sale of wheat surpluses to the flour mills spread throughout the region. Though this process has not been written about, interviews with observant Dolores Molina (Agua Prieta, October 20, 1985) indicate that during the 1950s to the 1970s, flour mills stopped buying from peasants and opted for cheaper wheat mass-produced on the giant agro-industrial farms of the coast.

## Population Shift to the Border

During the 1940-1970 period, the families dealt with in Chapter 5 headed from older industrial locations to Agua Prieta. This was part of a shift of population in the state out of the interior towns to the coastal and border cities. Partial proof of this shift comes from Margarita Nolasco's study (1979) of net inter-municipal migration in the decade 1960-1970. Of 69 Sonora municipalities, only 9 attracted immigration--all but one, San Pedro de la Cueva[14], on the coast. Four had an equilibrium: Agua Prieta and Nogales

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(border ports), Villa Hidalgo in the highlands, and Etchojoa on the coast. Fifty six municipalities, including all but two of the rural highland ones, were net out-migrant sources.[15] Besides rural out-migration, the data shows net mine center out-migration of 6,679 persons from Cananea and 1,441 from already de-populated Nacozari de Garcia.

Agua Prieta's municipal population[16] had stagnated from 1930 (6,677) to 1940 (6,552); despite the repatriation through this border port, the loss of jobs in the Douglas smelter and the export sector apparently meant that few stayed on the border. However, the population surged from 1940 (6,552) to 1950 (13,121) and 1960 (17, 248). These decades were prosperous ones for the border: the commerce with soldiers at nearby Fort Huachuca in World War II, the Bracero Program (1942-1965), and the meat-packing plant built in Agua Prieta (1947-1954) to compensate for the cattle export ban of those years. The decade of the 1940s in particular, when the total population doubled, was the time when repatriated families came to the border from their refuge in the interior and former miners from Nacozari and El Tigre arrived in their search for employment.

Nolasco's data show little net immigration to Agua Prieta and Nogales from 1960 to 1970.[17] Agua Prieta grew from 17,248 to 23,272 persons during this decade, growth more than accounted for by natural increase. Nolasco appears to have sampled an unusually slow decade of Agua Prieta growth. The population surged again in the decade of

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the 1970s, from 23,272 in 1970 to 32,691 in 1980 (all figures from Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía, e Informática, 1984: Cuadro 2.1.1).

## Post-World War Two Immigration to the U.S.

In the analysis of family relocation to the border one of the key processes involved is men's work in the U.S. as contract laborers (braceros) or as legal immigrants. The U.S. side of the border, which had been expelling people, in the 1940s came to attract them once more. During the Second World War designated key war industries, such as the Douglas smelter and the Bisbee mine, which lost workers to the service were allowed to certify potential employees for immigration from Mexico. There was no numerical limit on immigration from Western Hemisphere nations until 1965, but potential immigrants had to demonstrate that they had work or support in the U.S., or they would be blocked as "likely public charges". This was the permanent side of post-war immigration.

A temporary labor contract program, the Bracero program, was more important. It was begun in 1942 as a wartime labor program, and continued for twenty three years until opponents finally killed it in 1965. Importation of Bracero workers was substantial in the post-war years: from 1946 to 1948, the annual numbers contracted ranged between 20,000 and 30,000, in 1951 to 1954 in the 200,000 area, and in the 1956-1960 half decade, over 400,000 each year,

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tapering off until 1965 (Portes and Bach, 1985: 63). By design, the Bracero program brought persons to the U.S. as units of labor but forbade them from joining human communities (Galarza, 1964); from the perspective of understanding the people of Sonora, the Bracero program offered men a livelihood in the aftermath of the collapse of the mines, and initially (prior to 1952) contracting directly at the border favored settlement in Mexican border towns, while preventing people from continuing the movement on to the U.S..

Contract labor existed side by side with extra-legal immigration, and after the legal program was terminated, employers relied on undocumented workers (Kiser and Kiser, 1979: 69). By its nature, we cannot easily say what numbers of undocumented aliens successfully slip into the U.S., but it is an important phenomenon in Mexican wage work and life histories. Studies of apprehended entrants show the most common one to be a young male, 22 to 32 years old; that their trip was short (about six months); and that they had made more than one cycle (the mean was 4.5; Portes and Bach, 1985: 61, 127). This is a picture of temporary labor migration to earn money for themselves and others in Mexico; the sum of remittances to Mexico is unknown but it by necessity is substantial. Again we must consider the context of these numbers: the INS tends to apprehend people crossing the border or in male workplaces like construction sites and agricultural fields, rather than female workplaces

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like homes and small factories, so that these numbers may hide the women and the portion that lives in the U.S. permanently rather than periodically crossing the border to work (Weintraub and Ross, 1979: 12, 16).

The 1986 Immigration Control and Reform Act (the Simpson-Mazzoli bill) has three principal elements: penalties to employers for knowingly hiring undocumented aliens; amnesty for those who can prove continuous residence since 1981; and an agricultural worker importation program that will allow up to 350,000 laborers in, with the ability in law to formalize their immigrant status. At the present, reports from the border indicate that the law is discouraging undocumented crossers since the law has been widely publicized and feared in Mexico. However, it is not possible to know what the long term effects, if any, of the law will be.

But the passage of the Immigration Act has turned attention away from a more persistent and insidious process of imposing greater force over the border. The Reagan administration has announced a $266 million border control plan, ostensibly to restrict the flow of drugs, calling for 189 more customs officers, 75 FBI inspectors, in addition to the current Border Patrol of 3,300, over $100 million in equipment, including 4 E-2C radar planes, 5 balloons, and 2 C-130's with sensory equipment (the reporter was not allowed to be more specific on these), all tied to a command control center in El Paso (New York Times, August 14, 1986: 1, 6).

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Already Vietnam era technologies such as infra-red night vision, electronic motion sensors, and camera surveillance are in use along sections of the border, such as south of San Diego, with heavy human (as opposed to drug) traffic (New York Times, June 26, 1986: 1).

The glare of publicity about illegal immigration has obscured the steady flow of legal immigration across the border. Though legal immigrants are many fewer than undocumented ones, anyone who knows the border knows how important legal immigration is in the lives of these communities (Chapter 6). Portes and Bach describe the situation as within a large flow of undocumented migration there is carried in a legal immigrant population; their evidence shows that most current legal immigrants are former undocumented entrants who manage to regularize their situation (1985: 65).

In 1965 immigration quotas were reformed and applied to Western Hemisphere nations so that Mexico was restricted to 20,000 slots. Certain close kin can come free of the quota (see Chapter 6); altogether between 50,000 and 100,000 arrived annually in the 1970s (Portes and Bach, 1985: 79). Portes and Bach's study of legal immigrants found that Mexican immigrants are almost entirely wage workers for private firms; their level is predominantly labor, not supervisor; their employers were predominantly Anglo Americans, while their co-workers tended to be Mexican Americans, and their mean monthly wage in 1979 was $906 a

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month, low by U.S. standards but far better than Mexican border standards (1985: 183-190).

Another group of local importance on the border are the commuters, so-called "Green Card" workers, who can live in Mexico but work legally in the U.S. as long as they recertify their employment every six months. It is estimated that 250,000 persons in Mexican border cities directly depend on the earnings of commuters (Kiser and Kiser, 1979: 215), since their earnings are in dollars they have a disproportionate value on the border. This income enables a form of border balance household in Agua Prieta analyzed in Chapter 5.

I contend that the border since 1929 has been characterized by chronologically increasing application--not necessarily increasing success--of "control" to human movement.[18] Chapter 6 deals with the patterns of both legal and extra-legal immigration using kinship analysis, and it emphasizes the distinctive nature of immigration for Mexican border communities. Understanding border history from the perspective of "control" enables us to interpret different immigration crossing strategies. Chapter 7 considers the border as a power domain over Mexican border residents' lives.

## The Maquiladora Period

In Agua Prieta, the period since 1967 has been characterized by a new industrial formation, the border

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assembly plants, with a distinctive, mostly female work force. The complicated relationships among women and men, and young industrial workers and older generations is covered in Chapter 6. The historical context for the ethnography in that chapter is the chronology of factory employment in Agua Prieta, especially the expansion beginning with the August, 1982 devaluation.

The Border Industrialization Program (BIP), also known by the Spanish term for the factories, maquiladoras, was begun in 1966. In the maquiladoras parts and items, usually brought from the U.S., are assembled by Mexican workers, by hand or with simple machinery, for "export" to the U.S.. In other words, the purpose of the maquiladora is to obtain inexpensive labor for the labor-intensive steps of manufacturing. The BIP established the border as a zone with special privileges for foreign, mostly U.S., companies--tariff free, in-bond importation of parts and equipment, control of land within the constitutionally forbidden border strip, 100 percent foreign ownership, and frequently state tax exemptions. Though not per se part of the BIP, the process is facilitated by two loopholes in the U.S. tariff code that enable the shipping out of parts for partial assembly outside the U.S., and their return with tariffs charged on only "value added" (labor costs and other local expenses) not the total import value (more detail on the history and provisions of the BIP can be found in Fernández-Kelly, 1983: Chapter 2).

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The maquiladoras have grown since 1966 to the point that they are today the most important employment sector in Agua Prieta. However, their employment growth has been markedly erratic, with sudden bouts of unemployment. The first plant located in Agua Prieta, as far as I could determine, was an unofficial ("pirate") maquiladora, Swan Mexicana, in 1967. The first legal plant, Dickson Mexicana, was begun in 1968. In 1969, the state of Sonora Law 49 of Fomento Industrial (industrial development) offered 10 year tax breaks and funds to build industrial parks (Ramírez, Conde, and León, 1985: 213). By 1970, there were 12 plants with 800 employees in Agua Prieta, and steady growth continued until the first half of 1974 (20 factories with, at most 4,000 workers).

In the second half of 1974 a downturn in the U.S. brought a terrible collapse in Mexico's BIP (Pena, 1980). From June to December, 1974, over 1,000 workers were laid-off in Agua Prieta, and in early 1975 232 more were laid-off by Agua Prieta's then most important factory, Equipo Automotriz. More than three years passed before the 4,000 employee level was recovered. As of 1980, maquiladora employment of 4,554 was 38 percent of the officially counted labor force in the census--a huge proportion, though the census labor force is not a reliable figure (Secretaría de Programación y Presupuesto, 1983). That level was sustained until June, 1982, when a slumping U.S. automotive industry

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brought lay-offs to Agua Prieta's seat-belt and tire-iron sector and brought employment down to 2,978.

The continual devaluation of the peso which began in August, 1982, has reduced the dollar cost of maquiladora wages by roughly 60 percent.[19] Since that date, U.S. companies have increased their utilization of inexpensive Mexican labor. In 1985, maquiladora employment in Agua Prieta was 5,792--that is, it had increased roughly 2,800 since June 1982. Expansion was continuing in 1986, even as I finished my field research. Telson, S.A., a subsidiary of Zenith, which already was the largest operation in Agua Prieta, employed 1,200 in four factories and a warehouse in 1986, up 400 from 1985. Two new factories had arrived from the U.S.: Bendix Safety Restraints, a seat-belt subsidiary of the Allied Signal Company, which hired 345 workers, and Velcro-Mex, with 170 employed.[20]

The Agua Prieta maquiladora workforce is characteristically young and female. In Seligson and Williams' sample of Agua Prieta maquiladoras, 80 percent were women and 20 percent men; of both men and women, 33.5 percent were 15 to 19 years of age and 30 percent were 20 to 24; thus almost 64 percent were between 15 and 24, and 86 percent were below the age of 30. Over 90 percent of the teenaged workers were women. Among the women, 63 percent were single and 16 percent were widowed, divorced, or separated, while 20 percent were married (figures are rounded). Men were somewhat older and much more likely to

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be married (56 percent), while 40 percent were single, and strikingly, only 4 percent reported as widowed, divorced, or separated (Seligson and Williams, 1981: 30-36). Seligson and Williams failed to publish data which describes the wages and job position of workers, but data presented in Chapter 6 indicates that virtually all women were operatives who earned the minimum wage while men were more diverse in position and pay.

The copper economy in northern Sonora has also returned to vigor in the 1980s. Major investments have been made in Cananea and in a new development in the Nacozari area, La Caridad. Both are highly capitalized, low labor ratio open pit mine-mill-smelter complexes. La Caridad in particular has a close relationship with Agua Prieta, as Nacozari has always had. Many men work during weeks in La Caridad and commute to homes in Agua Prieta on weekends. La Caridad was the scene of very bitterly repressed strikes in 1978-1979 by the contract construction labor force (documented in Besserer, Gonzalez, and Rosales, 1979). In contrast, Douglas, Arizona lost its long-time smelter in 1987, for lack of any pollution controls, and after a very bitter national strike starting in 1983 against Phelps Dodge.

## Real Wages and Devaluations

Because working people use cash to buy most of the items of their lives, the history of the real wage is essential to interpreting the rhythms of family histories.

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A history of real wages and purchasing power is intimately related (on the border) with the peso/dollar exchange rates. Continual devaluation of the Mexican peso against the dollar and severe loss of consumer purchasing power formed the context for my field research from 1984 to 1986.

The first devaluation crisis in Mexico occurred as long ago as 1905, when the peso fell from parity to two to one for the dollar, bringing hidden inflation to the fore and sharply reducing the purchasing power of wages which had been rising during the boom of mines and railroads in the Porfiriato (Bernstein, 1964: 29). Oscar J. Martinez' description of the effect of this on the border has eerie echoes in the present. He found that the Mexican side of the border was badly disrupted due to its close ties with the U.S. economy and almost complete lack of supplies from the Mexican economy (Martinez, 1977: 2); it was one of the direct antecedents, in conjunction with the return of immigrants from the U.S. during the metal mining depression of 1907, of the Mexican Revolution of 1910 (Katz, 1975).

Though real wage figures do not exist before the 1930s, anecdotal evidence indicates that during the 1910s and the 1920s, high prices for imported corn kept purchasing power low (Cardoso, 1980: 42, 73, 87). The next set of major devaluations occurred in the 1930s, when the peso slipped from 2 to 1, to 4.85 to 1 in 1941. It was held there until 1947. In the Cárdenas presidency of the 1930s, however, a concerted effort was made to push up wages. According to

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the unweighted average real minimum wage index (1978 = 100) constructed by Peter Gregory (1986: Chapter 7),[21] the government set the wage in 1934-1935 at a peak for the period of 53.2.

In terms of how this national policy affected Sonorans, we must realize that in the 1930s, miners' union power was driving wages up through 1940, but that this benefitted only those who were still employed, mainly at Cananea, while most Sonorans were laid-off or repatriated. A study in 1938 found that miners in Mexico earned double the legal minimum in agriculture, and 50 percent more than the industrial minimum, and Bernstein concludes that miners' real wages hit their peak in 1940 and fell rapidly to inflation thereafter (1964: 198).

The post-Cardenas governments deliberately forced the real wage to decline severely. For instance, in 1944 miners who went on strike to recoup 90 percent inflation between 1939 and 1944 were pressed by President Avila Camacho to accept a 10 to 12.5 percent increase (Bernstein, 1964: 229). From 53.2 in 1935, Gregory's real wage index declined until 1946-1947, when the it hit bottom at 27.9--a fall of 48 percent in real purchasing power. In 1948, the peso was devalued from 4.85 to 8.65, and in 1953 to 12.5 (Martinez, 1977). The bottoming-out of the real wage in 1947, and the injurious devaluations of the peso, mark an era that coincides with the closing of Nacozari, a flood of new

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migrants to Agua Prieta, and the beginning of a new phase of life for many northeast Sonorans.

From the bottom in 1947 to the crisis of 1976, the families who had come to the Agua Prieta constructed their new lives in a long period of rising real wages and a stable peso (12.5 to 1) which benefitted border consumers. This process is the principal subject of Chapter 5. By 1964 the real wage of thirty years before (54.9) had been recovered, and from 1965-1966 to 1977-1978 there was a 60 percent rise in the value of the minimum wage. Certain standards of decent life were established in the Agua Prieta working families, standards which would come under severe threat in the following years.

In 1976, the first sounds of chronic crisis were heard in the political struggles of the end of the Echeverría term, and in the first devaluation in over twenty years. The peso was halved, going from 12.5 to a dollar to 23 to the dollar, the level around which it hovered for six years until February, 1982. Gregory's index of real minimum wages peaked in 1978 at 100.00, and it was somewhat eroded by growing inflation so that it was worth 87.3 in January, 1982. However, the sense of prosperity among border Mexicans--and Americans who sold to them--was heightened by the artificial boom created by President López Portillo and his conspirators, the global banks.

That bubble burst in 1982, when the peso was devalued, first from 24 to 48 in January, then free-falling

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speculatively, approaching 200 in August and September. This brought a severe decline in the real wage index to 67.2 in June, 1983, two-thirds of what it had been in 1978. The slashing of the real wage has been brought about not only by uncontrolled inflation, but also by a deliberately conceived process: setting increases in the minimum wage and contract wages at a ceiling considerably below the official estimate for coming inflation, which, anyway, is often underestimated for public relations purposes (Bortz, 1986: 41-42).

Gregory finished his calculations with 1983, but we know that over-100 percent annual inflation has worsened the real wage since then. Detailed and ethnographically appropriate data on declines in household purchasing power in Agua Prieta between 1982 and 1986 is presented in Chapter 6. Let us examine what the real wage index number "67.2" for 1983 means. The real wage has been pushed back below the level of 1966-1967 (70.3), approaching the level of 1934-1935 (53.2), and indeed, with declines since mid-1983, we can be sure that the level of the 1930s has been reached. The standards of decent living built up in the decades of prosperity along the border have been suddenly, visibly eliminated.

In September, 1984, the peso was below 200 to the dollar; it had fallen, by leaps and bounds, to 500 to the dollar by May, 1986, and fell below 1000 within another month. The devaluations demonstrate that Mexico's debt crisis of 1982 reverberates. It is not possible here to

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deal with the politics and economics of the crisis in general (see Cornelius, 1986). But it is very important for the study of Agua Prieta in the maquiladora era to understand the specific role of the border region in the reshaping of Mexico's economy.

In order to make bank payments on the loan interest, Mexico must become a net exporter with a current account surplus to fund the real capital deficit. This was expressed by John H. Makin of the American Enterprise Institute (and note his tone of doubt about its success): "Put bluntly, the idea is to put more money into Mexico, part of it provided by the commercial banks, on the condition, or hope, that Mexico transforms itself into an economy more like Korea. That would be nice, but to count on it may not be prudent" (New York Times, May 22, 1987: D2).

The maquiladora program is a keystone in this strategy. The devaluation of the peso cheapens local labor costs and therefore encourages U.S. companies (and also the Japanese) to enter or expand their "off-shore" manufacturing in Mexico. John Taylor, a spokesman for Zenith, described in an unusually frank manner the benefit his company obtained in the devaluation of 1982-1983: "It is common knowledge that Zenith suffered a net loss of $21.8 million last year. We had a turnaround the first half of this year. We benefitted significantly by the devaluation of the Mexican peso" (Arizona Daily Star, September 25, 1983: A20). In

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1983, Zenith started its first plant in Agua Prieta, and today it is the largest employer there by far. Zenith is the largest U.S. employer in Mexico with 18,000 maquiladora employees (Multinational Monitor, February, 1987: 6).

Therefore the context of my 1984-1986 Agua Prieta fieldwork was an odd "boom" in which factory employment was growing substantially, but real wages, and thus household economies, were hurting badly. My argument, presented in Chapter 6, is that in this context key segments of the labor force are increasing their involvement in wage labor. A crisis of this type--much work but little money--contrasts with the previous crises of the 1930s and 1940s, in which the basic problem was massive industrial unemployment (and the present border crisis also contrasts with the Mexican interior where employment contraction is being forced by shrinking domestic markets and closed state industries).

## Conclusion

Since 1886, the area of Sonora around Agua Prieta has changed from a frontier with the Apaches to a border zone tied into the U.S. economy. Access to rural livelihoods was made more difficult by the competition over resources beginning in the Porfiriato. The industrial working class first emerged in copper mines in Sonora and migratory wage labor in the U.S. side. Although the mine working class solidified after the turn of the century, it was broken-up by massive closures in the 1930s and 1940s. Combined with

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extensive repatriations from the U.S., this brought a process of transformation and resettlement on the border. Bracero and other forms of labor in the U.S. were important in this era. Beginning in the late 1960s, and gaining size in the 1970s and the devaluation-racked 1980s, a new form of working class is emerging within the border assembly plants, the maquiladoras.

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1. Here I will try to avoid the teleology that all processes aim to create a working class, since a history of the Jesuits, for example, would note that they both introduced European labor patterns, and yet erected the protective bulwark of village land control. Rather than a process of long class formation, it is better thought of as part of the violent alteration of the world on the European model which set the conditions into which nineteenth and twentieth century American and Europeans planted their industries.

2. The erosion of community land tenures still is not complete in the 1980s.

3. In this context, the Opata village formed a powerful military unit, yet when peace came, this organization seemingly evaporated--research is yet to be done on this question.

4. Antonio Quijada has done especially interesting research on Opata village grievances that resulted in local violent protests in the early Mexican republic (1985: 67-69).

5. Park (1961) provides an important discussion of the differentiation of Arizona into regions of labor and ethnic relations, from the more exclusionary central valleys to the heavily Mexican immigrant southeast, and he describes how Mexican labor was selected out from other options, including Indians and Chinese (also see Sheridan). Ernesto Galarza's analysis of farm labor in California (1964: Chapter 4) is still the fundamental text to understanding how Mexican immigrant labor came to predominate in the U.S. west, for he shows how successive immigrant groups--Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, American Blacks, Anglo dustbowlers--were utilized and how immigration struggles, supplies limited to economic crises, etc. brought about reliance on Mexican labor over the long run.

6. Furthermore, as Park noted, in the "dual wage" system, there was little distinction offered for legal citizenship, so immigrant Mexicans and hispanic Arizonans were put in the same status, whatever they felt.

7. Mario Garcia (1981) presents an excellent description of the different types of labor recruitment in El Paso. Less is known about the Arizona-Sonora section of the border; I suspect from oral history that immigration from the nearby region of Sonora required relatively little organized recruitment while the main concentration of such activities would have been located at Nogales, Arizona, the railhead for the west coast trunk line that drained deeper into the interior (see Peterson, 1975).

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8. Numbers of immigrants from Mexico were not tallied until 1910, and poorly counted before 1924; Juan Gomez-Quinonez (1979) makes a convincing case that immigration from Mexico through out the second half of the nineteenth century and up to 1910 was greater than is usually accounted.

9. Even after the mine was separated from Greene's family, his cattle estate cooperated in providing these supplies to the company.

10. I have not been able to find out how much Phelps Dodge invested in Nacozari or elsewhere.

11. Nestor Corella of Douglas recalled that his father, who worked in a Douglas smelter and before that in the Cananea smelter, was recruited by Juan Cabral in Pirtleville, and in the course of the revolution ended up by becoming a captain in Calles' forces and later head of the rurales in Agua Prieta. His father, Mr. Corella stated, came from the line of Rafael Corella, mid-nineteenth military leader in the Rio Sonora valley.

12. The Spanish flu was responsible for deaths of key persons in several family histories I collected.

13. Jeffrey reports that C & A workers with over 25 years tenure (that is, hired before 1906) received $1,800 in retirement compensation but he does not specify how many were paid or what happened to those who had fewer years at work there.

14. A dam that flooded two neighboring communities probably explains this exception.

15. Unfortunately, because a page was missing from my copy of the book, I could not calculate the total net out-migration.

16. Agua Prieta city's population has always been around 2,000 to 2,500 less than the municipal population, so it is reasonable to use the latter to represent changes in the former. The censused rural population in 1980 shot up to 5,202 in 1980, but I believe that this is an artifact of counting urban neighborhoods on ejido lands as part of the ejido.

17. Net loss in Agua Prieta, 332 persons; net loss in Nogales, 942 persons.

18. It is not appropriate here to prove this argument at length, but some evidence can be ascertained if we take border apprehension statistics as data about the rising tempo of the application of control rather than as indicators of numbers of unapprehended crossers. In 1946 to

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1949, the annual figures were in the 100,000's; from 1950 to 1952, in the 500,000's; in 1953, 886,000; and in 1954 over 1,000,000. It was in 1953 and especially 1954 that the border was subject to a planned interdiction when the Border Patrol was militarized under General Swing. Yet within another year, 1956, apprehensions had fallen to 88,000 and they were to remain below 100,000 through 1964. The economic history of the booming U.S. west gives us no reason to believe that demand fell so precipitously, so I argue that the alternations in the numbers reflect swings in the policy of control. Beginning with President Nixon, and carried through by Presidents Carter and Reagan, explicit border enforcement has been the policy, and the statistics have moved correspondingly: in the late 1960s, the numbers range between 100,000 and 200,000, going to 345,000 in 1970, and by 1972, half a million. Continuing a steady rise in the 1970s, apprehensions went over one million in 1977, and reached 1.2 million in fiscal 1985 (the numbers are taken from Portes and Bach, 1985: 63; and the Arizona Daily Star, October 11, 1985: 5A).

19. According to the Twin Plant News (January, 1986: 12), the cost in dollars at the controlled exchange rate of workers' hourly pay and all benefits, in Ciudad Juarez, was 1.5328 dollars an hour in January-October, 1982, and .6526 dollars in January, 1986. The latter is forty two percent of the former. The total cost figure the factories use should not be confused with the smaller cash paycheck of the individual worker, since the factories include legally mandatory contributions to Seguro Social, and numerous other such paid benefits.

20. Employment figures were collected with the kind help of Ignacio Romero, the labor inspector in Agua Prieta, and from Ladman and Poulson, 1972; Seligson and Williams, 1981; Greenberg, n.d.; and the Arizona Daily Star (Tucson), June 20, 1982: B1-2; February 19, 1985: Section 4; February 25, 1986: Section H.

21. Of course there are any number of limitations to this index--it had to be deflated with data for Mexico City which may differ greatly at times from the border; the minimum wage is not necessarily the real paid wages, either above or below, etc.--but it is useful as an indicator of change over time and it is better than nothing.

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# CHAPTER 3

# THE FORMATIVE WORKING CLASS IN THE MINE PERIOD, 1886-1949

The formative period of the industrial working population began with the first generation to enter employment in the copper mines and railroads; the Hernández family provides one history of a passage from a Northeastern Sonoran village to wage work. After the Hernández history, we will consider in more general terms the emergence of an impersonal wage labor market in the region, and manners in which persons moved from rural Sonora into labor markets. The Aguirre family history, which follows, offers the chance to explore the emergence of full-time, wage-earning miners through several generations. By the 1920s, the Aguirre families were part of the consolidated mine working class, and their kinship is used to explore the social organization of the mine towns and mine work. An additional dimension of the consolidated mine working class was its spread across the international boundary, examined in the movements of the Samaniego family. The chapter closes with an examination of the patterns of insecurity--death, occupational illness, and lack of pensions--which undermined the uniformity of the male working force.

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## The Hernández Family History: Entry to the Working Population

The Hernández story is of great interest, for it shows how land conflict in Pivipa, a small farm settlement, lead Guadalupe Hernández to enter the mine work force at Pilares de Nacozari, and how he fought in the revolution to recover Pivipa's land. This is a case-study of the formation of the Sonoran working class, and of the role of a first-generation worker in the Mexican Revolution. This case shows that an industrial worker fought under an elite commander for peasant goals. This history has been assembled from the recollections of Guadalupe's sons, José and Antonio Hernández; documents describing Guadalupe's role in the revolution written later by his commanding officers for a legal case, and now in the possession of José; a corroborating identification of Guadalupe's political connection to Calles in Horton (1969); and background on Pivipa's land struggles and Opata origins cited below.

José said that his great-grandfather (FaFaFa), a teamster who drove a mulecart between Moctezuma and Hermosillo, spoke only Opata, no Spanish. In turn, José claimed that his grandfather, the father of Guadalupe, spoke Opata and Spanish but he refused to pass on the Indian language or customs. This man was labeled an agricultor (frequently used in genealogies to indicate a peasant with some manner of access to workable land) in the small outlying village of Pivipa, in the municipality of

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Moctezuma. José later worked his father's share of this land after it was restored, so this information may be reliable.

Though these items should be regarded as family legends, Hinton's map (1959) does show Pivipa and its neighbor San Clemente de Terapa as having a strong remaining presence of Opata culture, so José's description of his ancestors may well be accurate. Unfortunately, they did not know any of the dates of birth or death of these grandparents, but José, the oldest of the Hernández siblings, was born in 1908, so my guess is that his great-grandfather lived in the mid-nineteenth century, and his grandfather in the second half of the nineteenth century.

When we first encounter him, Guadalupe Hernández was a miner at the Pilares de Nacozari mine. Two brothers (José and Antonio's uncles) were miners in Pilares. A brother, two sisters, and the widow of a brother (one of the miners) went to California or Arizona, and the descendants of the siblings in the U.S. were lost track of. The oldest brother became an officer in the Mexican army (see Chart 1). When this generation left Pivipa (at a date I can only roughly approximate around 1900) they formed two separated branches, both in formative working class patterns--mines and immigration to the U.S. What had happened in Pivipa that caused them to leave?

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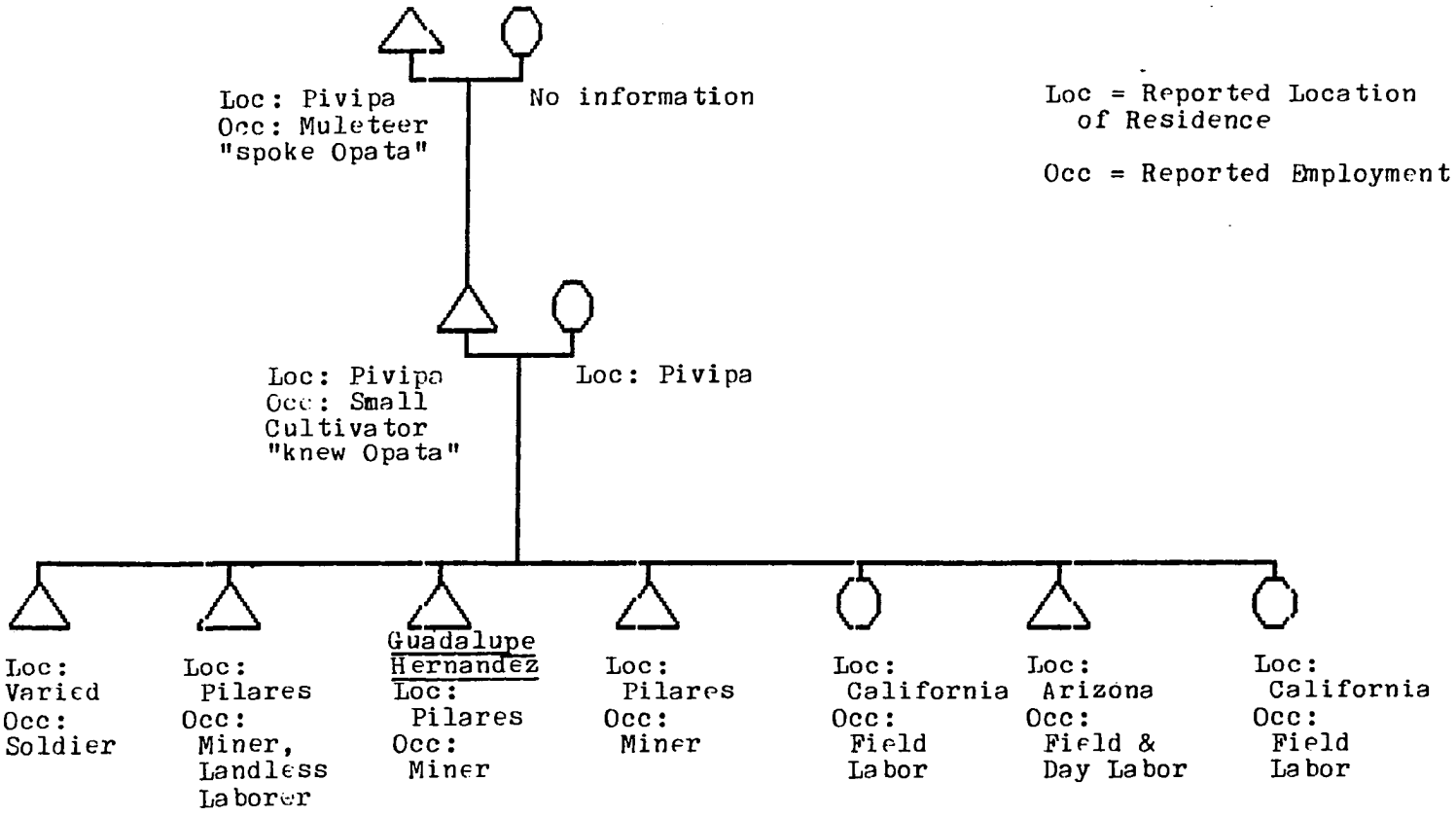


CHART 1: HERNANDEZ FAMILY, FORMATIVE WORKING CLASS

In 1883 there occurred a lawsuit over the lands of Pivipa between the residents of Pivipa lead by Guadalupe Velarde, versus Genaro Teran and his mother Dolores Villaescusa of Moctezuma. The judge in Moctezuma ruled in favor of Teran, but the villagers refused to leave the land. When public force was sent to remove the landholders, thirty of them formed an armed fort at a place called Churivari. Governor Luis Torres sent state troops to bring Velarde and his band to Hermosillo, where they were released after a promise to desist from the struggle for the land. Of course they did not comply. After further legal appeals, Velarde again dispossessed the landlord Teran of the land. After suits and injunctions had reached the Supreme Court, Governor Torres was permitted to capture Velarde by force. But Velarde had raised a small army of 100 men, and they had taken to the mountains in "open rebellion" to use the phrase of Eduardo Villa, the great historian of Sonora.

In January 1886, the 10th state regiment and some attachments of federal troops were sent after Velarde and the neighbors of Pivipa. In June they killed the prefect of the district, Jose Maria Torres, the brother of Governor Torres. Finally, in October, Velarde was captured and executed. Political opponents of the Porfirian Governor started a newspaper in Guaymas called "The Shadow of Velarde." (This account is taken from Villa, 1984: 365-366.) The land remained alienated from the residents of

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Pivipa and San Clemente de Terapa until after the revolution.

José and Antonio's mother, María, was born in Ocampo, Chihuahua, a "mineral" (mine town), but she lived and married in Pilares de Nacozari. Her mother and father (José and Antonio's MoFa and MoMo; see Chart 2) apparently came from Madera, Chihuahua, an active mine town in close communication with Sahuaripa, Sonora. Her father was described as a peón (laborer) not a miner. María's parents were traveling to Sonora when her father drowned crossing a river (a normally half-dry river will become an unfordable torrent during Sonora's summer rains). María's mother brought her children, by then probably grown youths, to Pilares where they supported the family by working in the huge mines. These moves would have to have dated before 1908, when José was born in Pilares. María's two (unmarried) brothers were miners and she and both sisters married mineworkers.[1]

Guadalupe was a hoistman in the Pilares de Nacozari mine--he drove the elevator that raised and lowered men into the mine. This was a highly responsible position in the work hierarchy, and the general manager of Pilares, Frank Horton, treated Guadalupe as a personally valued employee, almost in the manner of a patron. (Evidence of this can be found in the description of Guadalupe in Inez Horton's Copper's Children (1968), written by the manager's wife.) They lived in a "large" company house--a good house because

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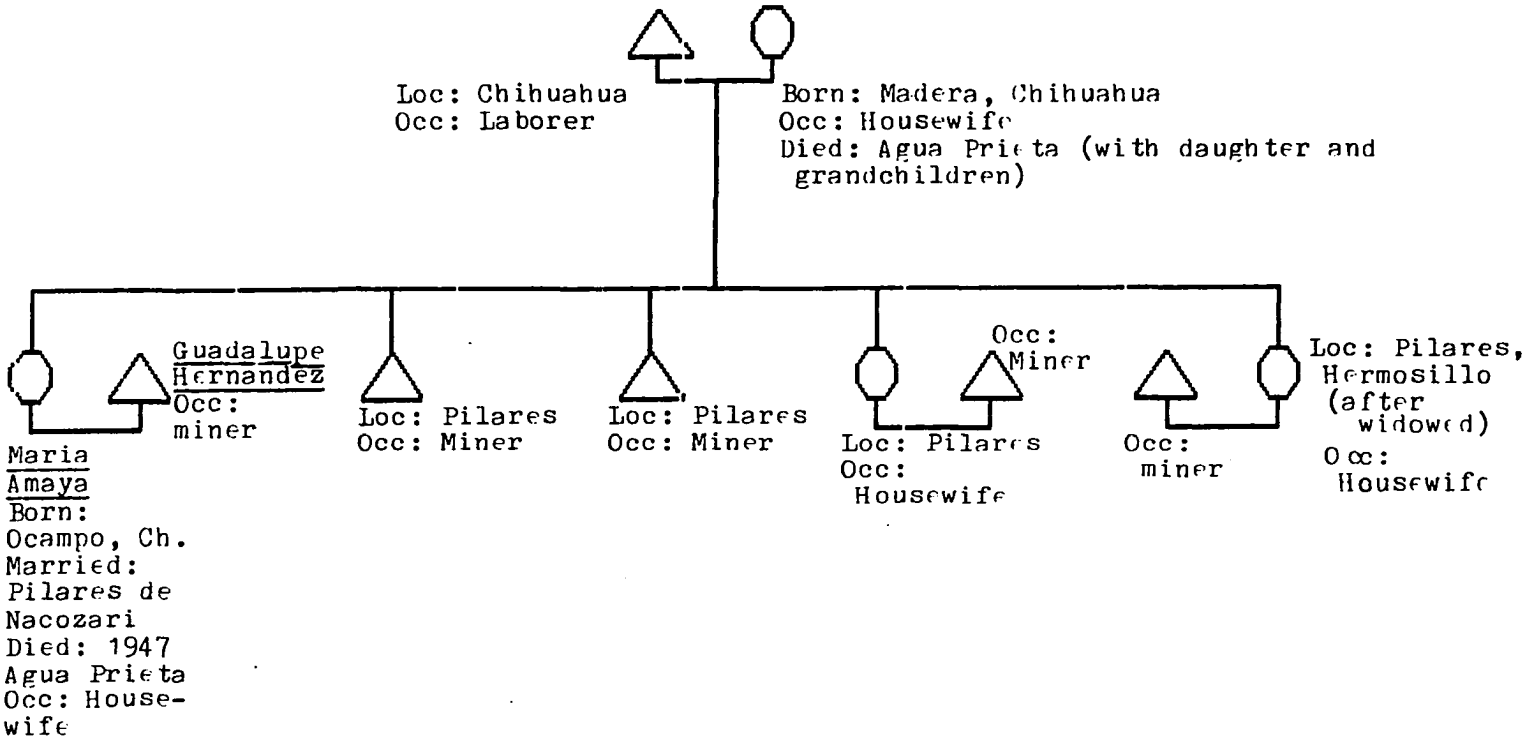


Loc = Reported Residence
Occ = Reported Employment

CHART 2: AMAYA FAMILY, FORMATIVE WORKING CLASS

of the level of his job with the company--with water and electricity. However, Guadalupe Pilares left to farm in Pivipa in 1924, before any of his sons had begun to work in the mines. How did it come about that he returned to his father's village, Pivipa?

Guadalupe began his career as a soldier in the revolution in 1913--the year of the rebellion against Madero's killer, Huerta--but details about his activities are absent prior to 1914. In September 5, 1914, he joined the guerrilla of Abraham Fraujo in Pilares de Nacozari. He fought in the October battle at Naco, Sonora, under General Benjamin Hill of the "Constitutionalist" side. In November he was commissioned by General Hill to recruit soldiers in the mine towns Nacozari de Garcia, Pilares de Nacozari, the rural town of Cumpas south of the mines, and the nearby peasant commissary of San Clemente de Terapa. The commissary of San Clemente included his family's home village of Pivipa. Guadalupe returned to Agua Prieta with eighty men.[2]

In Agua Prieta, the troops of Hernández were merged with the troops of Fraujo and Contreras into the "Batallón Pilares." Hernández was a second captain under Abraham Fraujo. These troops were part of the forces that sided with Plutarco Elías Calles in his split with Jose María Maytorena, the Sonoran state governor and ally of Pancho Villa. Hernández fought in eight battles in the northeastern corner of Sonora that culminated in the

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dramatic defeat of Villa when he besieged Calles at Agua Prieta in November, 1915. After this time we do not know what happened with Hernández, except that at some time he returned to work again at Pilares.

Calles declared the lands in San Clemente de Terapa and Pivipa restored on January 1, 1916. The official date of possession was February 22, 1920 (Sanderson, 1981: 236),[3] but some of the documents held by the family indicate that Pivipa was in the possession of the ejidatarios before that. The grant included 1,503 acres of farmland, almost none of it irrigated, and 18,400 acres of "pasture." Evidently it was done to reward Calles' loyal troops, and it seems that Guadalupe Hernández had a hand in the distribution of lands.[4] Guadalupe himself obtained seven hectares of farmland, including the use of shares of absent siblings. José spoke of the shares of "the 31 cousins"--all of the children of his father's father's siblings, his father's siblings and first cousins: that is, members via bilateral descent of the land-holding community of Pivipa. José later worked this land for his father, so his recollection is likely to be accurate.

From circumstantial evidence, it appears that for several years after the initial land distribution, Guadalupe continued to work in Pilares where his family stayed, and commuted to the farm. By 1927, they were residing in Pivipa.[5] However, the Hernández children eventually abandoned the peasant life for proletarian work in Agua

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Prieta or in lumber mills. This came about through the political involvement of Guadalupe which had similarly enabled him to obtain the land. He had had to flee Moctezuma for several years after a political dispute that ended in a gunfight. Apparently, Guadalupe was then serving on the municipal council of Moctezuma (which includes Pivipa). From indirect evidence this would date around 1934 or 1935. Although it would be desirable, I do not feel I could reconstruct reliably the nature of the dispute from the partial accounts provided by Guadalupe's son, Antonio.

When Guadalupe fled Pivipa, José took responsibility for the farm, directing the work of his younger siblings. Later María took her younger children with her to Nacozari de Garcia, where she found work in a restaurant (and where, later, Guadalupe rejoined them). Ultimately they went with the children as they left for work at a lumber mill. In 1942, José (who had already left Pivipa for normal school and to work several times) gave up on farming and teaching, and moved to Agua Prieta, where he readily found work as a carpenter that paid him, in cash, more in three days than he could make in a month teaching. José was characteristically terse about his reasons for moving, but he felt that he was wearing himself out farming.[6] The stories of both José and the other Hernández siblings will resume in Chapter 5.

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## Processes of Working Class Formation: Labor Markets, Cash Wages, and Kin Organization

Let us return to the epoch of Guadalupe Hernández' youth, when he first went to work in the Pilares mine, and consider the general causes of working class formation in Northeastern Sonora. This will consist of two sections: evidence for the emergence of a large, impersonal labor market; and questions about the nature of the flows into this labor market--who, where from, how recruited, for how long, and why? One important element in this story is the role of cash wages, and thus we will pay considerable attention to evidence about consumption in the time of the formation; another element highlighted is the kinship relationships which bring people to enter wage labor markets and to persist in them over time.

### The Emergence of an Impersonal Labor Market

There is little evidence about the organization of labor in northern Sonora prior to the industrial era. To seek such evidence, I read the exploratory ethnographies of Lumholtz (1973 [1902]), Bandelier (1970 [1883-1884]), and Hrdlicka (1904), not just for information on surviving Indian cultural traits of northeastern Sonora, but also paying attention to how they organized their expeditions. Lumholtz, describing how he obtained his mule train crew entering Sonora, stated: "In hiring them, only one precaution had always to be observed: never to accept one unless he had a good recommendation from his village

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authorities or some prominent man in his neighborhood" (1973, 1: 5-6). Similar labor recruitment patterns appear in the 1858-1859 journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman, who operated a mine near Arivaca, between Tucson and Mexico. He sent assistants several times to Sonora, to Santa Cruz, Altar, and Tubutama: "to see a rich Mexican there and get laborers. The cry now is the want of laborers, when some time ago any number could be obtained, as they were flocking to these rich mines" (North, 1980: 61; also see 86).

These are "personalized" ways of organizing labor (Wolf, 1959: 207-209). The hypothesis is that cash wages, massive employment, and work in the U.S. broke down these older forms of labor recruitment. People then went to the jobs, on their own, and not as part of their relationship with a local patron. In this sense the new labor markets were "impersonal".[7]

In the final decades of the nineteenth century, the haciendas and ranches of Sonora felt the U.S. labor demand for Mexican immigrant workers. Park argues that as early as the 1870s the Arizona mines had uprooted laborers from haciendas when served offered new consumer desires; he quotes an Arizona newspaper of 1879: "Sonora seems to be undergoing a labor crisis, writes La Sonora. Ten years ago she paid her peones seven to ten pesos per month and cotton clothes. Now due to American influence they want shoes, pants, and flannel shirts, for which the hacendado puts them deeper into debt. But the peones still run away." (1961:

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148). Friedrich Katz found that sharecropping arrangements improved the closer the locality to the U.S., mines, and industries, and debt peonage was much lessened in border states. In the Río Sonora town of Banamichi (due south of Cananea) even when the owner provided seed, draft animals, and tools, the sharecropper kept two-thirds of the crop; without these, they kept three-fourths (Katz, 1980: 44-45). In general, cowboys and workers in border states were less tied down (Katz, 1981: 12-14).

Within Sonora itself, mines demanded much greater amounts of labor because the nature of mining changed in the industrial epoch. The decades before the turn of the century witnessed advances in mining technology which eliminated Mexican mining crafts. Steam or diesel driven mechanical mills and chemical leaching processes replaced arrastra (mule dragged) milling and patio (mercury) amalgamation of gold, and silver chlorides. Charcoal heated "Castillian" reverberatory furnaces had required high-grade ores to be worthwhile. Smelting in Mexico had been a carefully developed empirical tradition about lead, salt, and soda-ash combinations applied to different types of silver ore. This was replaced with much hotter furnaces, and applications of scientific chemical engineering that allowed the extraction of low-grade, difficult sulfides--not only of silver, but more importantly, of copper.

Copper extraction had been of secondary importance to silver and gold in Mexico; demand for copper electrical wire

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at the end of the nineteenth century reversed this. The new technology of copper smelting permitted the use of massive low-grade porphyry ores. These were not taken out by the careful chasing of veins by experienced miners, as had been high-grade ores, but rather extracted in high-volume operations planned by engineers on structural and cost efficiency bases. Changes inside the mine followed the logic of mass ore removal--the use of dynamite, laying tracks for ore cars, etc. Craft miners were displaced throughout Sonora, particularly the old silver district of Alamos, and new mine labor forces were summoned in the copper area to the northeast of the state. As far as I know, on one has traced the fates of Sonoran craft miners to see whether or not they went into the new industrial mines. (This material is summarized from Park, 1961; Young, 1970; Gómez-Quiñones, 1979; Jiménez, 1985: 176-191).

Each new mine, each new railroad, was a tremendous engineering project using many men in a relatively isolated area. To take one dramatic instance, a 65 mile electrical line was run from Douglas to El Tigre in 1911, ascending the very heights of the sierra (Bernstein, 1965: 43). The American mining engineer Parker described hauling 1,600 pounds of cable carried on ten mules, and a 700 pound cam on a frame of wood poles carried by sixteen men (1979: 87).

The Douglas smelter, the Cananea mine-mill-smelter complex, the Nacozari mine-mill complex, the Nacozari-Agua Prieta railroad, the Cananea-Naco railroad--each of these

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projects required huge manual labor forces coordinated by American engineers. Cananea employed between 7,000 and 8,000 men when it was built (Besserer, Díaz, and Santana, 1980: 1323). In 1913, at a time late in their construction, the Copper Queen smelter employed 1000 and the Calumet and Arizona smelter 700 (Jeffrey, 1951: 25). Railroad construction, unlike the U.S. West, in Sonora was done by local, not Chinese contract labor (Hu-DeHart, 1980: 51-52).

Each "large-scale project" (Ribeiro, 1985) offered tremendous burst of wage work which helped initiate a labor market in interior Sonora. Oral histories help confirm this by indicating the distances from which these project pulled men: Dolores Molina's father (who had already worked in Bisbee) and uncle came over 100 miles on horseback from the Valle de Tacupeto to work in the construction of the Douglas smelters in 1901.

Cananea had a permanent workforce producing copper by 1903, Nacozari by 1904, and El Tigre by 1907 (though construction continued throughout). From 1897 to 1907, the reported mine, mill, and smelter workforce in the State of Sonora went from 5,874 to 17,368 (Flores, Velasco, and Ramírez, 1985: Cuadros 89 and 90).[8] Since Cananea had 5,360 workers and Pilares de Nacozari 2,000 (figures cited in Chapter 2), it is likely that most of this mine labor force was concentrated in the northeastern corner of the state. This constitutes evidence about the scale of the wage labor market already formed by 1910. However, this does not tell

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us in what manner people entered the market, nor the length of their stay there.

## Sources of the Working Population

To approach these questions, let us begin with evidence about the sources of this working population. According to Besserer, Díaz, and Santana (1980: 1324-1325), their examination of registries at Cananea (they do not cite quantitative results) indicates that the first generation of industrial miners at Cananea came from two sources: experienced miners who came from interior states of Mexico for the better jobs; and villagers who came from the Río Sonora valley (and surely other valleys nearby) to fill unskilled laboring positions. This is consistent with specific genealogies I collected.

We cannot presume, however, that all the population from Sonora entered the mines for the same reasons. This population came from two sources: formerly Opata villagers and Mestizo immigrants to the frontier--streams of people which were intermingling at the time (a change perhaps even encouraged by the mine towns). The Hernández, for example, were probably of Opata extraction, from a village relatively close to Pilares de Nacozari. In their case, loss of land brought entry to the wage labor market.

However, in another case, the Encinas-Acosta history reported below, Pilares workers came from a Mestizo family

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previously located in Mulatos and Trinidad, Sonora, an area where non-Indian ranchers were expropriating the Pima villagers from their land in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (see Dunnigan, 1969, cited in Chapter 2). Non-Indian, or "Mestizo" Mexicans were arriving in large numbers in the towns and villages of central and northern highland Sonora in this era. I speculate that Mestizo populations sent branches to the new mine centers, where earnings and consumption levels were high (following León-Portilla's valuable discussion of Norteño culture in Mexico, 1972).

Differences in cultural stream made a difference in manner of entry into labor markets. In Marobavi, Owen found that Mestizo, or "white" Mexicans had relatively recently entered a town of former Opata:

> Another feature that differentiates between many Whites and many Indians is that the Indians typically think of Marobavi as their ancestral home and have no remembrance of or knowledge of ever having lived anywhere else. Half of the Whites are not native to Marobavi and many of these are from some distance away--Tomchic, Ures, other river valleys, or even Hermosillo (1959: 39).

He goes on to correlate this with differences in entry to external wage labor markets:

> Possibly related to differences in attitudes toward the village as a place in which to live and to work, are the relative numbers of the three catagories who have gone to the United Sates to work. Few Indians have gone, and none are going now. If the figures on movement to other parts of Sonora were included ..., the differences would become larger (1959: 39-40).

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Owen lastly notes that cash for upfront expenses of migrating to work was a barrier for poorer, more Indian villagers. (Similarly, see the discussion below of differences in work careers between Mestizo and Pima miners/lumber mill workers).

Recruitment into the Labor Market

Our understanding of the formation of a working class in northeastern Sonora can be aided by comparison with two other mine regions, the Andes and Southern Africa. This aims to widen the search for possible phenomena in Sonora, but it does not try to answer comparative questions of why working classes differ. The studies of DeWind (1975) in central Peru and Van Onselen (1976) in colonial Rhodesia describe labor forces created by coercion, specifically the use of cash or debt (goods on credit) advances to entrap men into enforced labor-time contracts.

Adrian DeWind in particular analyzes a history resembles northern Sonora in type of industry, period of global capital, and some aspects of the indigenous society. DeWind found that the "problem" of how to get labor out of the surrounding communities was first addressed by debt peonage, initiated in villages by recruiters who advanced money to men who sponsored celebrations, combined with a company store that paid cash only once a month, and paid in tokens in the meantime. This lead, in the first four decades of the twentieth century, to a incompletely

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proletarianized work force, which left the labor force for the agricultural cycle or after repaying debt.

However, over these decades new processes in the villages were taking place which tended toward more permanent wage labor, including land encroachment by outsiders, partible inheritance of the reduced remainder, and a shift away from reciprocal labor arrangements toward sharecropping and hired labor. On the waged end of the process, purchases increased cash needs and brought about a self-selecting, free-flowing labor force. These changes coincided with the mechanization and rationalization of the mines which made a more permanent labor force desireable to the mine companies (which used cheap meat from estates they bought because of smelter smoke damage).

The questions posed for the Sonoran material are the degree of coercion versus voluntary entrance into the workforce, and related to this, the manner in which cash wages and consumer goods were made available. Turning to long-term flows between workers and peasants, Laite (1981) has described for more recent decades in central Peru that copper refinery workers strongly maintain land rights or business and political office investments in home villages.

From this comparative reading three possibilities in the Sonoran life histories appear: permanent entry to the working class; permanent or long-term entry to the working class while retaining a commitment to potential rights within restricted community land tenure (such as those in

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Pivipa actualized by Guadalupe Hernandez through the Revolution); and temporary or periodic wage labor, afterwards returning to non-wage locations.

There does not seem to be any evidence for coercive labor recruitment, or contracts by advances in Sonoran mining. Besserer, Díaz, and Santana (1985) state that Cananea did not employ any labor contractors (enganchadores). I asked about labor recruitment in family oral histories and no such material was reported either for Sonoran mines or the Douglas smelter.

## Cash Wages

There is much evidence to conclude the opposite of the coercion hypothesis--that mines and other employers could readily attract laborers with cash wages and consumer goods. There was little to hold them in the countryside. Conflicts over land in the late nineteenth century, in particular the gigantic cattle operations associated with the mines at Cananea and Nacozari, entailed not just the loss of land but also loss of access to scarce water, to firewood, and frontier occupations. At the same time, personalized rural labor relationships no longer had the power to hold men.

It would have been difficult to hold recruited workers to coercive labor contracts this close to the U.S. border. Railroads in the U.S. had an insatiable demand for workers, as did Arizona mines such as Clifton-Morenci or Douglas. When mines in Sonora had to assemble workforces in the thousands, they had to pay sufficiently to attract both

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skilled miners and laborers. Besserer, Novelo, and Sariego write that mines entered into fierce wage competition in northern Mexico for migrating workmen (1983: 21-22).

Flores, Velasco, and Ramírez (1985: Cuadro 92) report state-wide wage figures for the daily pay of mine operatives (that is, not white collar employees); these numbers serve for general trends only, for their nature is limited: they are not true average mine wages, but rather unweighted statewide averages of the numbers reported for the maximum and minimum for each mineral product. Even if we take the minimum daily wage, presumably for unskilled laborers in the smaller mines, we see that it increased from .84 pesos a day in 1902, to 1.75 pesos a day in 1907.

In terms of the wages paid in the most advanced industrial mines, the best document is Esteban Baca Calderón's testimonial about the Cananea strike of 1906: in that year, the lowest wage (for helpers and carters) was 3 pesos a day; for drillers, 4 pesos; for carpenters, 5 pesos; for smelter's helpers 6 pesos and for smelters, 8 pesos a day (this is at 2 pesos for a dollar). The company paid American workers more for the same work (cited in Meyer et al., 1980: 70).

## The Role of Consumption

However, even when a labor market offers cash wages, one cannot assume that this will attract a workforce. People must need money for something. Part of this certainly had to do with replacing absent rural livelihoods,

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and part of it, on the basis of material culture histories (described in the Appendix), had to do with new consumer goods. Cash in rural Sonora had gone for fabric, sugar, coffee, lard, and horses. New purchases included sewing machines, men's work clothes and shoes, yet more fabric, cast-iron stoves, beds and mattresses, clocks, phonographs, musical instruments, wire, housing materials, guns, and in later years, cars, trucks, and refrigerators. The appeal of these goods had to do with new skills and forms of household production, a subject deferred to Chapter 4. Here the focus is on the interrelationship of work arrangements, cash pay and credit systems, and locations of work and consumption.

There were four means of obtaining these items. They were bought in the U.S. with money earned there and later brought back to Mexico when single men returned to families or whole families moved. U.S. made items were sold in the villages of Sonora by peddlers. Workers and their families in mine towns made purchases in company stores stocked mainly from the U.S.. Least common were shopping trips to the U.S. (especially Douglas); but people who lived near the Agua Prieta-Nacozari railroad could take a special autocar on the railroad as well as the cheaper train.

Since so much of the new material culture was introduced from the U.S., the process of wage labor and consumption had the character of culture change toward U.S. patterns. The effect of work and commerce in the U.S. on Sonora was so great that several informants spoke of prices

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in dollars and handled small change in quarters, dimes, and nickels before 1929, especially near the border.

There were two patterns of relationship to cash and consumption. In the mine payroll pattern, credit favored wage work for corporations over long periods. Miners could buy large appliances, as well as daily groceries, from company stores and sales agents in company towns--for example, Singer had a sewing machine dealer in Nacozari de Garcia, and the Phelps Dodge store did not handle sewing machines, but it did much business in fabric. The company stores represented gigantic commercial intrusions in highland Sonora relative to the existing scale. The Cananea company store had a capital of 180,000 pesos and sales of 145,000, compared to 12,000 and 20,000 respectively of its nearest competitor; Phelps Dodge Mercantile in Pilares and Nacozari de Garcia had annual sales of 30,000 versus 8,000 of the next firm; and that of the Lucky Tiger mining company in El Tigre, sold 25,000 versus 2,100 (Aguilar Camín, 1977: 114-115).

Material presented below on Agua Prieta families with workers in the Copper Queen smelter shows that when they bought appliances from Phelps Dodge Mercantile the payments were deducted from their weekly pay. In this and similar Sonoran cases, the remainder of the paycheck was paid in cash, not company scrip or tokens.[9] My last surviving informant who worked in Sonoran mines prior to 1910, Don Jesus Ramírez, reported that he was paid in Bank of Sonora

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banknotes at Lampazos (interview, Douglas, Arizona, April 22, 1985).

The recollections of former miner Luis Aguirre (cited below) allows us to look at the management of payroll deductions to encourage consumption and work. His level of credit was set by the El Tigre company according to his pay rate. He made weekly installment payments and the small remainder was paid to him in cash. This does not appear to be a case of working under permanent debt. A system of installment payment or payroll deduction implies, of course, that workers be full-time, permanent wage-earners. Such a system would serve not to trap indebted workers--the U.S. border was too close to hold them, as Katz (1980) has shown --but it could keep them working, making payments for appliances over long periods of time.[10]

The alternative relationship was entering sporadic wage labor in the U.S. or the industrial sector in order to get sufficient cash to make some desired purchase. When major appliances from the U.S. were available, the need for cash was much greater. Parker describes a peddler in Chihuahua who sold sewing machines in mining camps--where he had the best sales--for 165 pesos, at 15 down and 10 a month payment (1979: 94). A simple estimate shows that at 3 pesos a day miner's wages, the monthly payment was just over three days work, while at the traditional 50 centavos it was twenty days a month.

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## The Anthropology of Working Class Formation

In the general economic view, it is easy to understand how a working population was formed when rural livelihoods were being undermined and simultaneously a large and relatively well-paid labor market opened in the very same region. Nevertheless, this does not adequately explain the human organization of the labor flow (Wolf, 1982: 359): the lines of kinship and relationship which made people available to the mines. This is the topic in which anthropology has the most to contribute. In order to approach this topic, it is necessary to explore the organization of family, land, and labor in the countryside, especially in the Porfirian context of land shortage and pressures.

Unfortunately, this is easier said than done. I use three sources: Owen's study of Marobavi (1959); Sheridan's work on Cucurpe (1983); and a major peasant family history and genealogy I collected in Agua Prieta[11] (a history located in the District of Sahuaripa until 1916; Colonia Morelos outside Agua Prieta shortly thereafter) with repeated migratory and permanent forays into the industrial working class. The two published ethnographies obviously date much later than the period dealt with here, and both were done in circumstances of heated commercial production in the Sonoran countryside (the mid-fifties cotton boom for Marobavi; the cattle boom for Cucurpe, and all Sonora since

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the seventies). Realizing these limits, it is nevertheless worth proposing some ideas.

The argument is that the arrangements of land inheritance brought about temporary and permanent wage labor in different situations. Ideally, inheritance in Sonora is partible among all children, male and female. I suspect, but cannot prove, that sons tend to get land and daughters animals, appliances, etc. The date of partition is at the breakup of the parental household. Single sons work for their fathers, as do a few married ones; but most married sons have their own economy, whether their own land, or sharecropping, or wage work. Siblings, once they have inherited, each have their own economy and work their own land; cooperative labor is obtained through wage hiring, and Owen found that even brothers deal with each other in monetary terms.

Migratory wage labor may be produced in this situation for the following reasons. First, single sons may trek in search of work to bring home some money for their fathers--in expectation of a share of the inheritance--or to accumulate some cash in anticipation of setting up their own married household, possibly buying a parcel of land or sharecropping. Second, married men may seek outside work in a situation of marriage with no or insufficient inheritance, or while awaiting it.

Permanent wage labor, on the other hand, may be produced from the process of partitioning inheritance.

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Although partible inheritance is the model, Sheridan found that in reality many siblings did not claim their shares. Often, the inheritance share was too small to be worth claiming. If the person was already working or living outside the community, they might not return. If they were still in the community, partible inheritance was often accompanied by disputes between siblings; the siblings who triumphed could retain most of the inheritance and stay, while the siblings who lost out left. Alternatively, siblings might amicably agree to leave the inheritance with one who could keep it going, especially if they thought work opportunities were better elsewhere.

The arable land base of these riverine communities is quite restricted. If one does not inherit land, there is little chance of finding or buying land. Returning relatives would find access to land difficult because their inclusion in existing households might have been as members without claims to inherited land or opportunities to acquire other plots.

Permanent exodus involved both male and female co-inheritors (in contrast with male temporary wage labor). Sheridan found in Cucurpe--admittedly in a different, more educated urban labor market context of the 1980s--that 38 percent of all the children of Cucurpe families were residing elsewhere, either at work or school, and that they were very nearly balanced between sons and daughters[12] (very slightly more females; 1983: 107-109).

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The argument is that the rural economy constrained inheritors, whereas the wage economy was "open" to employ any number of them. This was the situation in turn of the century Sonora when land conflicts and severe land shortages may have heightened inheritance disputes, while at the same time the nearby mine economy was booming.

Change in the form of work careers is closely connected with these processes of family relations which produced wage labor. I propose that one of the characteristics of the emerging working class was a life-long career in the labor market, job-seeking wherever employment might be, moving about and accumulating saleable industrial work skills. Indeed, this "individual" work career characterizes permanent working class life better than permanence in one single job or location. This sort of work career contrasts with the temporary work career in which a young man works for his father, in the expectation of an inheritance or in order to prepare to marry in the home town.

Dunnigan (1969) worked among the Pima Bajo of east-central highland Sonora (an indigenous group adjacent to the Opata which has held more tenaciously onto its identity, but which occupies an area with a farm and mine-mill economy very similar to northeastern Sonora). He found that the Pima worked extensively in nearby sawmills (and previously, mines), but that when the sawmill closed or laid workers off, the Pima were the first to go; when they left, they returned to their agricultural town rather than moving after

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other jobs (some Pima families instead went as agricultural laborers to the south coast of Sonora). Mestizo workers, in contrast, sought new industrial jobs. Dunnigan attributed this to the accumulated industrial skills of the Mestizos (mechanics, truck drivers).

Young Pima men would return to work on their father's farms to help harvest, and to participate in the Pima festivals at Maycoba. Dunnigan found that Pima families were organized around older men with land and younger men who earned cash wages while awaiting inheritance; this prevented full proletarianization (1981). Ranging further afield, in southern Jalisco, Mexico, de la Pena (1984) also found that wage work in the U.S. and Guadalajara had transformed a system in which young men worked on father's farms and orchards to one where they moved in search of their own career.

There is substantial supporting evidence for these propositions `closer to home' in the family histories from northeastern Sonora. The evidence of individual work careers, associated with industrial skills, and manifested in wage-seeking movement after disemployment, is best demonstrated in the father-son conflicts of the Repatriation period, found in Chapter 5. At this point, however, we take up the Aguirre history, which allows us to explore the kinship organization of working class formation at two stages: the distribution of siblings between rural farms and the mine towns which tells us how the first generation

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entered the permanent wage economy; and the next generation of siblings distributed within and among mine towns, which shows the social organization of male-wage earning miner households as the working class consolidated in the 1920s.

## The Aguirre History: The Organization of Life in a Mine Town

Luis Aguirre remembered that when his father, Santiago, was a young man (just at the turn of this century) he worked for several years in the U.S. Typical Mexican immigrant labor in that time was agricultural field labor and railroad track work--and this is what Santiago Aguirre did. He was from Zacatecas, and because Luis did not grow up around his father's kin, he knew little about his father's origins. Santiago appears in the Rio Bavispe village of Bacerac in 1903, when he married Antonia Peralta. Luis believed that his father was brought to Sonora by the Lucky Tiger mining company to work in the mine El Tigre (started in 1903). El Tigre is on the high ridge directly above Bacerac. Santiago and Antonia had nine children, beginning in 1903. The first three were born in Bacerac, up to the year 1906, and the remaining ones were born in El Tigre. Luis was born in 1912. This indicates that Antonia probably went to Bacerac to stay with her mother at childbirth while her husband was working in El Tigre.

Santiago worked in El Tigre as a paymaster; Luis described his father's work as keeping track of quotas and

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extras of the workers, and he also filled in at the office when needed. Paymaster is at the top of the part of the mine hierarchy filled by working class Mexicans. It seems likely from the genealogical evidence that Santiago, with a relatively high position, helped bring the siblings and kin of Antonia to El Tigre and got them work in the mine.

The Peraltas (Chart 3) were small, landholding peasants (agricultor con tierra propia pequeña). Antonia's oldest brother, Jose María (born by estimate 1880) kept the family land and passed it to his youngest son, Trinidad. After that generation, Luis had lost track of this branch of his mother's family. On the other hand, Antonia's three sisters and her other brother all ended up in the mine town of El Tigre. Her brother was a mine electrician and later went to Cananea when El Tigre closed. One sister married a miner in El Tigre and two others supported themselves after separating from husbands one with a small restaurant and another as a domestic. Finally, two of the nephews, sons of the peasant Peralta brother, also became miners in El Tigre, and a niece worked as a domestic.

The Peralta family consisted of a peasant core, descendants of one sibling, which kept the small property, while the remainder went as a group (in the 1903-1930 period) to a mine center. It is interesting that Luis remembered virtually every descendent of those mother's siblings who came through El Tigre, but lost track of the descendants in Bacerac. It is not as though the Peraltas in

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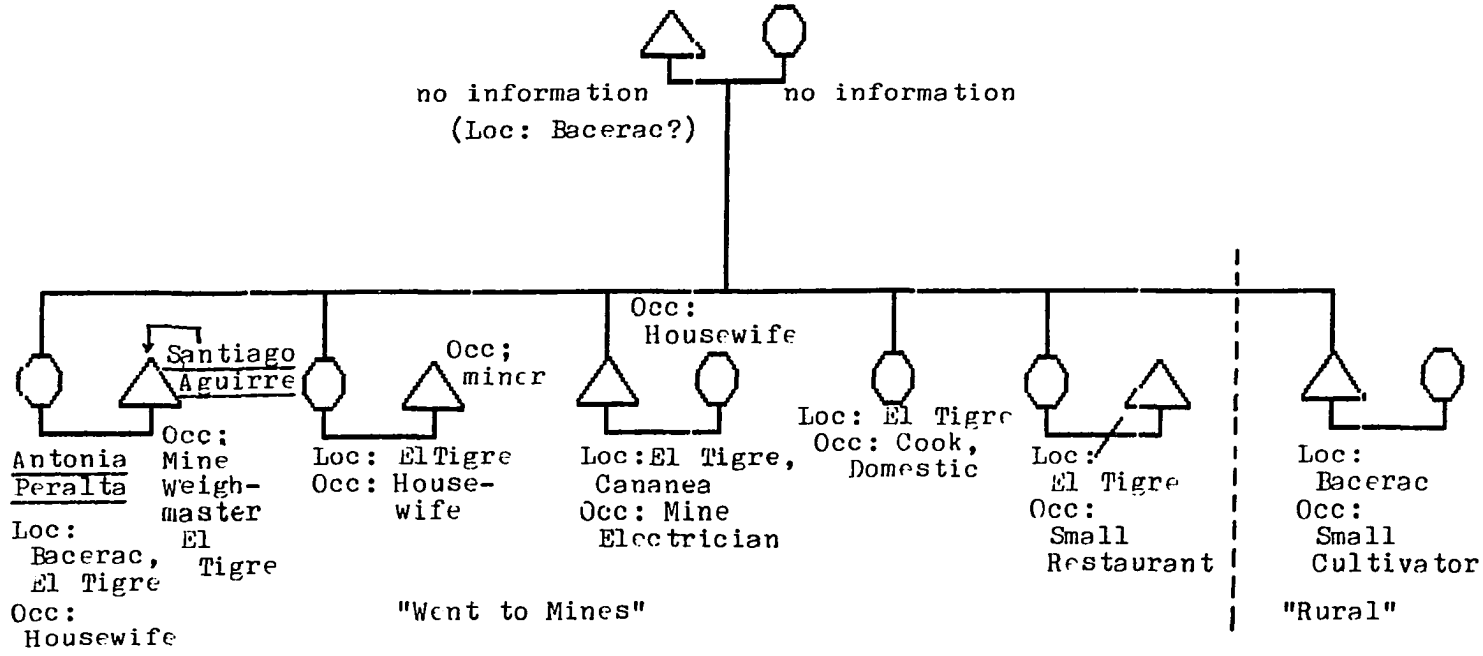


Loc = Reported Residence
Occ = Reported Employment

CHART 3: PERALTA SIBLINGS, FORMATIVE WORKING CLASS



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El Tigre lost contact with their rural cousins, since when Luis was growing up in El Tigre he recalled steady visiting by his mother's relatives between the mine and the village; but the mine cousins no longer kept an interest in the inheritance of land. Even when the mine closed in the 1930s, none of them went back.

## Leverage Into the Labor Market

From the rural perspective, inheritance split siblings into groups, one retaining the land, cattle, etc., and the others leaving to seek work. How does this process of kin allocation look from the mine perspective? The relationship of Santiago Aguirre and his Peralta in-laws gives us a clue. He was a valued worker, and he could readily "lever" his relatives into work at the El Tigre mine, especially in the early years when it was expanding.

A labor market, unlike landed resources, is not the possession of any worker; they do not control it, but they may have some influence on the allocation of jobs. In the context of corporate employment, there is no harm to bring one's relatives onto the payroll, and perhaps some future advantages. In the partible inheritance situation, there always exists the potential for conflict among siblings/siblings-in-law. In the labor market, siblings/siblings-in-law have no structural rivalry, and because they are more or less of the same age group, often they are in a good position to help each other.

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I call the phenomenon "leverage" where kin help one another within institutions they do not control, whether wage labor markets described here, or immigration to the U.S. It is characteristic of proletarianized people who do not own resources themselves, but who are deeply involved within institutional powers. Kin who lever one another do not necessarily have to be close personally on a day to day basis, though they may be. It only takes one strategic favor at one time--getting a job, or helping a person settle in the border city--to structure their life thereafter. Thus it is especially well discerned in genealogies which show results of actions over long periods of time, in the form of parallel or related occupations and locations.

## Luis and Angelita

Luis Aguirre's future wife, Angelita León, grew up in several mine towns, finishing in El Tigre. Angelita recalled that her mother, María Martínez, was born in 1897 in Dolores, Chihuahua, a small mine town near Sonora, but she did not know her grandparents (either her mother's or father's parents). Her mother's brother and sister also lived in El Tigre when Angelita knew them. Angelita's father was a miner from Parral, center of the southern Chihuahua mine district. Angelita was born in 1916 in Dolores, but her father died in 1920 of the Spanish influenza while working in Nacozari (this epidemic had a marked impact on the crowded Sonoran mining towns).

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In 1921 María remarried, in Pilares de Nacozari, another miner, Arturo Fierros, who within a year went to work in El Tigre (Pilares was closed over a year in 1921 to 1922 while El Tigre operated, albeit at lower levels). The exact chronological relationship in settling in El Tigre by María and Arturo and by María's siblings is unclear, but a coordination of residence is evident. Arturo Fierros (born about 1896) had two brothers who farmed their own land in the village of San Juan in the municipio of Villa Hidalgo, south of Nacozari and El Tigre. Arturo died in 1936 of silicosis, at the young age of 40, and Maria, twice widowed, with three younger children by Arturo, was helped by her oldest daughter, Angelita (by then married to Luis).

Luis' family lived in a company house, made of wood with a tin roof but not tumbledown, with electricity, an outside faucet, and an outhouse. His father built a bath for them, but Luis recalled that only the American managers got houses with bathrooms. Luis did not remember how much the rent was in his father's time.

Angelita also grew up in a similar company house. Her mother had an American made pedal sewing machine, which turned out to be important in Angelita's future, for she learned to sew from her mother and when she married Luis she bought that very machine from her mother.

Luis and Angelita grew up in the same neighborhood, "El Molino" named for the concentrator located there. This was the smaller and more isolated of the two Mexican

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neighborhoods; the other one, called "La Gran China" because it was big and perched on the mountain, had the company offices, the mine head, the main company store, etc. The American engineers and managers lived away from the Mexican workers, in a small section of nice houses.

Luis had only three years of school--there were only four in the school the company provided to El Tigre. He started work at the age of 16, in 1928. His father used his friendship with the American manager of the mine shop to get Luis a job there, despite having to lie about his age (he was supposed to have been 18). Luis started out as a machinist's helper, earning only the day's wage of 2.50 pesos. In the shop, Luis cut, tempered, and prepared the drill "bars" according to the instructions of the machinists ("machinist" is the term that it is used for the men who actually worked on the ore face). Although an American engineer visited the mine and gave instructions to the machinists via a Mexican foreman, Luis recalled that the machinists used to laugh and say that no one had to tell them how to do their job--they told Luis how long to cut the drill, what diameter and type of rod, etc. Luis was learning the machinist's craft by assisting and watching, and substituting when opportunities arose. Luis also worked shoveling and cleaning in the mine faces, and as a helper to the plumber who placed water lines, earning 3.15 pesos a day.

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In 1930, Luis was switched from the mine to the mill. Luis earned 3.60 pesos a day, and he worked the evening shift. At first Luis worked operating the mill that grinds the ore, but he asked to change to mine because he thought the mill dust was doing damage to his lungs. He went to the American manager, who wouldn't let him go to the mine but did send him to another part of the mill, where Luis counted the ore cars that each contractor dumped into the tank and operated the tank.

What is interesting about this story is that when we were discussing the union representative who handled grievances, I asked Luis if he had any complaints, and he recited this case--where he went to the manager, not the union. There was a union in El Tigre. It was a branch of, or affiliated with, the Cananea union local so it probably dates after 1931. Luis had little to say about the union until the period of the union cooperative (beginning 1938), which will be discussed in a later section. Apparently, he had little to do with the union until then.

There were protests in 1930 against 10 to 25 percent wage cuts by the Lucky Tiger mining company, and in 1931 the Secretary of Industry had to intervene with the company to prevent the closing of the mine (agreeing instead to layoff 200 of 400 workers). Evidently, this saved Luis' job, though again he recalled little, and indeed, the negotiations may have been hidden from the workers. Luis did comment that conditions were worsening in the mine and

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he remembered that safety declined; for example, the company cut off water that fed the drills to damp the rock dust.

When Angelita was a young woman, she worked as housekeeper in the house of the mine manager. She stopped working when she married, and did not resume working until the time that Luis had left the abandoned mine town and he had no work. El Tigre, like the other mines, employed men only--I asked if women picked ore from tailings and they replied that this was done by boys and old men--and women with husbands bringing in wages were expected not to be working outside the house. A young woman who worked while she was still single--in the role of "daughter"--would cease at marriage.

Luis and Angelita were married in 1936, while the mine was still operating, though visibly declining. When they married, they were given a small house, one of three in "apartments," by the mine company. This was a one room house--they did not recall exact dimensions, but Ingersoll (1924: 115) described his helper's house in Pilares de Nacozari as 15 feet squared. In the mine town hierarchy, Luis when he started would get the smallest houses, and advance subsequently. To draw a comparison, a more senior worker I interviewed (who worked at Pilares, not El Tigre) had a four room company house. Therefore, the grading of workers by housing was a sub-class of the larger hierarchy at work in the mine.

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Luis and Angelita had two children in El Tigre (1938 and 1941) and two later. The salary of Luis, Angelita remembers, was sufficient to buy food and clothing. The mark of a decent life was meat, and they could afford a piece of meat a week. They bought most of the food, fabric, and some housewares like dishes at the El Tigre company store. The company store was stocked from the U.S. and this started a strong preference for American goods by the Aguirres. Each worker had a yellow slip on which purchases for the week were recorded, and then the total was deducted from the weekly paycheck. With their small family, they had a little cash left over at the end of a week, but families with many children lived on credit, and they remembered that there wasn't as much cash handled then as today on the border.

There were a few small stores--butchers, bakeries, etc.--but even private businessmen rented lots from the company. There was even less competition after the Chinese storeowners were expelled in 1931. After the company abandoned El Tigre, and miners worked and sold gold for themselves, more stores came to the town. Peasants brought meat, cheese, fruit, corn, beans and chiles to sell. But there was no marketplace (there are none in Northeastern Sonora). The Peralta kin from Bacerac stayed with Luis' family when they came to sell corn and chiles. When Luis and Angelita moved to a house with more room Angelita fed chickens and pigs with corn bought from farmers from San

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Miguelito de Bavispe, and this saved the necessity of buying meat and eggs. All in all, however, there was little competition for the company store.

For rent, their recollection was uncertain but they thought 10 pesos a month (less than three days work) was deducted from the paycheck, and that this included electricity and water. Medical coverage was free. They had a cast-iron firewood stove (the company sold firewood from their lands) bought from an aunt of Luis. They saved some money and bought a bed and a mattress from an agent of a Nacozari furniture store who came to El Tigre to take orders; they paid straight cash but others made time payments. On the other hand, they used wooden dynamite crates because, at first, they didn't have money for chairs. Angelita had the sewing machine she bought from her mother. She sewed most of the clothes, and this saved cash. Unfortunately for Luis and Angelita, they started their new household within a few years of the collapse of the El Tigre mine, and so they endured some years of great scarcity that stretched into the late 1940s.

The life of Luis and Angelita in El Tigre was reproduced in a series of parallel households of their siblings located in several mine towns in the region, mostly El Tigre (Chart 4). My purpose here is to explore, through the patterning of these kin, the social organization of the mine working community. Luis' oldest sister (born 1903, married 1930) married a miner/machinist in El Tigre. His

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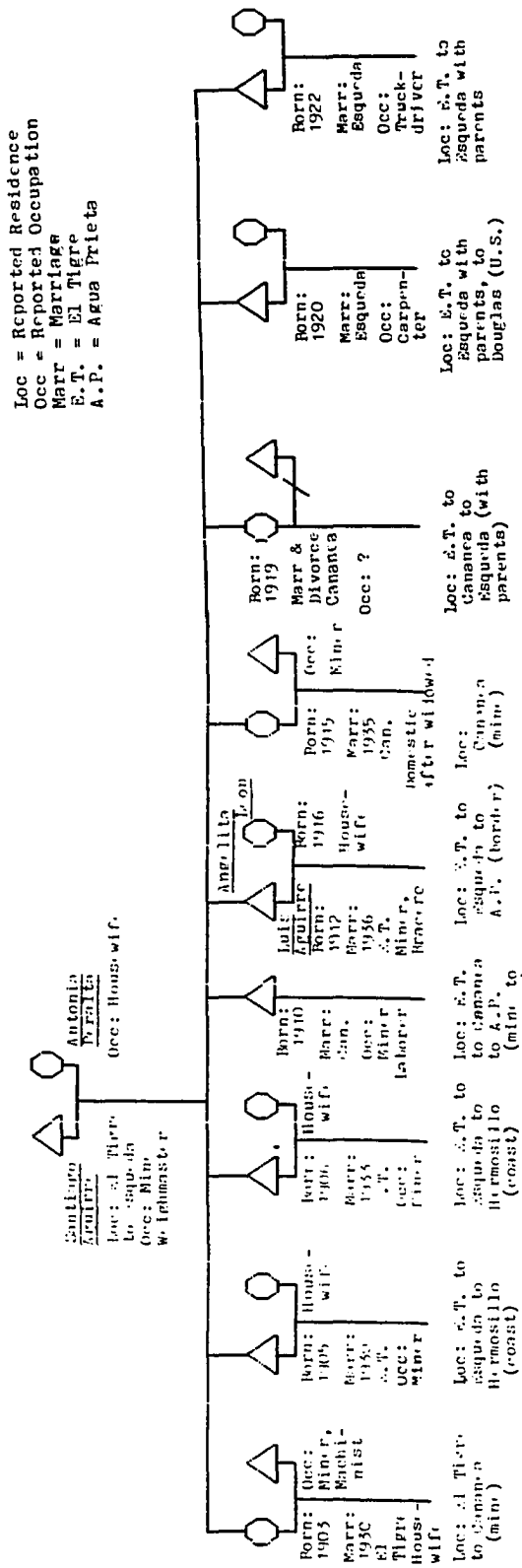


Chart 4: Aguirre Family History (including paths after El Tigre mine closed)

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oldest brother (born 1905, married 1930) and next oldest brother (born 1906, married 1933) both were miners who married in El Tigre. The third brother (born 1910, no date recalled of marriage), worked in El Tigre but married in Cananea, thus probably after El Tigre closed in 1938. Luis was the fourth brother. The next two sisters (born 1915 and 1919) both married miners but in Cananea. The last two brothers (born 1920 and 1922) were too young to enter the mine at El Tigre and instead went with their parents when they moved to Esqueda after the mine closed; they married in that town and neither became miners.[13]

As Luis phrased it, when each Aguirre son reached working age, they went to the mine "to help my father" and "we all cooperated for the family," but when each son married, they worked for "their (new) house," though they always gave a "little help to their mother." As best as I can reconstruct the residential history, all the marriages were neolocal except a divorced daughter who returned to her parent's house in Esqueda, and certainly the newly married sons and daughters in El Tigre were given their own house by the mine company. Luis and Angelita lived separately from parents on either side, though in proximity, for they were in the same neighborhood.

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## The Social Organization of the Miners

### Kinship and Residence

Looking at this family it is possible to state some generalizations about the organization of the mine town community. This organization conforms to the "unitary structure" type of community dominated by one enterprise. The organization of wage-earning households dependent on one source explains the vulnerability of these communities to the decisions made from outside to close shop.

The companies determined that the basic residential pattern was neolocal with their assignment of houses to newlywed miners. The wage was not generous, but the system of shopping on family tickets at the company store (which were then deducted from the paycheck) was designed, obviously, with the male wage-supported family in mind.

Fathers (and older brothers) helped sons get jobs in the mine, but they did not have to work together on the same job (though the contract system, described below, often made this possible). There were very strong relationships between senior and junior males but neither controlled resources or organized production--the company did--and thus sons when they married worked for their own family not their father's. There were no land or tools to inherit. But jobs in the mine tended to stay within families. Mine companies deliberately hired sons of miners, and though I have no certain evidence about a policy concerning other male kin--brothers, nephews, cousins--personal favoritism and possibly

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company policy also brought them in. Before the 1930s the mines were generally booming and thus employment could spread through kin networks. Blocs of siblings together in mine towns appear again and again in the genealogies.

Therefore one sees, in the Aguirre family and others, groups of parallel neolocal nuclear families all of whom depend on mine wages and company stores, cooperate through favors and small material aid but do not pool wages or consume jointly. This generation of Aguirre siblings had begun to proliferate in mine locations at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s.

Social life was spent with kin, fellow miners, and neighbors, who were the same people. This is illustrated, by the list of padrinos (sponsors) on Luis and Angelita's wedding invitation: two were older brothers of Luis and one brother in law and their wives, two co-workers of Luis' father and two neighboring couples--all of the men were miners. In a mine town, the family of a man who, like Santiago, was a paymaster, had stature among neighbors; and the hierarchy of the mine, beginning with the social-racial separation of American and Mexican and extended through the ranks of miners, formed the social order of the town as well.

The mine corporation owned the land and decided what would be built where. If it did not build it itself, it approved what was built on rented lots. Thus the map of the mine town was the design of the company's executives.[14]

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They determined the location of different types of neighborhoods according to their concepts of hierarchy. American houses were segregated from the Mexican town, and American areas were higher than Mexican houses and (at least at Cananea) closer to the center district, while Mexicans lived on the lower, rougher terrained, outer margins. (Rich Mexicans who were not miners, but ranchers and businessmen, often lived in the central districts of mine cities.) Workers were graded in the houses they were eligible for by their position in the occupational hierarchy. Of course, workers tended to live near their worksites so their neighborhoods clustered around different installations. There were marginal areas not directly part of company housing where the discards of mine employment lived: peddlers, firewood gatherers, prospectors, miners whose lungs had given out (I draw on Peña and Chávez, who describe Cananea neighborhoods, 1985: 239-242, as well as the El Tigre material).

## Work

The social-racial hierarchy of workplace relations (American managers and Mexican workers) repeated the segregation of the mine town. This situation, which offered surprising opportunities for authority among the working men, built upon the patterns of senior-junior relations found in the generations of the Aguirre family. A widespread contract system of organizing work utilized these relationships, although in the particular case of Luis

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Aguirre he never worked under contract.

The mining complex actually consisted of three main parts--the mine, the concentrator (the mill), and the smelter--as well as subsidiary operations like machine shops, power plants, maintenance, etc. All of the sections were located together at Cananea, whereas the Phelps Dodge operations were divided between mines at Pilares de Nacozari and Bisbee, a mill in Nacozari de Garcia, and the smelter in Douglas.

Crews were contracted in the mines to drill and blast the faces, to "muck" (shovel ore), to haul ore carts (before the 1940s few of the cars were powered), and to timber. All of these men were paid by piecework in the contract system (see below). There were also specialists in plumbing, pumping, hoists, electrical lines, ventilation, etc., paid by the day. In the concentrator, rock was separated by the size of pieces, ground up, and the ore isolated by flotation. The concentrator was organized by a hierarchy of skill and responsibility which workers ascended by seniority. Workers in the mill made a daily minimum and extra pay by the metal content of the ore. The smelter had a similar hierarchy of posts by seniority, starting with the men who loaded and charged the hot reverberatory furnaces. In Douglas, before the union entered in 1942, the smelter was organized along social-racial lines, where all craft and supervisory positions were reserved for Anglo-American

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workers, and Mexicans could not ascend (Ingersoll, 1921; Leland, 1930; Catron, 1930; Peña and Chávez, 1985: 242-244).

Mine organization in Mexico was simple in relation to the giant size of the operation. At Cananea, there was a general mine superintendent, four or five general foremen over major operations, and shift bosses who ran sections which were several levels. These were the Americans. The American shift boss had one to five Mexican "jigger" bosses, who were the ones directly in charge of the men. Each "jigger" boss had two to three stopes (faces) with an average of 25 men in the crew (Catron, 1930: 37).

From the American point of view, it was the power of social race that enabled them to operate so simply, as Ralph Ingersoll, a novice engineer in the Pilares de Nacozari mine wrote:

> He began by explaining a little to me about the organization of the mine. For a big industry it was extremely simple. On the other side of the line, an order had to pass through several assistants--general foremen, division foremen, day and night foremen, shift bosses, and so on--to get from the superintendent to the workmen; a never ending process, in which all personal touch was lost, and usually the spirit of the order as well. In Mexico the authority was much more directly relegated, and was backed by racial superiority. The mine, the superintendent told me, was divided into sections, three or four levels underground to a section. Over each division was an American foreman and an engineer. Above them was only one general foreman, and then the superintendents. I was to be one of the engineers (1924: 37-38).

However, if we read between the lines, we see that the Mexican "jigger" foreman--who stood between American

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engineer and Mexican worker--had an enormous amount of control over the workplace, especially if the Americans didn't speak Spanish. The machinists who Luis Aguirre worked with told him that they didn't need to be told what to do by American engineers (I am also drawing on the discussion of underground mine work by Nash, 1979).

The deposit, at least at Pilares de Nacozari, was highly brecciated--that is, the ore was broken up--and the Bureau of Mines circular for Pilares stated that "in stoping operations grade control is very important. Knowledge of the character of the ore by the foremen and bosses aids them in keeping mining operations within the ore areas" (Leland, 1930: 6). So how could the racial hierarchy of the mines be so blunt, and yet experienced Mexican miners have so much control? To understand this, we must look at the contract system of production.

At the Pilares mine, in 1929, 79 percent of the men underground were on the contract system (Leland, 1930: 28-29). At Cananea, 50 to 60 percent of the underground labor force worked on contract (Catron, 1930: 37; of course, many men worked aboveground). In the contract system, work was paid on a piecerate. Elaborate sets of rates were constructed for various types of tasks--the number of feet advanced at a face, the number of ore cars loaded, or the amount of timber placed, etc. One man was hired as the contractor. He was then responsible for hiring his crew, and he then gave their names and rates to the mine personnel

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office. Each worker was given three pesos, or whatever was the daily minimum wage, on their credit ticket at the company store. This is deducted from the contractor's payment on settlement day. The engineers made weekly measurements, and the payment was arranged with the contractor, often after some haggling. The contractor's crew was paid by the company according to the rate initially listed, in proportion to the contractor's total earnings; by the 1930s the minimum was guaranteed, but in 1925 miners at Nacozari complained to the labor inspector of the lack of a wage rate and he ordered the minimum wage commission to fix one, which may indicate that contract crews had no guarantee of pay then (Radding, 1985: 334). The remainder went to the contractor as his profit.

Ingersoll gave a rough estimate of earnings in 1921: "the contracts are worked out so that if an operation is well run, each man will receive an average wage of about five pesos a day, and as the contractors rarely pay their helpers...more than four pesos, they make a peso a day on each of their men" (1924: 44). Phelps Dodge, as part of its safety campaign at the Pilares de Nacozari mine, gave piece rates for extra safety work at the stopes, such as extra timbering (summarized from Leland, 1930).

The American boss dealt only with the contractor, not the mass of workers (this was explicit policy at Pilares, stated in Leland, 1930). The contractor, not the company, hired men. This reinforced kin and friendship relations

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among males. One miner who I interviewed about contract membership (at Pilares) worked with the same contractor as had his father, and he was related to two other crew members--one was his half-brother, the other was the husband of a niece. He also worked for a brother-in-law who had a timber cutting contract. The men who were hired as contractors--and the ones who attracted men by paying well--were experienced, skillful senior workers. Contractors usually worked alongside their crews.

The contract system created powerful bonds among groups of cooperating miners, coordinated by senior men with the authority of experience and the power of the contract. Kinship and status from the community reinforced relations of authority among working men. Engineers found it hard to exercise authority, though they had the power of measurement that regulated pay.[15] The contractors could abuse their position by underpaying the workers or not giving fair shares, and the workers were very dependent on contractors, who sometimes loaned money.[16]

Beginning in the 1920's the Mexican government began to push mine companies to train and use Mexican professionals. This policy began to be effective in the 1930's as the Cardenas government put pressure on foreign investors, and in succeeding decades the strict racial power system disappeared in "nationalized" mines (Bernstein, 1964; Cananea was nominally nationalized in 1971). The exercise of power in the mine hierarchy was transferred from the

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sphere of nationality (American dominating Mexicans) to the sphere of domestic inequality (Mexicans-dominating Mexicans, with the American role hidden behind investment and technology).[17]

## Miners' Union

Chapter 2 summarizes the history of the mine union starting at Cananea in the 1930s. If we look at the organization of the community in the mine towns: the blocs of related male wage-earner families, the position of experienced, senior miners in the contract system; and if we look at the racial hierarchy in workplaces and residence organized by the U.S. mining companies, then we can understand how the union could come to represent not only the workers in the workplace but the civil community as a whole in relation to the company: that is, the emergence over time of what A. L. Epstein (1958) calls a "unitary structure". In this regard, Peña and Chávez write that, by 1950, Section 65 of the national miners' union came to represent the townspeople of Cananea as a whole in dealing with the company. Local politics in Cananea since the 1930's has revolved around various leaders and factions in the union and their relation to the national government.

But this was only at Cananea, for by 1950 the other large groups of miners had been dispersed and the other towns abandoned or greatly reduced, so that these people were not long part of the unionized community. Instead, as I will discuss at greater length in Chapter 5, there

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occurred a sharp break in involvement and therefore memories of mine town politics as people left this behind.

### The Mine Working Class: Summary

The chronology of the giant industrial mines shows the emergence of a mine working class. By the Revolutionary decade and the 1920s, mining had begun to concentrate and the mine workforce had become more stable and permanent. The mine union in Cananea began to emerge in the late 1920s. The Aguirre family pattern of parallel wage-earning households characterizes the era when the mine working class consolidated itself in mine town communities.

But this way of life was abruptly cut short by the Depression. Because each family was dependent on the same enterprise, they were uniformly vulnerable to mine layoffs in the 1930s, and there was little they could do to help each other, except help to get out. Thus Chapter 5 discusses the kinship organization, in the Aguirre family, of the exodus from El Tigre.

## Cross-Border Families

This analysis of the mine community based on El Tigre understates one element which characterized the mine working class before 1929: the flow of people between a network of mine towns located in Arizona as well as Sonora. More precisely, the network was not towns but working class neighborhoods in these towns. The precondition for this situation was completely open population movement between

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the U.S. and Mexico before 1917, and substantially open visa policy until 1929. The analysis here of this phenomenon starts with two linked industrial neighborhoods, one in the U.S. and one in Mexico, and then considers briefly a family history which demonstrates the cross-border families of the period.

Pirtleville (also called Pueblo Nuevo by Spanish speakers) is a small unincorporated town west of Douglas and due north of the smelter. It began when men who had come to work in the construction of the two smelters were offered house lots for $20 by one Elmo Pirtle, one tenth the cost in Douglas, and so Mexican American smelter workers built their houses there.

Barrio Ferrocarril, despite its name, did not begin with railroad workers (there were a few), but again with smelter laborers. They opted to live in Mexico, rather than the U.S., avoiding paying rents or buying lots, and apparently took building materials from the smelters (Sandomingo, 1951). Although Ferrocarril was the first settlement in Agua Prieta, the lay-out of the town isolated it to the west of the railroad and directly south of the border and the smelter site. Thus, before the 1940s, it remained a relatively few scattered houses. Smelter labor predominated before the 1931 layoffs, but after 1916 residents of Ferrocarril were also given Agua Prieta ejido plots. Pueblo Nuevo and Barrio Ferrocarril although separated by the international boundary and the smelters

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were, as one resident of Ferrocarril put it, like two neighborhoods where one could just cross the fence and walk between them.[18]

In 1909 the immigration-restrictionist "Dillingham Committee" of the U.S. Senate (1911, 25: 188-190, 602-610) investigated the composition of workforces in Arizona copper smelters.[19] This information, combined with ethnographic information, indicates cross-border flows. The investigators found 947 Mexican nationals and 57 more native-born of Mexican fathers in the combined Douglas and Clifton smelter labor force of 1,566. In the same group, 902 of 1,279 general laborers were Mexican nationals, and only 20 Mexicans responding were not general laborers. The investigators report that "The largest wage group of the table is that for employees earning $1.50 but under $1.75 [a day], the lowest wages received by any adult employee. The importance of this wage group, however, is entirely due to the influence of the Mexicans, the Mexican Americans, and the Americans of Mexican descent, who include almost all of the employees within the group" (1911, 25: 193). All others were correspondingly better paid.

The Commission investigators also asked how many years it had been since the worker's first arrival in the U.S.: 438 had five years or less and 273 had five to nine, while 236 had more than ten years in the U.S. They asked about the location of these men's wives, which gives a useful indication about permanent household location and thus

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whether the migration was cyclical or permanent. There were 332 wives in the U.S. versus only 165 in Mexico, but on the other hand 411 men were single (totalling 576 "bachelor" male workers). The Dillingham statistics may show two portions of immigrants to Douglas and Clifton: permanent immigrant households and possibly cyclical migration of men.

Though no data was collected on origins within Mexico, family histories show in the earliest remembered generations (around the turn of the century) a flow from Northern Sonora to Douglas, and southern Arizona more generally, while Clifton was also known to have recruited workers from El Paso, the center for recruiting from interior Mexico.

## The Samaniegos: A Cross-Border Family

A case of a family which criss-crossed the international boundary from Pirtleville/Barrio Ferrocarril helps us interpret this data. Antonia Samaniego's father, his five brothers, and two sisters came from the small peasant village of Santa Cruz, Sonora (between Cananea and Nogales). Their widowed mother (the informant's FaMo) left Santa Cruz in 1903, where they were working as landless laborers for 50 centavos a day, and brought her sons to live in Pirtleville and work in the Douglas smelters and the Paul Spur lime plant for $1.50 U.S. a day. Her father worked on the construction of the roof and chimney of the Copper Queen smelter. He bought a cast-iron stove and a sewing machine for his mother, at Phelps Dodge Mercantile in Douglas, with

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the payments taken from his first paychecks--Antonia still has the stove and sewing machine.

Within a year or so, Antonia's grandmother and her unmarried sons moved to Barrio Ferrocarril on the opposite side of the smelter, although several married sons stayed in Paul Spur and Pirtleville. Antonia, who was not yet born, was uncertain about the reasons for this move, but what is certain is that her father and his brothers built a small adobe house for their mother in the Barrio, one of the first houses in Agua Prieta, and it still stands.

Antonia's father was sent back and forth by Phelps Dodge between their smelter in Douglas and their mine in Pilares de Nacozari, where he worked on the mine pumps. In Pilares he met Antonia's mother, her family having come there from Ures. When they married, their life was spent moving back and forth between Pilares and Agua Prieta: Antonia was born in Pilares where her mother had a sister, but registered in Agua Prieta. While Antonia was small, they lived sometimes in rented apartments in Nacozari de Garcia, and sometimes in her grandmother's house in Ferrocarril.

Antonia's father died in 1918, at the age of 33, of what Antonia said were lung problems acquired from work on the smelter. After her father died, her mother stayed in Barrio Ferrocarril with his family, and she supported herself and her children by sewing, cooking for sale at home, running a small restaurant, and panning for gold in

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the Sierra south of Agua Prieta. When she was older, Antonia went to work for a doctor caring for patients, and later became a licensed midwife, and she always lived in the same neighborhood her grandmother settled in, Barrio Ferrocarril.

## Cross-Border Families: Conclusions

What we notice in these histories, besides the constant moving about, is that the international border was very permeable. Sonorans had always moved north to the frontier side which when it was ceded, was called Arizona. The industrial infrastructure of copper mining and railroads linked both sides of the border; indeed, one company, Phelps Dodge, spanned Nacozari, Douglas, Bisbee, and Clifton-Morenci. Skills gained in mines, mills, and smelters on one side were readily applicable on the other, as were recommendations by Phelps Dodge supervisors. Visas could be readily obtained before policy was made deliberately restrictive for Mexican applicants in 1929; and crossing the border, with or without permission, was easy because there was no or little border patrol and border fence to contend with. The result for the Dillingham investigators was Mexican "immigrants", but the result for Sonoran-Arizonans were cross-border families, not just in the important sense of kinship, but in work, residence, and the activity of daily life. The closure of visa policy, the 1930s repatriation, the fence and the coercive control of the

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boundary-line, either broke many of these flows or made them difficult and dangerous (Chapter 5).

## Insecurity in the Mine Towns

The picture presented of the mine community is too neat because it ignores the factors which undercut the wage earning pattern. The "conditions of security" had an enormous power in determining the patterns of life-courses. These include work safety and occupational health, and also the compensation or lack thereof for illness and death of wage earners, as well as layoffs and indemnities, or lack thereof. "Conditions of security" are important anywhere, of course, but they are particularly important for situations such as mine towns where women and children depend on one major male wage-earner. The terrible conditions of work and inevitable silicosis made widows of miner's wives. Widows and children had no security because they did not get indemnities or pensions before the mid-1930's.

Before the 1910 revolution, safety regulation was non-existent in Mexico; for example, the 50 peso compensation for fatal accidents was cheaper than alternative safety measures. The first safety laws for mines were promulgated in 1912 but remained until the late 1920's before they were enforced. In those years the first effective mine inspections were made, timbering required, first aid training instituted, and most importantly, arbitration

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boards and government inspectors held corporations responsible for accidents, making safety cheaper than lives. Phelps Dodge, at Nacozari, to give credit where credit is due, instituted model safety measures that not only were the best in Mexico, but also in comparison to the U.S..

In December 1928, water drilling to dampen dust was mandated, an important though incomplete measure to reduce silicosis. Leland in 1930 stated that all drilling except sampling used wet drills at Pilares de Nacozari, while Peña and Chávez report that Cananea lagged until 1932. Compensation for silicosis was the thrust of the Cárdenas years (1934-1940). Mine companies were required to inspect new hires for silicosis and either reject them or accept all responsibility for compensation for occupational loss of lungs and life, at 75 percent wages. The law had the contradictory effect of giving more security for the employed worker should he become ill, but also producing a large group of rejected miners who had to make do with prospecting and firewood gathering on the edges of the giant mines. More generally, in the 1930's the strong national and local mine unions and the Cárdenas government with its labor constituency brought all variety of safety and health laws into reality. In 1925, there were 27,163 mining accidents leading to 378 deaths; in 1931, 10,315 accidents and 125 deaths; and in 1936, 72 deaths (Bernstein, 1964: 156, 193).

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In Sonora, state laws guaranteed miner's widows a pension (no amounts are cited), and federal regulations supplemented by union contracts mandated compensation for accidents up to 914 day's wages. In fatal accidents, companies had to pay 612 day's wages and 30 days for the funeral expenses. These laws came into force in the 1930's, though, and previous decades had offered little in this way (Bernstein, 1964: 194). As for silicosis, the 1936 law mandated that occupationally ill workers were compensated at 75 percent of their pay (Bernstein, 1964: 193); but Peña and Chávez' history of Cananea makes it clear that the company there obstructed this law by firing workers with silicosis amidst the 1930s layoffs.

For unemployment compensation, the law required three months pay, plus 20 days per year of seniority, but as we saw in Chapter 2, when Nacozari and El Tigre closed and Cananea cut back, this amount was not forthcoming. Instead, negotiation and power plays by mine companies, labor unions, federal work inspectors, and Sonoran state governors ended in diverse results, from reductions of hours worked to shameless abandonment in lieu of indemnities. (The summary of safety and security issues draws on Leland, 1930; Bernstein, 1964; and Peña and Chávez, 1985).

Safety, disability compensation, protection of widows, and employment security was significantly increased for employed miners with union contracts (e.g. Cananea) beginning in the mid-1930's. However, the majority of

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miners lost their jobs during the depression (e.g. El Tigre, Nacozari before 1937). Some of them worked as prospectors inside extremely dangerous abandoned mines and tunnels, or in small, marginal mines, with no effective protection. Thus a large population was as insecure as before.

I have treated the mine community as typologically male wage earning households with very little to say about women. In reality, widows and their children occur at key points in many of the histories. This should not surprise us; the insecurity of mine work systematically produced such people. They are the "alternative forms" of the formative working class; and the next chapter brings us to consider important features of this period bypassed in the discussion of one type of male industrial worker.

## Conclusion

These histories have permitted us to get inside the generalization "formation of the working class". Land pressure from outside the community split peasants in the process of inheritance, and leverage into the labor market brought blocs of these siblings into the wage work locations. Permanence of wage work was "built into" lives through careers dedicated to seeking work, cash, and access to consumer goods brought from the U.S. In the mine towns, the working class consolidated into parallel wage-based households, and over time a single-enterprise community structure lead to a strong mineworkers' union. These

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communities before 1929 formed an industrial and human network which crossed the border between Sonora and Arizona. However, the danger of mine work and lack of security constantly threatened wage-based households, and the single-enterprise community as a whole was helpless in the face of mine shutdowns which began in 1930.

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1. My informant's, Antonio's, knowledge of his mother's siblings was obtained because his mother moved with her children in the late 1930s to Nacozari and stayed with a widowed sister there; leaving the mine towns in the 1940s, these two sets of cousins took two alternate routes out, Antonio and his siblings via lumber mills to the border at Agua Prieta, and his aunt and cousins to the coast at Hermosillo.

2. This material is based on documents kindly provided me by the family, and copied in longhand. Several of them were testimonials written for legal appeals over lands in Pivipa. Copies are in the files of the author.

3. The hacienda of Tonibabi included the lands of Pivipa and Terapa. I am not sure what else this grant might have included. In Sanderson, the ejido is named Tonibabi.

4. Corroborating evidence of Guadalupe's close association with Calles can be found in Horton's account of the 1929 military rebellion against Calles, where Guadalupe, who was known to her husband as a former worker, suddenly arrived at her home in Pilares seeking refuge, fearing that he would be captured by the anti-Calles rebels who then controlled Agua Prieta and Nacozari; he also boasted to her that he would bring 150 men with rifles from his village, if he could avoid capture, which he did not--he was later released; Horton, 1968: Chapter 18).

5. Guadalupe himself appears at times to have worked outside Pivipa to earn money--for instance, he was a night watchman in the American section of Pilares de Nacozari in 1929 (Horton, 1968).

6. The land eventually was given by José to his father's first cousins, after a land dispute in the Hernández family unrelated to the events narrated in the text.

7. Impersonal in this sense is not to say that kinship, for example, or blacklists, etc. disappeared from the process of hiring in the mines.

8. One must wonder, however, about the large figure cited for 1907, a badly depressed year in the metal mines in the U.S. and northern Mexico.

9. Indirect supporting evidence can be found in J. Remigo Agraz' numismatical review of company tokens from Sonora (1984). The cases he cites are predominantly from the mines of Alamos in the southern part of the state, or haciendas in the same region. He does not cite any from Cananea, Nacozari, etc.--however, the review concentrates on the nineteenth century. He does cite examples from Las Prietas

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near Hermosillo and La Trinidad and Mulatos in the District of Sahuaripa which were large early industrial mines.

10. Detailed information about company store and mine consumption does not exist. We should know about the levels of credit, the interest rates and mark-up, and the distributions of purchases.

11. To reduce the length of this dissertation I do not report the details of this history but I have consulted it to support my generalizations here.

12. Although this is not relevant to the turn of the century era, I would like to point out that Sheridan's results indicate that Cucurpe was not per se exporting young women to the maquiladora economy (any more than it exported young men), although the large border city of Nogales is quite close to Cucurpe; this contrasts with the early New England rural supply of single young women to factories.

13. Although Esqueda is near several mines, it was a farm and railroad town until the new smelter for "La Caridad" was built there.

14. Even the architecture reflected American rather than local patterns--sawed timber walls, tin roofs for workers, and for company managers, brick walls--choices of materials which persist as working class ideas of houses even today.

15. Proof of this bold proposition can be found numerous times in Ingersoll's reminiscences, if we read through his naive understanding of what was at work. For example, once he stumbled on a covert arrangement to cheat the company by a rayador who added an extra five cars a day to one contractor's total, worth thirty more dollars in a week, by shorting the contractor one day's added work. In one incident he offended the pride and injured the material interests of a contractor by mistakenly failing to count one half of his crew's work. The contractor said to Ingersoll in great anger that he thought the American was his friend, told him of the woe to his family, and asked what grudge did he have against him. When Ingersoll refused to budge, the contractor retreated to sudden silence and then accepted in a sickly sweet tone that the American engineer was really his friend and could have the 200 dollars, etc. One could hardly illustrate any better a combination of anger and dependence in the context of social race.

Lastly, Ingersoll gives us a general view of measurement day when engineers determined the extra pay of each crew. Each time, the contractors would charge in, apparently enraged, and yell at the engineers in rapid fire Spanish that they deserved more. The American engineers would try to baffle the contractors with technical jargon, or buck it up to the foreman. In particular as the rookie

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engineer, three or four contractors at once would try to pressure Ingersoll: "It took me some time ... to realize that the performance was a well-established custom, almost a religious rite." (Ingersoll, 1924: 41-42, 66, 78-80).

16. What was the relation of the new union with the existing organization of authority among miners who worked in the contract system? The position of key union leaders in the contract system would be interesting to know, for example--were they experienced miners, or younger men? We do know that the union insisted on several reforms, especially the direct and definite payment of shares to the crew, which removed most of the personal power of the contractor. Contractors no longer profited by paying crews less. The union also insisted on preference for positions going on strict seniority, which removed company favoritism in advancement and the giving out of contracts. One former worker at Pilares de Nacozari who I spoke to insisted to me that these changes were the real accomplishments of the union. Additionally, as the nature of the mines changed from underground to surface mining there were less contract positions and more straight wage positions operating equipment.

17. Related changes occurred in the 1940's in the U.S. because the CIO unions such as the one at the Douglas smelter attacked the old Arizona mine racial hierarchy: the union eliminated the segregation of jobs and facilities, and allowed Mexican American workers to advance to better paid craft positions by seniority, and insisted on equal pay rather than the discriminatory "Mexican wage".

18. I am summarizing a great deal of research here; more details can be found in my histories of Douglas and Agua Prieta cited in the bibliography.

19. It is not possible to isolate specifically Pirtleville and Ferrocarril, or even Douglas in the Report tables.

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# CHAPTER 4

## ALTERNATIVE FORMS IN THE MINE PERIOD, 1886-1949

A male wage based family can be called the ideal type of the mine period. However, real family histories show alternative forms equally characterize this phase of history. The conditions of insecurity in mine work and poor health more generally made widows and orphans frequent in the genealogies I collected. Therefore, these alternative forms came from the same causes which made the male wage dominant. In order to understand the life-courses of these alternative families, our analysis of the wage economy must not stop at the dominant industrial workplaces of the era; they must also examine men's and women's work, industrial skills, and widows' businesses.

The first two histories, the Galaz and Acosta, are cases were the widow was relatively young, and thus concentrate on new forms of women's money earning work which utilized technologies of industrial derivation; while in the Durazo and Cordoba stories which follow, the widows were older, and the histories concentrate on the cyclical migratory work in the U.S. of their sons. Accompanying the histories are commentaries on two subtle but powerful processes: how the character of widow's businesses and work favored resettlement in urban (border or mine) areas; and the emergence of gender-tied bodies of knowledge about new

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industrial technologies. It is my contention that these processes became generalized after the massive disemployment of miners and repatriates, and thus in the succeeding chapter we can study the origins and character of these processes in order to comprehend the post-1929 period.

## Two Working Widows

### Amalia Galaz

In 1932, Amalia Galaz was a widow with three small children, running a tiny restaurant in one room of her adult daughter and son-in-law's house. The history of Amalia Galaz looks at how she used her cooking skills after she was widowed from her second husband, a miner, and it looks at the relationships with her daughters, including the transmission of skills among women. Amalia had been born in a small village, Tres Alamos, in the rural municipality of Aconchi, located on the upper Río Sonora valley. Her daughter Francisca, my informant, was not sure when her mother was born but from her age at marriages and death, it was in the range 1890 to 1900. Amalia had a brother and a sister who stayed in Tres Alamos, where her brother worked or owned land and had some cattle. Neither was married and there were no descendants on that side. Her mother married around 1916 in Aconchi and had one daughter before her first husband died or left her. Evidently, Francisca, who grew up in a mine town, as did her older half-sister, knew little about her mother's family.

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Amalia remarried, this time to Ildefonso Lopez, a miner working at Las Chispas, a middle sized gold mine (150 employed) in the municipality of Arizpe, just up the river valley from Amalia's home in Tres Alamos (Gracida, 1985: 84; Radding, 1985: 334). Francisca, their first child, was born in 1925, and her younger full-sister and brother in 1927 and 1929 respectively (see Chart 5). Ildefonso was from Culiacan, Sinaloa, and he had worked in several mines in the state of Sonora. He may have been suffering from silicosis ("he was sick in the lungs") while Francisca was a young girl and he had to quit the mine. He went to work selling lunches in Cananea (again, near this area), and finally died of his ailment in 1932--he was about thirty when he died.

So Amalia Galaz was widowed again. This time, however, she did not remarry; her first daughter was old enough to help her survive. Luisa was 16 in 1932, she had married, and she was expecting her first child. She married Ricardo Rodríguez, who had been managing a mine company store at Las Palmas near Hermosillo; when they married, he had been hired to run the company store at Santo Domingo in the municipality of Nacozari. Luisa sent for her newly bereaved mother to help her with the birth of her child. Thus Amalia and her three remaining children, the oldest seven, moved to Santo Domingo.

Santo Domingo was a substantial copper mine, though not on the scale of Pilares de Nacozari; I estimate it had several hundred workers but this is not documented. This

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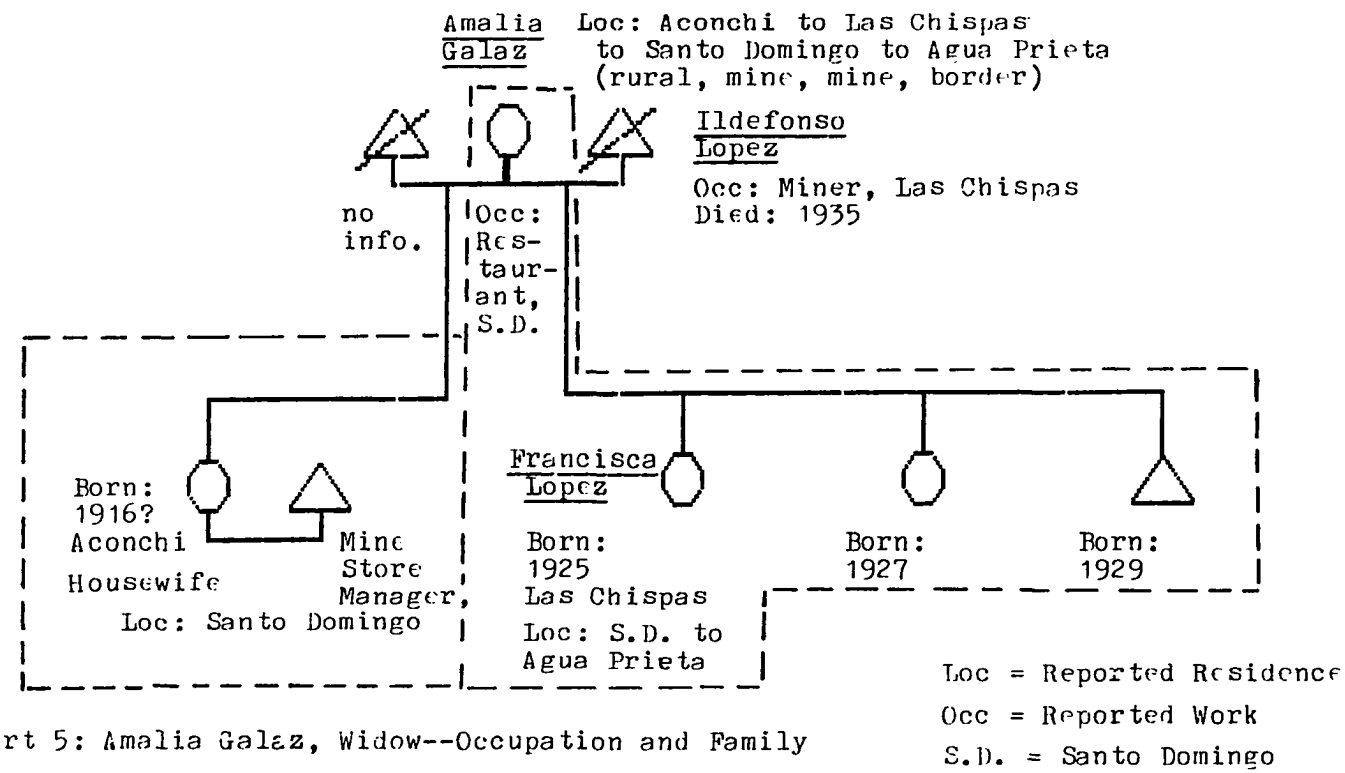


Chart 5: Amalia Galaz, Widow--Occupation and Family

mine was owned by Susano Montano, who also owned the company store that was managed by Ricardo Rodríguez, but Montano contracted a succession of Americans to operate the mine itself. In terms of production the mine was an annex of the Phelps Dodge complex, since the milled ore from Santo Domingo was sent to Nacozari de Garcia to be concentrated and then on to Douglas to be smelted.

Amalia opened a restaurant in a rented room which served bachelor miners and peddlers who came through the Santo Domingo, while she lived with her daughter's family. The first restaurant was successful enough that Amalia decided to build her own house, a four room house with two bedrooms, a kitchen, and a front room for the restaurant. Francisca and her younger brother and sister grew up working in their mother's restaurant, cleaning tables and serving food. The restaurant was supplied on credit from the Santo Domingo company store, managed by Amalia's son-in-law.

Working for her mother, Francisca learned household skills which used new technologies rather than traditional hand-skills. She learned to cook on a cast-iron firewood stove, not on a clay oven and pottery comal, as had her mother. She learned to grind corn nixtamal in a hand-driven corn mill, a manufactured iron one, and she told me that she did not learn how to use the stone metate and mano with which her mother made the masa finer. Some of the other items of food technology were still traditional--for example, they kept vegetables and cheese cool in wet, clean

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sand and cool water in new, porous pottery urns covered with wet cloth, both of which operate on the principle of heat loss by evaporation. Meat was best preserved by drying and sun-curing.

Changes in clothing skills were similar. Francisca learned to sew on a sewing machine that her mother bought with the earnings of the restaurant; her mother had had to sell a previous machine because she could not carry it with her to Santo Domingo. Fabric and cloth peddlers, called hacheteros, brought these items to Santo Domingo, almost all from the U.S. side via Agua Prieta and Nacozari. Clothing styles, both bought and made at home, reflected the contemporaneous fashions of skirt lengths, while the older form of long skirts and rebozos were not worn. In Chapter 5, we will return to the subsequent history of the Galaz family in Santo Domingo and their move to Agua Prieta.

## Margarita Encinas de Acosta

This history also deals with the widow of a miner, told from the point of view of a daughter, and likewise emphasizes women's skills utilizing new technologies and styles derived from the U.S. This time the discussion concentrates on sewing. It also allows us to explore the manners in which Mestizo Mexicans moved into the mine working class, a subject which applies to the discussion of sources in the preceeding chapter.

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Manuela Acosta Encinas, my informant, was born in Nacozari de Garcia to Margarita Encinas de Acosta and Trinidad Acosta. Her father was a plumber for the mine company in Pilares de Nacozari. Her mother was born in 1906 in Mulatos, Sonora, and she married Trinidad in 1921 in Nacozari de Garcia. They had three other children, all boys. Trinidad died in 1931, of pneumonia, which killed him after his lungs were weak from so many years in the mines,[1] leaving Margarita widowed at the age of 25.

Manuela described her grandfather (FaFa), as a gambusino, a prospector who had "mine fever". She indicated the character of his work by saying that he had companeros, by which Sonorans mean equal partners in work, rather than employees. He prospected about the Trinidad area (in the district of Sahuaripa), but ended up living in Pilares de Nacozari. There, Manuela's grandmother (FaMo) worked as a midwife. She delivered Manuela.

Manuela's father and a brother, as young men, went from Pilares to Douglas to work in the smelter. They wandered about some; they also worked in the copper mine at Miami, Arizona. Trinidad's brother stayed in the U.S. working, until he retired to Santa Ana, Sonora, where he bought a store and ranch.[2] Trinidad, on the other hand, returned to Mexico from the Douglas smelter to work as a plumber in Pilares de Nacozari, where he married Margarita.

Margarita Encinas' father (the informant's MoFa) was originally from Madera, Chihuahua, but he married and raised

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his family nearby in Mulatos, Sonora, in the district of Sahuaripa. In Mulatos he owned many cattle, agricultural lands, and a mine in partnership with some Americans. He bought cattle in Sahuaripa and Chihuahua and assembled large parties to drive to the railhead at Nacozari. To keep the cattle there while they were sold, her father rented a ranch in a nearby village, Los Hoyos, and built a large, handsome house in Nacozari de Garcia.

Federico Encinas, the grandfather, died in 1921. The family businesses were split in half.[3] The ranches in Mulatos were held by the oldest two daughters (MoSi) whose husbands were ranchers in the area. Federico's widow kept the house and the share of the cattle in Los Hoyos. With her came three daughters and the two youngest sons, at that time all single. She kept the cattle by partido, or calf-sharecropping, arrangements with local ranchers. They favored the city life, staying in the great house in Nacozari, and the ranch went downhill. As adults, all but one of the siblings who came to Nacozari ended up living in urban locations in the U.S. or Sonoran border cities (see Chart 6).

Margarita and one sister soon married, Margarita to Trinidad Acosta in 1921, staying nearby her mother's house, and the other who married a store-owner and moved with him to Magdalena, Sonora (a town near Nogales). The third sister in Nacozari worked in a bakery and stayed at home helping her mother, and several years later she married a

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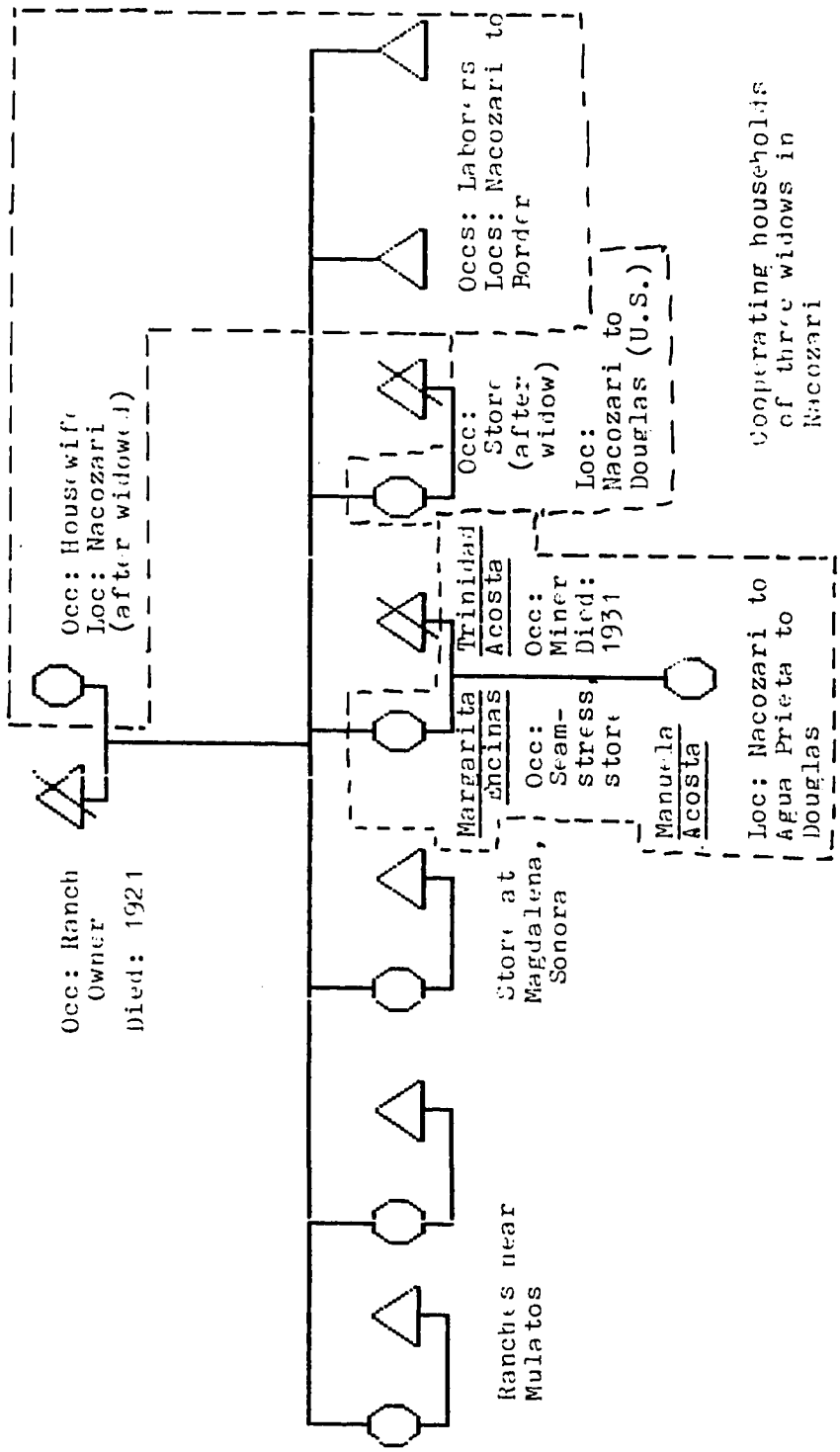


Chart 6: Margarita Encinas, widow--Occupation and Family
Loc = Reported Residence; Occ = Reported Work

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man who was the municipal treasurer of Nacozari de Garcia. He died, leaving her with two daughters (I do not have the precise year but this was the mid-1930s). Margarita was already widowed in 1931, so that she, her sister Ernestina, and her mother Maria were left together in Nacozari.

After Trinidad Acosta died, Margarita got an indemnity, a fixed sum, not a pension, from the mine company (Manuela, who was five then, was not sure how much). She made a brief (several month) move immediately after she was bereaved to Agua Prieta to try, unsuccessfully, to immigrate to the U.S.. Back in Nacozari, with three small children and one more coming, she had to go out to work. She worked as a seamstress in a shop where they cleaned and fixed formal clothes. Manuela was not sure how much she earned but she remembers that she worked very hard and many extra hours. The shop closed up within a year. During this time, the town of Nacozari was badly depressed because the mine was closed.

Margarita had learned to sew from her mother, the informant's MoMo, on a sewing machine. Margarita had her own sewing machine ever since she married, but while her husband was alive, she could afford to buy clothes. When she was widowed, she not only sewed for others, she also made the clothes for herself and the children. Only a special dress would be bought. They copied the styles out of Sears and other catalogs; Manuela's grandmother told

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Manuela about old-fashioned long skirts, but she and her daughters wore "modern" dresses.

Of course, learning to copy dress styles on a sewing machine was a part of an entire complex of changes that adhered to material culture imported from the United States. Indeed, when Manuela was growing up in Nacozari, people nicknamed it "Douglas chico"--little Douglas. Out of many items that Manuela described for me, I will name just a few. When Margarita married, among the items she and her husband bought were American dishes (at the company store), a large clock (and Trinidad also had a watch), a radio and a phonograph, and an American made bed, mattress, and even a baby crib. Manuela's family celebrated Christmas "American style", with a Christmas tree, Santa Claus, dolls, little soldiers, little dishes, etc. They kept the tradition of visiting on Christmas eve, the posada, but they had left behind the traditional manner of giving gifts on the day of the Reyes Magos, on January 6.

When the seamstress shop closed, Margarita again moved to Agua Prieta with the help of her husband's brother (the one who had stayed working in the Douglas smelter). She went to see if there was more opportunities for business there, but there was no work in Douglas during the depression, and the U.S. had made it hard to get immigration visas in the 1930s. In Agua Prieta she worked in a restaurant, which she found hard with small children and no female kin nearby to help her. This contrasts with Amalia

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Galaz whose restaurant was in or near her daughter's house. Margarita returned to Nacozari de Garcia in about 1933 or 1934.

Back in Nacozari, Margarita worked independently as a seamstress. She also sold factory clothes from Mexico City that she had on order, and made food to sell.[4] She was able to do this because she lived in her mother's house and her mother (the informant's MoMo) could take care of her children. Meanwhile, her sister Ernestina (MoSi), also widowed, had opened a tiny store, the type that Mexicans refer to as changarro. After several years, Margarita saved enough from her little businesses to buy a small house and put in a changarro; also her oldest daughter, Manuela, was by then about 9 or 10 and could help in the store. Manuela's mother and aunt were able to exchange help and stock in the two stores,[5] and both had the help of their mother (MoMo) with childcare (see Chart 6 on the lines of help among the women).

In the late 1930s, Ernestina moved from Nacozari to Agua Prieta, and then a few years later to Douglas. Her oldest daughter had married in Douglas, and she brought her mother to the border, and later, to the U.S. Ernestina helped her sister Margarita to return to Agua Prieta in 1942 or 1943 (when Manuela was 16 or 17), and gave her a small house. Manuela's oldest brother had apprenticed in printing in Nacozari, and in Agua Prieta he opened up a print shop which supported the family.

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In 1950, Manuela married a man from Douglas, a furnace fireman at the smelter, and she went to live in Douglas neolocally. Her mother later stayed with relatives (on her late husband's side) in Douglas until she passed away in 1974. One brother married an American citizen and later went to the West Coast where he worked as a mechanic, farm laborer, and such. The youngest brother married a woman from Agua Prieta, but he immigrated to Douglas and then went on to Tucson, where he has a second-hand store. Ernestina went to Tucson with her married daughter (the other married there), where she worked in a number of jobs like sewing and home care before she remarried. Margarita and Ernestina's two youngest brothers and their children followed similar paths, though Manuela, who grew up around her mother and sister, described their lives less; they came to Agua Prieta (one later went to Nogales, Sonora), both worked as construction laborers, and their children, as described by Manuela in the genealogy, form a typical mixture of Mexican border residents and immigrants to southern Arizona.

There remains only one comment: Margarita had moved to Agua Prieta thrice and tried to immigrate at Douglas twice. The first attempts were not successful because in the 1930s Agua Prieta was very depressed for lack of exports and layoffs of Aguapretense at the Douglas smelter. Evidently, even an equally depressed Nacozari offered a better opportunity for Margarita's and Ernestina's businesses. But in the 1940s Agua Prieta was booming with commerce derived

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from the U.S. of World War II, the smelter was hiring, and there was a steady stream of legal immigration to the U.S.; while Nacozari was operating, but visibly stagnating. For both widows, the evidence shows they had a goal of going to the border and immigrating to the U.S.

## Widow's Work and Kin Relationships of Women

Let us now consider the jobs and businesses of widows, and their wider implications for the family histories. Widows appear frequently in these histories. Men died in mine accidents, from silicosis, during the 1919 Spanish flu, from malaria and tuberculosis and other endemic diseases in the countryside, in the Revolution, etc. Women were also abandoned by husbands. I also suspect that women married at a younger age than their husband's, and may have survived longer. All of these qualitative points are ripe for quantitative demographic history. Of course, many wives died--of disease, in childbirth--and left men widowers with families. But men whose wives died might remarry or leave children with female kin, and they would not necessarily change their work, while for a housewife, widowhood meant a profound change for her and her children.

Widows with young children sometimes look for jobs, but frequently try to set up their own businesses that operate out of their houses. Widows with teenage and older children will not work for money, but their children will; and widows with married children, especially married daughters, may

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offer help in childcare while living with or near them. The two cases examined above were women with access to very good resources in their families: Margarita Acosta came from a prosperous family, and her mother's house was important to her survival; Amalia Galaz' son-in-law gave her credit at the Santo Domingo company store for her restaurant, with tacit company approval. In each case these resources enabled the widow's business to thrive. I want to insist, however, that the process of widowhood and subsequent activities are general, and access to supportive resources determines the degree of prosperity or misery in particular cases.

The occupations which appeared in the two family histories above are seamstress, clothes selling, small stores, food cooking for sale, and restaurants. We should also add paid domestic labor. The key items of technology include the sewing machine, the cast-iron stove, and the hand turned corn-mill. The knowledge of contemporary, U.S.-derived fashion was important. Women's work for money (jobs, businesses), sometimes appears to be an extension of "customary" household tasks.[6] This is not an adequate explanation, however; people are capable of great alterations, especially in life crisis situations. Widows in Sonora undertook these occupations because these were the gender-specific skills and technology they had available in the early twentieth-century; they were not traditional female technologies but new ones, which came from the U.S.

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at the same time as the industrial mines. Margarita and Amalia did choose types of production which could be conducted in the house with minimal interference with household tasks; in this sense they were "extensions."

Widows choose larger towns, mine centers, border cities in Mexico, and U.S. cities when they make residential moves. The reason is that the markets for women's work and business are better in larger and more commercialized places--the closer to the border, the better. Restaurants do better with miners and travelers, there is more cash to spend on dresses and suits, and so forth. In turn, because young widows bring unmarried children with them, their residential changes have ramifying effects on family histories. Over the long run, this was a major factor in relocating people closer to the urban, industrial, wage economy, and particularly, the border.[7]

When Amalia Galaz was widowed, she moved in with her oldest daughter; her son-in-law aided her supply the restaurant; and her daughter, Francisca, worked in the restaurant. The interrelationships between Margarita Acosta, her mother, and her sister are too manifold to repeat. There was a characteristic pattern of kinship relationships among women in the wage period. Evidence from material culture histories included in the synopses of family histories shows relationships along which women had acquired appliances and learned the skills of their use.

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There is evidence that appliances were inherited from mothers to daughters, particularly at the daughter's marriage. For example, note the sewing machine inherited at marriage cited in Angelita Aguirre's history in Chapters 3 and 5. Appliances and skills became a sort of dowry. Daughters worked for their mothers learning skills, a sort of apprenticeship. There was a reason for this pattern to emerge in the early industrial period. Women had an interest in investing in appliances and production skills because they could foresee the insecurities of life.

Appliances were most likely obtained with a male wage, whether that of a son or a husband. The mine company store credit system favored that route. One of the questions is how women got men to spend money on them in the male wage system. The other point is that women's relationships with their daughters differed from that of men's with sons. Daughters worked for mothers in expectation of an inheritance, similarly to the way sons worked for fathers on the land--but not like the male situation of young men seeking their own work careers in the industrial wage context. After all, most women's work (except certain jobs that unmarried daughters might take), unlike that of men, was still not paid in wages, though it might have involved a business that brought in cash. There was a logic to the strong kinship ties among women, particularly mothers and daughters.

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## Miners and Wives: Power Over Income and Consumption

To explore the manner in which women could obtain important appliances in a male wage-earner context we return to the male wage based households of employed miners. In the mine towns, men worked outside the house and received the cash wage, while most women did the unpaid work of the household. The major determinants of women's lives were in the hands of men--husbands, fathers, sons--their position in the workplace hierarchy of the mine determined their pay, their standing at the company store, the size of their house. In this situation women work hard, they have few opportunities for public communication and roles, and they depend on men for money. Thus they are subject to terrible abuses by men since women have few alternatives to get money, and these may be worse. This has been documented and analyzed for mines by June Nash (1979), plantations by Laurel Bossen (1984), and textile factory workers by Frances Rothstein (1982): the first two cases in particular "unitary" communities, where most jobs are for men.

This also characterizes the hard-drinking Sonoran miners; however, there was a source of considerable female power in the company towns which has been overlooked. When wives shopped during the week at the company store on their husband's ticket, the bill was deducted from the pay check, thus reducing the cash husbands had to spend with their friends drinking on pay days and increasing the consumption of the family. Buying furniture and appliances in stores

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and dealers on credit has the same effect. This was discussed several times with me in Douglas, where Phelps Dodge Mercantile still uses this system. The best evidence is material culture histories. One case were the stove and sewing machine--which I saw--bought by Antonia Samaniego's father for his mother (cited in Chapter 3). These purchases which went to women not only served in the short run to redirect spending to the family, but in the long run they were valuable investments--under the control of women--which could be sold or used in bad times.

## The Implications of Widows' Work Patterns

Women possibly invested in technologies of the new industrial era in response to the insecurities of life around them. Work and skills involving these technologies were organized through the daughter-mother relationship. The widows in need took advantage of these relationships and skills. In their businesses, they tended to relocate households toward urban centers, places with cash and commerce. This affected several family histories over the long run toward the border. The histories of widows are important for the mine period, and they also show patterns which reappear in the period after the mines had closed, and families moved toward the border. In that period women operated home-based businesses and family investments during times when their husbands had lost industrial jobs, or were away from home doing migratory work in the U.S.. Therefore the skills, markets, and kinship developed by women in the

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first decades of industrial work and technology set the pattern for subsequent generations of women.

## Two U.S. Work Histories of Widows' Sons

The following two histories are based on what now elderly men told me about their migratory work as young men in the U.S. They show the patterns through which sons remitted money to widowed mothers, which differ from the close overlap of work seen between mothers and daughters. These histories concentrate on the male work careers which emerge from learning and purchasing items of industrial technology. The Carlos Córdoba history contains especially valuable information on the male lines of apprenticeship in learning new mechanical skills, while the Pedro Durazo history shows how work in the U.S. enabled him to purchase trucks. These histories also inform us of the character of migratory work in the U.S. in an era of relatively open access prior to 1929.

### Carlos Córdoba

Consuelo Hoyos de Córdoba was widowed when her husband, Ramón Córdoba, a Mexican customs patrolman on horseback, was killed by American soldiers in a tragically mistaken incident in January 1918 near the border crossing of San Bernardino, east of Agua Prieta. U.S. soldiers had crossed onto the Mexican side, apparently to hunt at the San Bernardino marshes, and when they were challenged by the Mexican horse patrol, they shot and killed three men,

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including Ramón Córdoba (this version of the story comes from Ramón's son Carlos, confirmed in the recollections of Agua Prieta by Sandomingo, 1951: 200).

Ramón Cordoba was born in Tecoripa, Sonora (in mountainous central Sonora), about 1870. Carlos believes that his father's parents came from the District of the southern city of Alamos, the old silver mining center. He had three brothers and a sister; the brothers who I have information about moved to the coast--one was a train engineer at Empalme; another was a leather worker in a small factory in Hermosillo--this would be when Carlos knew them in the 1920s.

Ramón himself lived near Cananea in 1909, when Carlos was born, and where Ramón worked on horseback on a ranch El Secret (not a Cananea company ranch). Carlos' mother was from the District of Alamos and we estimated that she was born around 1876, but Carlos knew little else about her origins or family. Ramón's sister was married to a blacksmith/mechanic and they lived in Cananea. Both Ramón and his brother-in-law Francisco had moved to Agua Prieta by 1914 (Carlos witnessed the siege of Agua Prieta in 1915). Relations between these two families were very close (see Chart 7).

When Ramón Córdoba was killed, his wife Consuelo received a small and irregular pension from the government, and she moved in with her husband's sister and brother-in-law. While Carlos was growing up, he and his cousin (one

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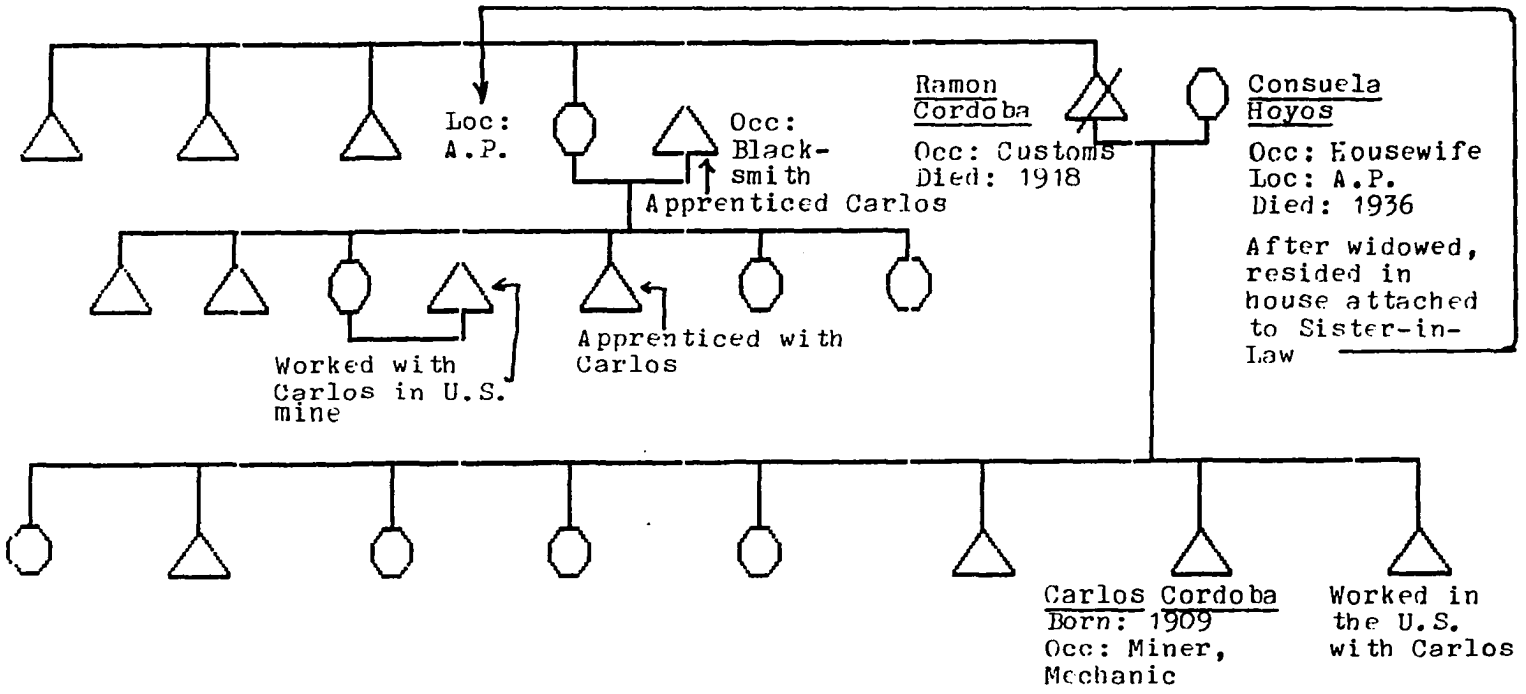


Chart 7: Carlos Cordoba Family, with relations of widow and son

Loc = Reported Residence; Occ = Reported Work

son of the aunt with whom they lived, his FaSiSo) worked in his uncle's blacksmith shop (Chart 7). They were not paid, because they were "family". There Carlos learned the properties of steel and iron, forging and tempering, types of tools, and so forth. They worked on horse carriages, and they also worked on the first cars in Agua Prieta.

Though Carlos and his cousin learned traditional skills such as hot and cold forging iron, they also learned to use American measurements, parts, and simple drilling and machining. Cananea and Agua Prieta were centers for new mechanical technology imported from the U.S. side. They learned both by direct instruction and by observation with imitation. One change in the shift toward the modern working class may be a change in learning from observation and imitation to direct instruction in person and by books and schools. Carlos' uncle was, in Carlos' estimation, a very respected craftsman, his cousin became an reputable blacksmith, and Carlos himself became an outstanding machinist.

In 1923, Carlos went to Hermosillo, where he attended a year of the Cruz Galvez school, a vocational school for orphans set up by Plutarco Elías Calles, and where, incidently, he studied shoemaking with his uncle (FaBr). In 1924, he was back in Agua Prieta, and he went to the U.S. side to work for the first time, at the age of 15. He went to Nogales, paid 18 dollars, and obtained a visa to immigrate permanently.

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He went to Douglas where he had a friend (not a kinsman) who was his partner (compañero) in wandering about and working. They worked at the Paul Lime quarry, located halfway between Douglas and Bisbee, which supplied metallurgical lime to the Douglas smelter. Today, the Paul Lime plant is a twenty minute drive from Douglas, but in 1924 it was a separate little company town, with houses for married workers and dormitories for bachelors such as Carlos and his companion. They visited Douglas, his friend's mother's house, on Saturday nights after work, to rest and enjoy their break. Carlos loaded and emptied the "charge" of limestone as it went into the furnaces to be roasted and purified; he made $2.50 a day, cash.[8] The work was hot and heavy, and from his description, did not seem to utilize or develop his skills. He worked at Paul Lime for three years.

I asked Carlos why he chose to work in the U.S. rather than Mexico during 1924 to 1929, when mines were prospering in Sonora. He replied that in Mexico he would have earned less (approximately the equivalent of $1.50 U.S. dollars, at 2 to 1), that mines in Mexico were further from his home in Agua Prieta than most of his jobs in the U.S., and that jobs were harder to find in Mexico. He did go to work in Sonora after 1929. I also add that adventuring about Arizona in various jobs was easier for a single young man than a older or married man.

During 1927 to 1928, Carlos worked in the Copper Queen mine (Phelps Dodge) at Bisbee. He worked above ground, in

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the maintenance department, keeping track of tools given out to workers.[9] At some time in these years, Carlos went with his younger brother to California, where they worked transplanting and picking tomatoes and in the construction of a railroad bridge for the Santa Fe railroad, jobs which they got from a employment agency in Los Angeles.

The last job Carlos had in the U.S. was in a small mine in Cochise County, Arizona (the county in which Douglas and Bisbee are placed). He worked there for just over a year, from 1928 to 1929. There workers were paid by the amount of ore and its metal content; he left there with 100 dollars savings after that year of work. The way Carlos describes it, he was not repatriated (in the sense of being "sent"), but he left the U.S. because the mine closed in the great crisis of 1929, and there was no work to be found. He left, like many Mexican immigrants, without advising the U.S. immigration, so he lost his visa and could not return (which would have been difficult anyway).

Looking back on his time in the U.S., Carlos realized that he had not saved up much money from all that work; though he had intended to work at one job steadily and put together money, his jobs were too irregular. The money he saved mostly went to his mother. He and his brother bought, in the U.S., wood for floors and tarpaper for the roof, and they put it in the house. He brought his mother a sewing machine, a stove, and a handmill. Also, he and his brother, when they were in Santa Ana, California, bought a used Model

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T Ford and drove it all the way back to Agua Prieta. Though he brought appliances back for his mother while he wandered about the mines of Arizona, his mother lived with his older sisters, who more directly supported her (one was a seamstress). The nature of the money or work flows between widows and their children differ between sons and daughters.

When Carlos lost his job in the U.S., he went to a mine in Churunibabi, a middle-sized mine center just north of Nacozari. He then bounced between several small mines and a sawmill in the Los Ajos mountains between Cananea and Fronteras. Work was getting scarcer and scarcer, and Carlos was competing with a flood of men laid-off from the giant mine at Nacozari. All this time he lived near his workplaces but returned to Agua Prieta periodically to bring some money to his mother.

In 1936 Carlos' mother died. At this sad time, Carlos said that each sibling took their own path (rumbo) in life, meaning that their widowed mother had held them together in bonds of obligation to her, but when she passed away, so did this family as a unit. Carlos himself found a job in 1936 in Santo Domingo in the mine tool shop. Carlos' sister's husband was a manager of a small mine near Santo Domingo, and he helped Carlos to get the Santo Domingo job at a difficult time, in the midst of the depression. At Santo Domingo, Carlos Córdoba met Francisca Galaz, and they were married in 1940. Their residence was neolocal, but they were very close to Francisca's mother and her sister and

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brother in law, while Carlos had no nearby relatives. Indeed, Carlos left behind Agua Prieta for many years. It is in this sense that we should understand Carlos' comment about each sibling taking their own path: in reality, a significant part of his siblings, their children, and his father's sister and her family stayed in Agua Prieta. We will return to the history of Carlos Córdoba's family in Chapter 5.

## Pedro Durazo

The Durazo history is of interest not only for the details of a young man's migratory work experience in the U.S., but also because it enables us to explore the circumstances in which a widowed woman left the farm for an urban mine center. There were four Durazo brothers in San Pedro de la Cueva, Sonora, born in the (estimated period) of 1866-1875. According to Pedro Durazo, the son of one of them--Francisco Durazo--his father and all three of his brothers were small landowners, propietarios pequeños, a term of some complexity, since today it is a euphemism for large landlords. Pedro's description of his father's farm makes it clear that they were prosperous farmers who worked land themselves but did not employ others.

His father's land was his own. He did not sharecrop or employ sharecroppers. He raised wheat, corn, beans, chiles, and peanuts to feed the family, and sold small, sweet peanuts as a cash crop. He produced three to four, sometimes five burro loads of peanuts to join the burro

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trains of peanuts shipped from San Pedro de la Cueva to Hermosillo. His father did not have cattle or a horse--he had a burro and pigs that they lost during the revolution. The family lived in a house at the center of town, in front of city hall, a clear sign of prosperity in rural Mexico. San Pedro de la Cueva also shipped food, eggs, chickens, and mezcal to feed mine towns like Nacozari, Las Prietas, and Las Palmas. This information dates, I would venture, to the 1910 to 1917 period.

Pedro's mother María was born in 1884. She had three sisters and two brothers; one brother went to California, as we shall see, and the other brother was also a propietario pequeño. A sister left San Pedro de la Cueva for Nacozari when she married; and María and the other sister married Francisco and one of his three brothers. Without going into great detail here, those children of the brothers and sisters on both sides (Pedro's first cousins) whose parents owned land generally stayed in San Pedro de la Cueva during the period around 1920 (Pedro cannot say what has happened since), with the exception of Francisco's family itself. As we will see, they left for Nacozari when María Durazo was widowed.

Here, just as in Luis Aguirre's case, we see that once a family leaves a bloc of rural kin, they lose track of them and their lands. Chart 8 maps the pattern of Pedro's recollection or forgetting of kin, interpreted by me as evidence of the split of urban from rural. Pedro was

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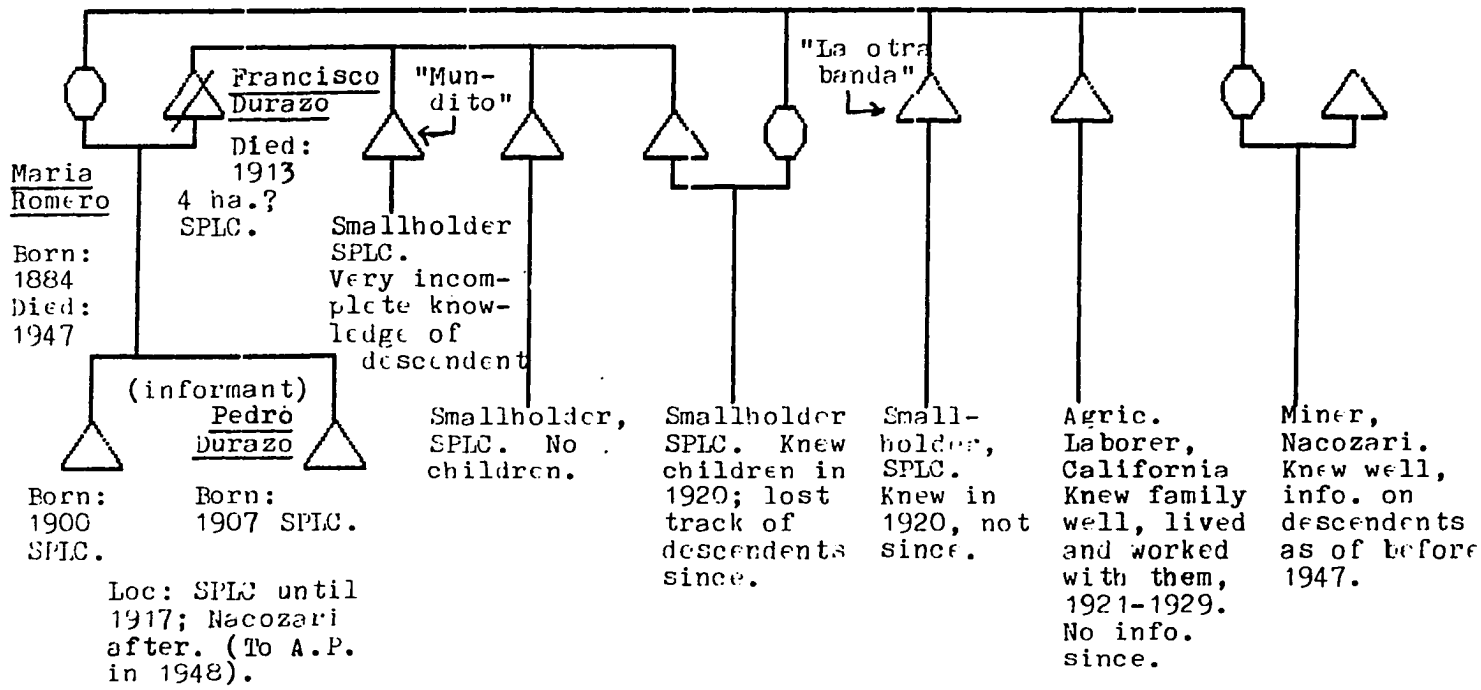


Chart 8: Pedro Durazo, patterns of remembering or forgetting kin.

SPLC = San Pedro de la Cueva; A.P. = Agua Prieta. Loc = Residence.
Names in quotation marks are named properties cited by informant.

capable naming and assigning the properties of his father and uncles, but not of his cousins. Each piece of land had a name; for instance, one uncle, Raymundo, had a plot called mundito--"little world", a pun on his name.[10]

Let us examine the circumstances in which Pedro's mother left the countryside. Francisco died in 1913, of what his son describes as "natural causes." He left his farm with his widow, who was 29 then, and two sons, José, born in 1900, and Pedro, born in 1907 (thus, aged 13 and 6 respectively). María farmed for another three years and then sold the land, for, as Pedro commented, she did not like farming and did not attend to it.

Spicer suggests that "the division of labor in agricultural activity was not sharp until the introduction of livestock when men became the herders"(1969:788). Previous to Spanish changes, Johnson reports that the "women assisted the men in the labor of cultivation, but, unlike the Pima, the women did not have to do all the work" (1950:11). Possibly the sexual division of labor was profoundly influenced by the European model, whether via cattle-ranching or mission instruction. If so, it established a pattern in which women's work was centered on the house site and men worked in fields and pastures.

In my interviews I found that men did most of the grain field labor (see Owen, 1959: 29) while women planted household vegetable plots; men herded cattle while women milked and made cheese; and women worked with cloth, not

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men. There were exceptions where people mentioned some women who rode horses and ran cattle by themselves, often noted with vigor as interesting and unusual cases. Though peasant women are capable of meeting many challenges, it is possible that European divisions of labor made it more likely for women to leave the farm.

Still, María's decision might have been different except that, as Pedro puts it, there was much "calamity" in San Pedro de la Cueva in these years. In 1912, the "Colorados" (Pascual Orozco's rebels) sacked the town. Sometime in 1915, during the civil war in Sonora, the troops of a constitutionalist general from Cananea, either Diéguez or Samaniego, rested in San Pedro after a battle and drank up all the mezcal produced in the town, when suddenly Maytorena's troops pounced upon them in the streets of the town. Worst of all, in December 1915, the retreating army of Pancho Villa encountered resistence entering San Pedro. Many residents hid, but those unfortunate males who did not hide were rounded up and executed by the angered Villa. As Pedro saw from his house facing city hall, the troops burned as many houses as possible, robbed and raped, and fired off rounds in the streets. As if the terror of 1915 was not bad enough, the year of 1916 brought drought, hunger and epidemic disease to the central highlands of Sonora.

So, in 1917, María Durazo sold her house and land to a nephew and moved her family to Nacozari de García, where, as Pedro said, there was much work, not calamity. In Nacozari

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Maria had two sisters, and Maria found some work, though I lack details. Pedro's older brother was 17, and he went to work as an apprentice carpenter with the mine company, while Pedro who was ten, went to school for four years. María was supported by her unmarried sons (Pedro went to the U.S. to earn money beginning in 1921). Pedro married in 1931 and his older brother in 1934; María lived with Pedro after 1934 until she died in 1947. His brother joined the family of his father in law, with whom he worked as a mason independently; together they went from Nacozari to Agua Prieta and from there to Tijuana, from which his wife and children have immigrated to Southern California.

When Pedro had finished primary school in Nacozari at the age of 14, he felt moved by the spirit of adventure to go to the U.S. The sense of youthful exploration, responding to the exciting stories that their older peers have recounted to them, motivates young men to act out this step in their life cycle, when commitments at home are few, and employment prospects in Mexico are poorer than those in the U.S.. Pedro went to Agua Prieta, and with two companions, slipped across the border and hid in a freight car. Of course, crossing the border in 1921, when there was no border patrol, had not the danger it has today.

The train rolled slowly through the night, and when they woke up, the car lay detached and still, sitting in the midst of fields, as it happened, in Maricopa, Arizona. Pedro and his companions walked to a farmhouse where the

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farmer fed them bacon and put them to work washing pigs and milking cows. Pedro worked 8 days and then jumped the rails again, riding to Madera, California, where he had an uncle.

This man, Andres, was his mother's brother, and at the age of 16, in 1875, he had left San Pedro de la Cueva on horseback for Los Angeles. (The flow of people in the nineteenth century from Sonora to California was substantial; see Camarillo, 1979: 25, Romo, 1983: 33). Eventually he settled in the northern part of the valley of California, where he had a small parcel of land, and he and his sons worked for others cutting roses and pruning grapes. It had not been arranged in advance that Pedro would go to his uncle in California; to their surprise, he showed up there one day, a skinny boy who barely even looked his 14 years. Pedro would return to work in the U.S. every year until 1931; in 1927, when he was 20, he took out a visa and immigrated legally for the first time.

In the spring months Pedro worked with his uncle and cousins planting and cutting, and then regularly he returned to Mexico by June. On June 13 there was the festival of San Antonio in Tepupa, on June 20 the horse races in San Pedro de la Cueva, and on June 24, riverside picnics in celebration of water in the Sonoran desert in honor of San Juan Bautista. In July, Pedro went back to the U.S. for the long summer and fall harvest season: plums, figs, apricots, and especially grapes. For table grapes, at three cents a carton, Pedro could make upwards of 6 dollars a day, but

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only 4 or 5 dollars for raisin grapes. In November and December, there was the cotton harvest, but Pedro preferred to return to Mexico, for cotton paid only 3 dollars for an exhausting 14 hours picking 200 pounds. Except for the work with his uncle, Pedro was sent to jobs by labor contractors in California, and he stayed in tents with other workers, both Mexicans and blacks, Filipinos, etc..[11] Pedro would return to his mother's house for Christmas.

Pedro estimated that he could save $100 to $200 a season. He brought this back to his mother; as a man, his manner of supporting his widowed mother was not to stay at home, but to send her money. On his second trip he began the practice of buying a car in California and returning with it to Nacozari, where he would sell it to get the money for the return to California (he had already learned to drive in Nacozari). When he finally stopped going to the U.S. he ended up with a truck; this experience was important because, in subsequent years, his business centered on his trucks.

Although Pedro spent most of 10 years in the U.S., and he was legally immigrated, he ended up living in Mexico. In abstract terms, his economic being was in the U.S. but his social being was in Mexico (Piore, 1979)--characteristic of young male migrants. All this time he had been helping to support his widowed mother. The most important parts of his social life were the festivals of Sonora, though he did have kin in California and he went to dances put on by Mexican

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Patriotic Societies there.[12] His male friends and his sweethearts, as he told me, were back in Mexico. Thus it is not surprising that he married, in 1931, Juanita Yañez, the daughter of a butcher and small storeowner in Moctezuma, a large farm town south of Nacozari.

When Pedro married in 1931 he stopped going back to the U.S. to work, the change in his life-cycle coinciding with the depression when, as Pedro put it, there was little work in either country, but at least in Mexico one could eat. From 1931 to 1947, Juanita ran a series of small stores in peasant towns in Sonora while Pedro hauled the bulked rural produce to Nacozari and Agua Prieta in his truck. (Highland Sonora does not have any peasant markets, and the Chinese, who had been the chief rural intermediaries were expelled from the state in 1931.) They were continually bankrupt and moving about, but this commerce nevertheless allowed them and the children to eat. In 1947 they moved to Agua Prieta with their children, where we will rejoin them later.

## Industrial Skills of Men and Women

The four histories presented in this chapter involve the use of industrial technologies--but not in contexts of industrial workplaces. Instead they involve the acquisition of new skills and their application, often after life crises such as widowhood, to make money as independent producers (in the cases of Pedro Durazo and Carlos Córdoba, beginning after they returned from the U.S.). These new technological

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patterns were as important to the formation of the working class in that era as were mines, mills, and smelters.

Each of these technologies were acquired through wage labor, at least initially. That is the importance of Pedro and Carlos' work experiences in the U.S. for the remainder of their life histories. For women, likewise, male wage labor whether husbands or sons, provided initial purchases of appliances. However, the organization of their use--the work and inheritance relations of mother and daughter--differed profoundly from the male workgroups. One of the major concerns, then, is analyzing the gender division of labor which organized the use and transmission of skills for these new technologies.

## The Method of Material Culture Histories

There were many new goods which Sonorans acquired in the early industrial period of wages and free flow back and forth from the U.S.[13] Sewing machines and cars and trucks (involving mechanical skills generally) repeatedly turned out to have been important in family histories, so we will concentrate on them here. The basis for discussion of new technologies were material culture histories which I collected for the households of the same families with whom I did oral histories (specifically the central household, the house of the elderly couple with the most historical depth). Besides the six household material culture interviews, I also inserted such topics in almost all my life history interviews.

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In the material history survey, my informants and I reviewed the history of each item I selected. Questions were divided into two groupings: the major appliances, cars, and the house; and family pictures, religious items, gifts displayed in the house, and suchlike (a topic not addressed for reasons of the concerns delved into here). I asked questions such as the date and manner of acquisition, including price, terms of purchase, and so forth; the first version of the item the person saw, how and from whom they learned to use it, whether men or women did the work, and related questions about skills, ownership, and use; when possible, about older technologies; and putting the above questions in the context of life-cycles, residence, jobs, and historical time. Although many appliances were relatively recent, because I inquired into the first one used or owned, it was possible to achieve considerable time depth, often discussing the possessions of my oldest informants' parents.

The analysis of the results was centered on the uses of such items: what knowledge is needed to use an item, what gender is "appropriate" to that item, what work is done with it, whether paid or unpaid. The understanding of material culture is that it is not just objects or traits but combinations of material objects with knowledge and ideas about use, and organized relationships of work, whether kin or industrial.

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## Sewing Machines and Women's Work

Of all the items discussed with people in Agua Prieta, perhaps none had had as great a presence in life histories as sewing machines. Johnson reports that the Opata used a stationary ground loom to weave cotton and, after the Spanish introduced it, wool; they also cured and dyed skins. Women did the work of weaving and spinning. Men had worn cotton breach-clothes, and other garments of skins, and women wore cotton cloaks (1940: 15-16; Hrdlicka also describes women's skirts made from scraped cottonwood bark, 1904: 73). By 1902, however, Hrdlicka described the residents of Tuape as wearing, for men, white cotton (manta) pants and shirts, and women wearing loose shirts, jackets, and long, full skirts of calico or manta, with a few serapes--that is, what he described was typical rural Mexican mestizo clothing. Women were still sewing, though, by hand.

Thus the first transformation we must consider is that people no longer wove their own cloth, but rather used purchased cotton fabrics to sew their clothes. It appears to me that by the nineteenth century, rural Sonoran stores were receiving fabric imported from England and France through the port of Guaymas, a commercial pattern that would be supplanted by fabric imported from the U.S. border. It is not known how or when the shift occurred from locally made fabric to purchased fabric occurred, but this was an important step which brought rural Sonorans to the point

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where they wanted money to buy goods, including cloth (however, Bandelier reports, in 1884, thriving wool serape factories in Huachinera and Bacerac, which sold to Chihuahua, 1970, 2: 280).

However, by the 1950s, Owen's study of a rural village shows that sewing was done by machine (virtually every house had one though many were broken), using imported cloth, and that men dressed like southwestern Americans while women's dresses were fashions copied from store catalogues (1959: 30-31). This pattern dated even further back in the mine-town families I interviewed: the sewing machine came so early to Northeastern Sonora that even the oldest informants' mothers used sewing machines--that is, women born in the 1860s, 1870s, 1880s. Let us examine three elements of change: the sewing machine; men's work clothing; and U.S. styles.

Though the introduction of sewing machines occurred so long ago that we can say little about previous forms of hand sewing, it does appear that sewing was categorized as women's work, and most of them probably worked for their families only.[14] The sewing machine was made in the U.S., brought from there or in mine company stores, and most importantly, bought by men for women (wives and mothers) with the cash they made in the U.S. or the mines and smelters.

The sewing machine made sewing much faster. The sewing requirements for a family may not have risen (they may have

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made more clothes per person, but this would be hard to confirm), but with less time per unit, women could expand their labor time for the marketplace, as seamstresses, especially if they needed money for reasons of the life-course. Several other factors also enabled this craft to emerge: cheaper and more abundant fabric brought from north of the border, and more cash to hire sewing outside the household economy. The best proof of the value of this technology to women is that they taught their daughters and granddaughters to become masters of the sewing machine, a gender-linked skill that would not have persisted if it was not worthwhile.

Associated with the new capabilities of machine sewing were copied dress patterns from sales catalogs; thus, the place from which clothing styles originated was the U.S. Women told me that the dresses they wore varied according to the fashion of the time. Therefore, the sensibilities of consumers in Sonora were synchronized with the temporal cycle of buying and buying anew that we call fashion.

The alternative then, as it is now, is purchasing ready made clothes. Buying ready made clothes implies much less skill and earnings opportunities for women, and more dependence on the wage earners in the families. The precise numerical balance between purchased clothes and made ones is impossible to determine for past years, but it appears that when a steady wage was coming in from the mines, more clothing was bought. But in times of unemployment, women

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made up for less cash with more sewing effort. There was a pattern associated with male earnings: men bought ready made work clothes,[15] overalls, jeans, stetson hats, and hard leather boots, while women made clothes for children (who, after all, are constantly needing new or repaired clothes) and for themselves. Men who worked in the U.S. had first access to the cash, before they brought it back to their wives, and one of the things they told me they did with their money was buy clothes.

Cars, Trucks, and Male Mechanical Skills

Men's work with cars corresponds to women's work on sewing machines. Though cattle represented an invasion of Opata community lands, and as Spicer wrote (1969), a major penetration of Spanish culture among the indigenous peoples of the area, the technology of horse and cow was integrally adopted into way of life of northeastern Sonora villagers. Before mechanical transportation in northeastern Sonora, and of course away from roads and railroads even today, men when possible rode horses for personal transportation. Owning a horse is an expensive sign of prestige, it is associated with non-Indian status (Pennington, 1979: 240-241), and riding skills are a basic symbol of manliness. Horse races are a popular recreation among men. Of course, many women learned to be skillful riders on isolated ranches, but this was interesting enough to Sonorans to be specially commented on: they were muy vaqueras (cowgirls). For minor carrying tasks around the farm, men, women, and children use burros.

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Heavier transportation between rural towns was performed by large mule trains with leather sacks attached, and by carriages drawn by horses. These were male occupations.

The railroad constituted the first displacement of animal power from the areas served by the lines to Cananea and Nacozari. The railroads and the mines constituted the first sources of machinery skills for Sonoran men, dating to the 1870-1910 period. Cars and trucks were introduced in very small numbers and only to the larger towns; by the late 1920s there were diligencias (town to town taxis) between Agua Prieta and Cananea and Nacozari. In the 1930s and 1940s, Pedro Durazo drove truck routes between Nacozari, Cumpas, Moctezuma, and several smaller outlying villages. From oral history, it seems that truck transportation began to spread to the small, more isolated lumbermills and small mines in the 1950s; good paved highways were built through the region in the late 1970s and the 1980s. Today cattle trucks have displaced cattle drives and pickup trucks are increasingly common in rural Sonoran towns and ranches.

Young men in Agua Prieta grow up working on cars and trucks--putting in rebored engines, heavy duty suspensions for bad roads, welding cracked chassis, expanding truck beds, and so forth. There is a tremendous business in used American cars requiring constant repair. Drag racing is popular. Fancy pickup trucks are a sign of easy money, and big cattle trucks are an important business. For men, car knowledge is an occupation and a fascination, valuable both

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in material and symbolic terms. One can draw a continuous line in Northeastern Sonora from horsemanship to pick-up trucks as male skills associated with cattle and wealth, physical and social power, and manliness, demonstrating that the material-cultural history can be studied as a set of gender-specific bodies of technical knowledge, and simultaneous idealizations as worthy or lowly.

I asked men and women how they learned to drive. Older women rarely know how to drive, while most younger women do drive. But car repair is an exclusively male domain--my image of Agua Prieta is a bunch of muchachos (young men) bent over a open hood parked on the side of a dusty street.

The older generation of men often learned mechanical and driving skills in mines and mills or in or near the U.S. Sometimes this culminated in the ownership of a truck, or a mechanical shop catering to cars and trucks. Ownership of a truck can be the difference between insecure day-labor and prosperous trucking for hire; migrant labor in the U.S. and work in Mexico for a rich rancher are the best ways of acquiring a truck. Today car skills are thoroughly internalized in Mexican communities, and they are passed down from father to son or along other lines of male friendship.

## Conclusion

In the cases of clothing and transportation northeastern Sonora underwent material cultural changes at

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the same time (the 1880s on) as the penetration of U.S. capital and working class formation.[16] These cultural changes brought new skills, some specific to women, some specific to men. Men and women used these technologies as independent producers (home-based businesses) as much as in paid labor. It is my argument that these forms of industrial knowledge constitute working class life as much as industrial employment. If we think of the working class only by occupation (e.g. as male miners) we forget these people, especially the women who work for money in their own houses, and we cannot account for the changeable work histories that people's lives encompass.

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1. Of course, I cannot retroactively diagnose the cause of death, which is why I supplied the informant's phrasing; I should, however, say that it is logically reasonable that any mineworker died from lung problems acquired in the mine.

2. Legal immigrants to the U.S. will often retire to Mexico, and invest the savings from a succession of laboring jobs in businesses and farms.

3. Sheridan remarks that partible inheritance was a major factor in fragmenting large landholdings in Cucurpe, and that keeping property together did not seem to be characteristic of the Sonoran landowner from his account.

4. In my experience in Agua Prieta today, the business of selling factory-made clothing brought by sales agents is very common among women and in some cases I documented, a major source of income.

5. Though I was not able to reconstruct retrospectively the economics of these stores, my interview with Dolores and Maria del Rosario Molina in Agua Prieta shows that one of the purposes of the stores was to have food and items for growing families to live off of, which is not to deny that stores which survive have substantial markups and profits.

6. The articles by Florence Babb (1986) and Judith-Maria Buechler (1986) have informed my argument and make similar criticisms, and I have learned from them.

7. In this case, my material strongly contrasts with the Bolivian material of Guillermo Delgado (1985). In Bolivia, widows, abandoned wives, and women who suffer from the chronic economic crisis of Bolivia's mines, have had recourse to peasant-like strategies of agricultural production, marketing, and cooperation; and they tend to retreat from proletarian and urban locations. Possibly the difference between Sonora and Bolivia was the powerful pull of cash in the commercial market and labor market provided by the proximity of the U.S. border.

8. The Paul Lime plant, like other companies, deducted the week's purchases at the company store, and the room and board in the dorms.

9. Carlos made one interesting comment in discussing his work at Bisbee. When I asked him if there was any way of resolving work problems, he said that because there was no union, there was no way to ask for more rights, which meant there were no problems (<u>problemas</u>) or disputes (<u>pleitos</u>). By implication, problems can only exist when there is a way of demanding their solution. Of course, this is my reading.

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10. Francisco Durazo had worked in small mines before Pedro was born, and Pedro commented that in his father's time, men left and returned from Las Prietas, about one day away. It is worth noting that men could work temporarily away from the farm without splitting off from the rural bloc in the manner that permanent immigrants were.

11. Pedro gave me a very full interview about his work experiences, which for succinctness' sake I have not put in the text.

12. For the Mexican Independence Day celebrations.

13. This is a case of commoditization of daily life, that is, the substitution of purchased items for items made for use. At the most abstract, it is a case of use-value work versus exchange-value work. But even in the preindustrial rural economy, Sonorans did not make every item they used, rather, they exchanged craft products, and later purchased industrial appliances were used for use-value creation, such as sewing clothes for the family with sewing machines. So I would not want to make this a rigid classification. Rather, it is better thought of as a change in the network of regional culture, in which a network of local production and exchange and a very few precious imports was transformed to a regional network (along railroads) which obtained its material culture from the U.S. by mine wages and selling cattle. Thinking in this context, we can make a more relevant abstraction of regional use-value production versus regional commoditization of labor both for wages and in family work.

14. Though it is impossible to dismiss that women might have made clothing for money, lacking large, cash-wage filled towns, the market cannot have been too great.

15. It is worth asking if men buying work clothes in or from the U.S. undermined the <u>serape</u> manufacturing that previously had thrived.

16. These are the consequences of cultural change, which I feel confident in arguing; I feel much less secure in arguing about the causes (partly this is because the consequences are in the present, the causes in the past, at least 100 years). Evidently, the material culture and the money to buy it accompanied the mines and railroads from the U.S.; but why were they adopted by people, that is, what were the mediating causal mechanisms of commoditization? I have three hypotheses, and no proofs. First, a simple material trade-off: wages meant that labor time was worth more in cash to purchase an item than to make it oneself. Cheap industrial goods may have driven out some products, and once the skill was not utilized, it was dead. Second, elites in Sonora in the mid-nineteenth century had imported

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goods from England and France via Guaymas; but as transportation was opened to the north, the U.S. became the source of elite style and statusful consumer goods. But working people in Sonora also found it easy to get to the U.S., so when they worked, they could readily buy goods that would be admired in Mexico. Lastly, and I think most importantly, is the argument of availability: when people left the farms along riversides for the crowded cities in the mountains (Cananea, Nacozari) or the empty desert along the boundary line (Agua Prieta), they could not continue traditional crafts with traditional materials, but they had a bountiful replacement in the form of the company store and the U.S. trade, and therefore knowledge of older technologies were not passed on, and newer technologies were learned and passed on.

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# CHAPTER 5

# UPROOTING AND TRANSFORMATIONS AT THE BORDER, 1929-1967

## Uprooting

In three months beginning September 21, 1931, 7,000 people left Pilares de Nacozari and Nacozari de Garcia, given the choice of paid transportation out or no help at all. Horton describes the caravans of mules loaded with massive stoves, kitchen pans, trunks, sewing machines, chairs, tables, bureaus, and iron beds, wobbling and banging about as they descended from the high mountains down to the rural valleys. Of course, when people see their home come to an end in such a sudden manner, they will feel tremendous emotions. Horton reproduces a departure party invitation:

> The baseball team, the Tigers, have the high honor of inviting you and your esteemed family to a little dance to be given in farewell of our beloved Nacozari, at the home of Sr. Jesus Ochoa, Saturday.... Don't fail to come and be with your friends for the last time. Forget your troubles and come and dance; for very soon we will not be seeing one another. Nacozari will be no more! So why not come to pass the last hours with your friends? Come, come and have a good time, to make merry just once more before the unknown future overtakes us.

And Horton herself observed that:

> The young people who boarded the train for distant points carried guitars and other musical instruments, babies and bundles, lunch baskets and bottles, as if they were going on a picnic.
>
> But the old folks hugged framed pictures of dead children and saints to their bosoms

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> and had not trusted even their little household trinkets and heirlooms to be packed in trunks and boxes. So when it came leaving time they in their feebleness could hardly be lifted on the train for their burdens.

And in July 1, 1949, when the Pilares mine was closed definitively, and again thousands were given transportation out, Sandomingo reports very similar sentiments: "Young people danced and cried out `Goodbye, Pilares!' and others said `Never will there be another Pilares!'." In Hoffman, we again read such accounts, this time of the repatriations of the 1930s, when trainloads of families hung from windows to say goodbye, and thousands of persons flooded the then tiny border port cities of Mexico, trying to find a way to the interior. (The material from Horton, 1968: 187-200, quotes on 195, 200; Sandomingo, 1951: 56, my translation; Hoffman, 1974).[1]

Such images are not just sentimental but also point out that these people had been uprooted from one way of life without any immediate alternative. Uprooting means the uncontrollable loss of accumulated work experience and job security, special knowledge, social ties and community life, and housing. Cut off from the old means, people then begin the search for new forms of these necessities. Questions about this include: what did families do when they were uprooted; where did they go; how did they sustain themselves? Why did so many of them end up living on the U.S.-Mexico border beginning around 1940? What work did

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they do before the first border factories came to Agua Prieta in 1967?

The contention is that a retreat to peasant life was attempted but not sustained, and that families returned as soon as possible to the wage economy--indeed relocating to the border, closer to the powerful U.S. labor market. Although it appears to have been the shattering of an industrial working class, this process intensified people's involvement over the long run in wage life. Several cases of repatriates from the U.S. who did not eventually sustain their retreat to the countryside demonstrate that the bodies of technological knowledge the younger generation had accumulated brought family tensions and resolution in a move to the border. Two extended and complex histories, the Romero and Aguirre families, who had been industrial working people before the Depression uprooting demonstrate the process which formed an new population in Agua Prieta after 1940. Two elements in this process prove important: the migrant work of men in the U.S.; and the role of women as managers of household investments in the border city using remittances and money they earned in home-based businesses using female productive knowledge.

## Repatriation Histories

These are four brief summaries of families which went through the repatriation from the U.S. in the 1930s. They show the previous patterns of cross-border families and the

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effects of the repatriation on this; they show how the repatriates brought material culture of the industrial world with them; they manifest conflicts over location (rural versus border) between older and younger generations; and they show the repeated pattern of return to the Mexican-side border city which followed upon these conflicts. This is followed by an analysis which looks at these as features of underlying "waged life" although the repatriates on the surface had been uprooted from visible industrial work.

Hortencia Salido

Hortencia Salcido, now in her sixties had an especially good opportunity to learn her family's history because she grew up around relatives on both father's and mother's sides and on both sides of the border. Her grandparents (MoFa and MoMo) went from Bacerac to southern New Mexico, sometime in the second half of the nineteenth century, and her grandfather worked in mines such as Santa Rita, Deming, Tyrone, etc. Only her mother was born in Sonora; her mother's sisters were born in New Mexico and they lived there and in California. But her grandmother (MoMo) had kin who owned land back in Bacerac, and her husband (MoFa) kept cattle (her cattle?) back there, so they went several times to Mexico, and then returned to the U.S. This was a characteristic cross-border family. Indeed, Hortencia recalled that people from Bacerac made trips on horseback to Douglas to buy clothing and dishes, and that an uncle of hers was employed by some Chinese storeowners to smuggle

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arms and munitions to Bacerac to sell, which he quit after a gunfight with Mexican customs agents.

Finally, her grandfather left Bacerac with a daughter and son-in-law, and went to live in Pirtleville, where he worked in the smelter. Her mother and father, who was also from Bacerac, came to Pirtleville around 1922 or 1923, because Hortencia was born in Bacerac in 1920. Her father went to work as a plumber in the smelter (one of the few Mexican American workers who had a craft position, he earned $3.33 a day, more than the $2.42 a day standard "Mexican wage").

In 1931 her father went back to Bacerac where his father had a farm, and his father and brother a carpentry shop--Hortencia said that he was not laid-off or repatriated, but that he foresaw the smelter closing. She recalled that Phelps Dodge sent people to Mexico by train but her family went with three others by car to Columbus, New Mexico, and Chihuahua, then over the pass to Bacerac. Her father planned to stay in Bacerac, for he built a house (with wooden floors and glass windows, a big luxury for Bacerac), but Hortencia's brothers were bored and dissatisfied with life in the village. Hortencia recalls that while they were in Bacerac, they would go to Columbus, New Mexico for visits to the lively U.S. I speculate that the family land might have proved too crowded for so many brothers, and the income from the carpentry too limited or

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irregular, so that a steady wage might have seemed more attractive.

When, in 1940 her father returned to Agua Prieta, he went back to work in the smelter, which was hiring, though he now worked in the U.S. without documents. Eventually, Hortencia and her siblings returned to the U.S. where they had citizenship rights by birth.[2] In Agua Prieta, Hortencia met her husband, Fernando, who was born in Sonora and grew up in Nogales, Arizona, but who, with at the depression, went to Agua Prieta with his mother and younger siblings, where some cousins supported them. In his young teens, Fernando farmed a subsistence plot granted by the Agua Prieta ejido, sold firewood and adobes, and eventually, by the 1940s, worked, in Agua Prieta and Cananea, in grocery stores. In Agua Prieta, he married Hortencia, and after several years (in 1953) they reclaimed Hortencia's citizenship rights in the U.S.. They stayed at the house in Agua Prieta, but their children were born in the U.S. and Fernando worked legally in Douglas with a "green-card". He worked at a Ford car lot painting cars (he had learned this skill with a brother-in-law who had a shop in Agua Prieta), and he later he worked at Cochise College in Douglas as painter and maintenance man for more than 15 years. They moved to Douglas in 1960. Their children all went to college in Arizona, and they have an distinguished collection of advanced degrees and professional jobs.

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## Juanita Lopez

Juanita Lopez was born in Pirtleville in 1923. Her father, who was from Moctezuma, Sonora, was working in the Copper Queen smelter. In 1930, he was let off by Phelps Dodge and offered rail transportation back to Sonora. He sold the house in Pirtleville to a niece and her husband. He went to Moctezuma, and there he planted a temporal (rain-fed plot, usually summer corn and beans). While, in Juanita's recollection, her father was satisfied with rural life, her older brothers were not, and they pressed her father to return to Agua Prieta, which he did in 1933. In addition, the 1930s were generally drought years, and so rain-fed land might have been unproductive.

In Agua Prieta, her father and brothers went to work as albaniles, "masons", that is, construction laborers, and Juanita and her sisters, when they reached their early teens, went to work as domestics. Though her parents stayed in Mexico, Juanita returned to Arizona when she married a Mexican American (who worked for Phelps Dodge), and all of her siblings, all born in the U.S., reside in Arizona or California.

## Rodrigo Ruíz

Rodrigo Ruíz was born in 1902 in the rural town of Villa Hidalgo, where his mother's parents lived. His father was an occasional laborer in various mines. In the period 1903-1907 he worked in a smelter in Douglas while living in Barrio Ferrocarril, and later he worked in El Tigre.

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Rodrigo, when he was 19, obtained a U.S. immigration visa, and went to work in the Copper Queen concentrator in Bisbee. There he met Carmela, his wife, who was born in Nacozari de Garcia in 1907, where her father was working in the concentrator. But her father was a U.S. citizen--he had been born in California--and during the 1921 shutdown, he returned to the U.S. (Bisbee).

Rodrigo worked in Bisbee for 12 years, until 1933, and his children were born there. In 1933, when the concentrator was shut-down, Rodrigo decided to take an offer from his mother of land in Villa Hidalgo (a large farm town south of Nacozari). His first season had poor results, and the second season's crop was destroyed by a May frost. He went to Churunibabi, a middling-sized mine near Nacozari, and worked for four months, but he got a better-paid job caretaking a small (80 cattle) ranch near Nacozari for 10 pesos a day (no shares). He drove the cattle, his children milked them, and his wife made cheese for the household and to sell, which could amount to a substantial income.

After eleven years on the ranch, they moved to Agua Prieta in 1947. He did not explain to me the reason for this move, but I note that his children would have been reaching their age of adulthood, that they had re-immigrated to the U.S. (some sons enlisting in the U.S. military), and thus in Agua Prieta Rodrigo and Carmela could keep close to their children. When they moved to Agua Prieta, they built a house in the Barrio Ferrocarril, where

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lots were being rented by the ejido of Agua Prieta (see below). Rodrigo worked in many construction, day laborer jobs, some independently, and some through the construction workers' union.

Guadalupe Barceló

Guadalupe Barceló's father Juan, born 1902, was from the small rural town of Divisaderos, Sonora, where his father owned land. One of Juan's brothers inherited the land--it was not large enough to split--and Juan and his brother Raymundo left for the border. Juan lived in Douglas and he worked in one of the smelters; he married about 1928. His wife Refugia, born 1903, was from the peasant town of Jécori, the daughter of a landless sharecropper. They had five children, two born in Douglas (1928 and 1930) and three born in Jécori (1934, 1936, and 1938).

Juan returned to Mexico after the Copper Queen and Calumet and Arizona smelters were merged in 1931. He went to Jécori where his wife was from and which is fairly close to Douglas, while Divisaderos is substantially farther. Lacking access to land there, he became a peddler of used furniture and appliances which he brought over from the U.S. side; Guadalupe inherited a mirror, several oak dressers, and a small stove from her father.

The Barceló family returned to Agua Prieta, like so many other repatriates, after the end of the depression, in 1943; Juan continued his Sonoran peddling out of the border port. Of the five children, four live in the U.S., two in

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California and two in Arizona, and only Guadalupe, the youngest, married in Agua Prieta and stayed in Mexico. The siblings who went to the U.S. in the 1950s (or their spouses) obtained blue collar, laboring jobs. Guadalupe, whose husband has a small mechanical and blacksmith shop in Agua Prieta and several children working in maquiladoras, visits her siblings in the U.S., and sometimes brings back clothes, or dishes.

## Repatriation: Rural Retreat and Border Rebound

We see a pattern in these cases: the family, forced by unemployment, and encouraged by former employers to leave the U.S., goes to live with relatives in a rural area; but they do not stay there permanently, rather, they return to the Mexican side of the border, where one part remains and another part re-enters the U.S. The repatriates joined other displaced people in Sonora: the laid-off workers from the giant mines, likewise transported to the bulging countryside, and who also cycled back to the border. This process contributed to the rise of the Mexican border cities; and it is worth asking, how and why?

## Effects on the Cross-Border Family

The post-1929 repatriation brought an end to the cross-border family. Hoffman, in his profound study of the repatriation (1974), points out that Anglo Americans considered Mexican Americans to be isolated particles of labor, not human settlements, and thus they could be

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dismissed when they were no longer needed, and indeed it was charity to help them leave. They assumed that Mexican labor was naturally cyclical, and that the resting place of the cycle was the rural village. Repatriation to Mexico failed to recognize that the Mexican people of Sonora and Arizona were one, and that New Mexico and California were also closely related to Sonora.

The subsequent control of legal immigration and punishment of illegal immigration hastened their differentiation. One portion of these families was able to re-immigrate legally to the U.S., get jobs at American wages (often poor ones), send their children to schools, and another portion went to the Mexican border cities, worked for Mexican minimum wage, had fewer years of schooling, and so on. When they cross the border today, they do so as bearers of two very distinctive legal positions. This does not mean that they no longer see each other, or send money across the border, or forget their kinship, or cease to immigrate from Mexico to the U.S. But the border defines two different ways of life--"Sonora" and "Arizona"--and controls movement of people between them, in a manner it did not before.

## Causes of Rural Retreat

In the 1930s families had few alternatives to rural retreat. The giant mines in Sonora were closed or nearly so, and they had laid-off thousands.[3] Agua Prieta was so depressed that it lost population. Return migration,

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whether from the U.S. or Sonoran mine cities, was part of the policy of closing down company towns (shutting off stores and utilities), and offering free transportation, a policy adhered to by Phelps Dodge both in Douglas and Nacozari, a policy which responded to labor unrest over layoffs in Cananea and Nacozari in 1931 and in Douglas to racial favoritism. Municipalities in the U.S. and American mine companies in Sonora had the power to remove people, and the Sonoran villages did not have the power or sentiment to turn kin away, and this inequality brought about kin-organized return migration.

In these family histories people appear to have kept kinship in rural towns as a form of insurance, which they drew on in the depression. Moreover, recognized kinship (through either side) would have been a way to renew community land access, though claims to land themselves were individual. We must keep in mind, though, that my interviews are retrospective, and thus this rural back linkage could have been an artifact of the very process of which I speak, or at the least greatly so reinforced. In the 1930s many of the peasant villages of northeastern Sonora were granted ejidos, which may have opened up some room for returnees, although we do not know how much.

Material Culture, Work Skills, and Waged Life Patterns

During 1933 James Gilbert wandered about Mexico speaking with repatriates, and then wrote a very interesting master's thesis (1934). He stopped for some time in

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Penjamo, Guanajuato, a small rural city, and there he observed the very depressed quality of the Penjamo market. Although many repatriates appeared to be productively employed in agriculture, in reality there was not land nor need for labor, and they were simply stuffed in there for lack of any alternatives. Applying this observation, with caution, to rural Sonora (if anything, a more constrained natural environment), we can begin to understand why the families who at first tried farming, drifted away from the land as time went on.

Gilbert, much concerned with acculturation and adjustment, observed that repatriates who had left Mexico as children or were born in the U.S. were much more dissatisfied with rural life than those who emigrated as adults: that is, that there was a split between generations. Certainly, this sounds like the Sonoran cases of sons arguing with fathers for a move to the border. Gilbert saw that repatriates brought tools, cars and trucks, and indeed such occupations as taxi driver were largely the invention of returnees. But the market and prices could not sustain many of these new occupations: Gilbert estimated that only one quarter used skills from the U.S. in jobs in Mexico. He also recorded that women missed American appliances--gas stoves, running water, electric lights, roller washing machines--much more than men.

Manuel Gamio in his study of Mexican emigration to the U.S. cleverly used data on possessions which passed duty

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free through border ports in 1927 to learn about the material culture of returnees to Mexico (1930: Appendix V). The numbers for Naco and Agua Prieta (35 and 60 persons respectively) accurately represent northeastern Sonora, since there is virtually no other place to go to from these ports. These 95 persons brought 41 cars and trucks, roughly one for every two persons.[4] There were 15 agricultural implements, 18 mechanical and carpentry tools, and 4 guns; 45 sewing machines for 95 entrants, 30 stoves and 14 refrigerators (ice-boxes), 2 washing machines, 16 washtubs, and 4 clocks; 86 beds, 69 mattresses, 99 tables, 21 dressers, 58 bathtubs, 192 records, and 4 pianos.

These material items, and especially the skills and relationships associated with them, encouraged people to return from the rural retreat to the border cities. Commodities required infrastructure: cars and trucks took gasoline, which was supplied from Nogales, Sonora, and was rare in rural towns. The businesses associated with these items found their best markets in bigger towns and cities, not villages: we have seen that in the cases of seamstresses and mechanics.

It may have been that new technological knowledge was concentrated in the younger generation, who had grown up in the U.S., which explains the conflicts of fathers and sons. With the advent of wage work careers and new industrial skills, the younger generation pulled away from obligations to work for the older generation toward job-seeking for

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themselves. In this situation of stress, the underlying construction of wage-seeking life patterns are exposed.

Furthermore, in the "border" regions of Mexico with commodities comes attached the commercial temporal-cycle of fashion, an impermanence that makes new possessions very exciting, and old ones boring. Thus, each generation identifies with its "style" and looks down on the "old-fashioned" older generations. The younger generation which grew up in the U.S. was more socialized in commodity culture than was the older generation, and this brought about a conflict within families that in the long run inclined the children of repatriates to return to the U.S. or at least the Mexican border city. These places would seem much more "exciting" than the countryside.

Long Term Consequences of the Move to the Border

Because the rural retreat of the 1930s was a necessity but never a viable way of life, families gradually drifted away. But relatively fewer of them went to the mine towns, and more to the border. This was simple economics: in the 1940s and 1950s, the copper sector was stagnating while the border towns were benefitting from commerce from a booming post-war U.S. Southwest. The sorts of occupations they took up in the border cities were still unskilled and insecure--construction worker or domestic--but there was a market for them. In the transitional period after the mines and before the maquiladoras, these migrants created the neighborhoods and family forms that are Agua Prieta today.

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## Settlement in Agua Prieta: Hernández History

Let us now hear the history of Mercedes Romero, whose life takes us from Pirtleville of 1914, through the 1930 repatriation, to the Agua Prieta of today. The Romero family show the effects on a pre-1929 cross-border family of the repatriation, and the process of re-entering the U.S. labor market after the end of the Depression. The family of José and Mercedes Hernandez provides ethnographic detail about the complex household allocations of money and unpaid work which enabled families to "balance on the border" during the post-1940 transition to Agua Prieta.

In 1910 in Pirtleville a man from Sonora, Isidro Romero, and a woman, Carmela Varela, from New Mexico and Arizona were married (see Chart 9). Mercedes was their second child. Carmela Varela was born in 1892 in El Paso, Texas. Her mother and mother's parents (the informant's MoMo, MoMoFa and MoMoMo) were from La Mesilla, an old New Mexican settlement in the valley of the Rio Grande directly north of El Paso.[5]

Carmela's father Luis (informant's MoFa) first appears in El Paso where he married Carmela's mother. He and his brother were masons--apparently very skilled ones--and they moved from one booming area to another. At some time between 1892 and 1901, they went from El Paso to Solomonville, Arizona, in the upper Gila valley, an new zone of Hispanic and Mormon farm settlement in proximity to the Clifton-Morenci mines (Meinig, 1971). In 1901 Luis and his

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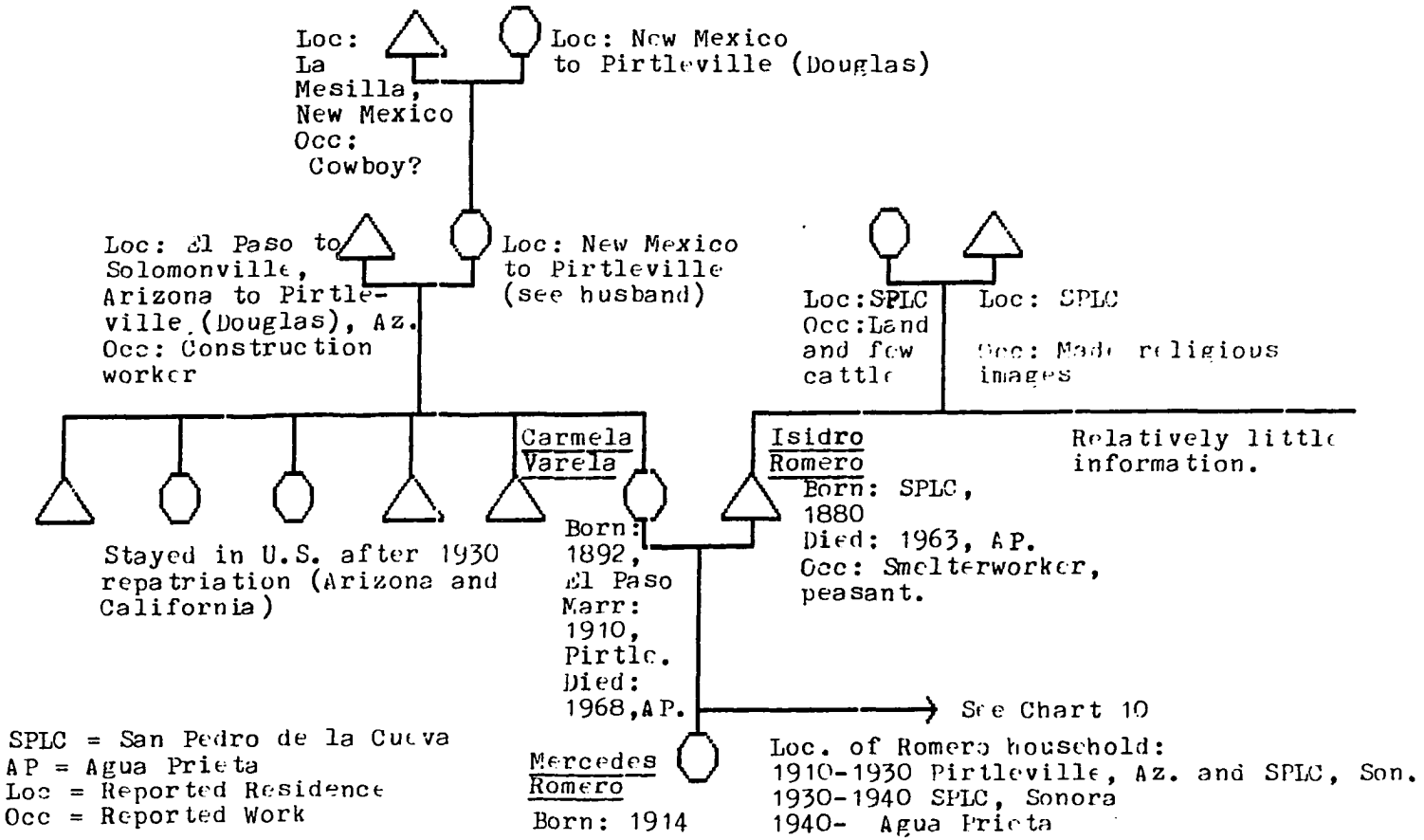


Chart 9: Romero Family--Cross-Border Family & Repatriation

brother came to work on the foundation of one of the smelters at Douglas. Within a year they bought house lots from Elmo Pirtle. Thus Carmela Varela came to Pirtleville.[6]

Isidro Romero, born around 1880, was from San Pedro de la Cueva, Sonora. He was the oldest of six sons and two daughters of a man who was described as owning a lot of cattle and land there (enough to give several sons large parcels). While Isidro went to the U.S., at least one of his brothers worked their father's land in San Pedro de la Cueva, but unfortunately I was not able to get information about all of his siblings. One brother, whose daughter I also interviewed, unlike Isidro never worked in the U.S.; instead he farmed his share of land, described as regular (average) size and worked as an horsebreaker. Before 1931, the landed and industrial, Mexican and U.S. branches did not constitute separated fates, since Isidro readily moved back and forth between them.[7]

It is not clear when Isidro first went to the U.S., but it was before he married in Pirtleville in 1910. He worked on a railroad track crew, in the Lefebvre store in Pirtleville, playing saxophone in a Mexican dance orchestra in Douglas, and in both the Copper Queen and Calumet and Arizona smelters in the departments of ore-testing.

In 1914 Mercedes was born in Pirtleville but registered in San Pedro later that year, indicating how the family moved between the two homes, and in 1915 after the massacre in San Pedro, they returned to the U.S. Four of her

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siblings were born in Pirtleville, 1913-1922, but a fifth brother was born in San Pedro in 1924, and a sixth sister was born in 1928 in Pirtleville. Though Isidro moved about, he did build a house in Pirtleville. His wife's brothers and mother and father lived nearby and the relationship between the two families was close (when he left in 1931, the house went to one of his wife's brothers).

In 1931 Isidro lost his job at the old Copper Queen smelter (this was the year the smelters were merged and the old Copper Queen closed). When Phelps Dodge offered laid-off workers paid transportation in Mexico for their families and their household goods, Isidro consulted with his brothers in San Pedro de la Cueva, and decided to go back.

When Carmela and the children went with her husband to San Pedro de la Cueva their fates split from her brothers and sisters' descendants who stayed on the U.S. side. The latter reside in California and Arizona, and when I spoke to one of them, he referred (speaking in English) to Mexico "over there" as strange and dangerous. Mercedes herself and her descendants became Mexican residents (though some later immigrated to the U.S.). Four of her siblings returned to the U.S. side after a decade, in the 1940s, and two others stayed in Mexico.[8]

In San Pedro de la Cueva, Isidro reclaimed a portion of his father's land. He bought a house there with some savings from the U.S. He planted corn, wheat, sugarcane, and beans, with advances for cash and seeds from one Carlos

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Maldonado, and he sold the crop to him at harvest. He also worked for Maldonado herding his cattle, but in turn he hired day laborers at 1.50 pesos a day to plant and harvest wheat. When he moved to Agua Prieta in 1940, it does not seem to have been the case that the farm was unviable.

In the Romero family, the move from Pirtleville to San Pedro de la Cueva brought cultural juxtapositions and conflicts like those already described. When I asked Mercedes to describe life in San Pedro, she did it in the narrative form of repeated contrasts between the rustic and the modern, the former having mucha calamidad ("much suffering"--though it was also pure and clean). She recounted a story that when she told her playmates about movies, they called her a crazy pocha (an insulting term for Americanized Mexicans). She also remembered that her older brother, Ernesto, was eager to leave the countryside.

Her father had had a car and taught his sons to drive, but he sold it in Fronteras, Sonora, on the way back. They also left behind furniture, a stove, and a phonograph, but they did bring a bed, mattress, and box springs, a clock, and the inevitable sewing machine that Carmela's mother had given her. In San Pedro Carmela made clothing from fabric, and they did not buy ready-made clothes; for example, Mercedes recalled that in San Pedro her mother made canvas shoes[9], while in Pirtleville they were not worth the effort, since cheap sneakers were 10 cents also. Carmela sewed for 30 centavos a dress (when for a man a day's work was 1.50

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pesos); she also rented out her machine to her sisters-in-law who didn't have one.

Mercedes' oldest brother, Ernesto (born 1913), who evidently was not content with life in the village, returned to the U.S. sometime in the mid-1930s, where he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps at Fort Huachuaca, Arizona. He was married in 1937 in Pirtleville, and he began to send some money to San Pedro de la Cueva to help two younger brothers to come to Douglas to continue school. The oldest daughter, Mercedes, was married to Jose Hernández in 1937, who she met at a festival in the nearby farm town of Moctezuma, and she went to live in Pivipa with her husband.

Only the youngest brother and two younger sisters were at home, and their mother Carmela was anxious to move back near her older sons, who she was afraid would be drafted, so she persuaded her husband to leave the farm and move to Agua Prieta in 1941. And he did as Carmela asked, though evidently Isidro had ideas of returning, for he did not sell the farm, but lent it to a first cousin of his. But he never reclaimed it.

Mercedes had her first two children in Pivipa, in 1937 and 1939, but when she was pregnant with the third one, in 1941, she felt she needed help with the two children, so she went to Agua Prieta to stay with her mother. In Agua Prieta, Mercedes' father was working as a house construction laborer (by then he was in his late fifties or sixties). Her mother was earning some money by taking in sewing and

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knitting. After Mercedes had her child, she began working to help her mother. She left her children with her mother while she worked for her mother's kin, walking from Agua Prieta to Pirtleville,, doing washing and ironing for $1 or $2 a week.

Her husband José had stayed in Pivipa attending to the farm, but when a sudden frost destroyed the crop, he gave up and came to Agua Prieta in 1942. There he obtained work as a carpenter. Mercedes recalled that at the time, many people were leaving Pivipa for the border--the depression had ended, and jobs were now available for all the people who had been bottled up in the countryside in the 1930s. (The fate of the land in Pivipa is described in Chapter 3).

José legally immigrated to the U.S. in 1942, a war year when working immigrants had unusual priority. One Marion Williams of Douglas, for whom he had worked in the U.S. without documents, recommended his immigration to the INS officer. Mercedes' brother Ernesto was hired at the smelter in 1942 (he worked there until 1979), and another brother and two brothers in law (Mercedes' sisters' husband) also worked there. Phelps Dodge hired heavily among Mexican immigrants during World War II. José, with the help of his brother-in-law (WiSiHu), was hired at the smelter in 1943.

A group of Mercedes' kin moved to Los Angeles in 1945, at a time when a prolonged strike had closed the smelter. José soon followed. This group formed an important set of relationships for the Hernandez family, so it is worth

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examining the kinship (see Chart 10). Mercedes' brother Ricardo and sister Aurelia married a sister and brother from Pirtleville, and her sister Concepción married their first cousin. Thus we find the following distribution of Mercedes' family: her parents with their youngest son in Agua Prieta, living with Mercedes and her children; three married siblings in California, hosting Mercedes' husband while he worked there; and one brother living and working in Pirtleville.

In Los Angeles Ricardo worked in a Ford factory, and one brother in law also worked there, while the other brother-in-law became a foreman at a crushed rock company--he got José his first job in Los Angeles. The relationship between José and his in-laws in Los Angeles, which facilitated his entry into the southwestern U.S. labor market is yet another case of kin leverage into an institutional structure--in this case, the labor market of the U.S. southwest. This was part of the process during the booming economy after World War II of re-establishing immigration connections severed by the repatriation decade.

Mines (1981) summarizes this as establishing "beachheads" in the U.S. immigration system and labor markets which can then support additional entrants from the home community. He makes a very important contribution in analyzing immigration beachheads by looking at their chronology: they are alternately shutdown by U.S. immigration restriction (during depressions of 1921,

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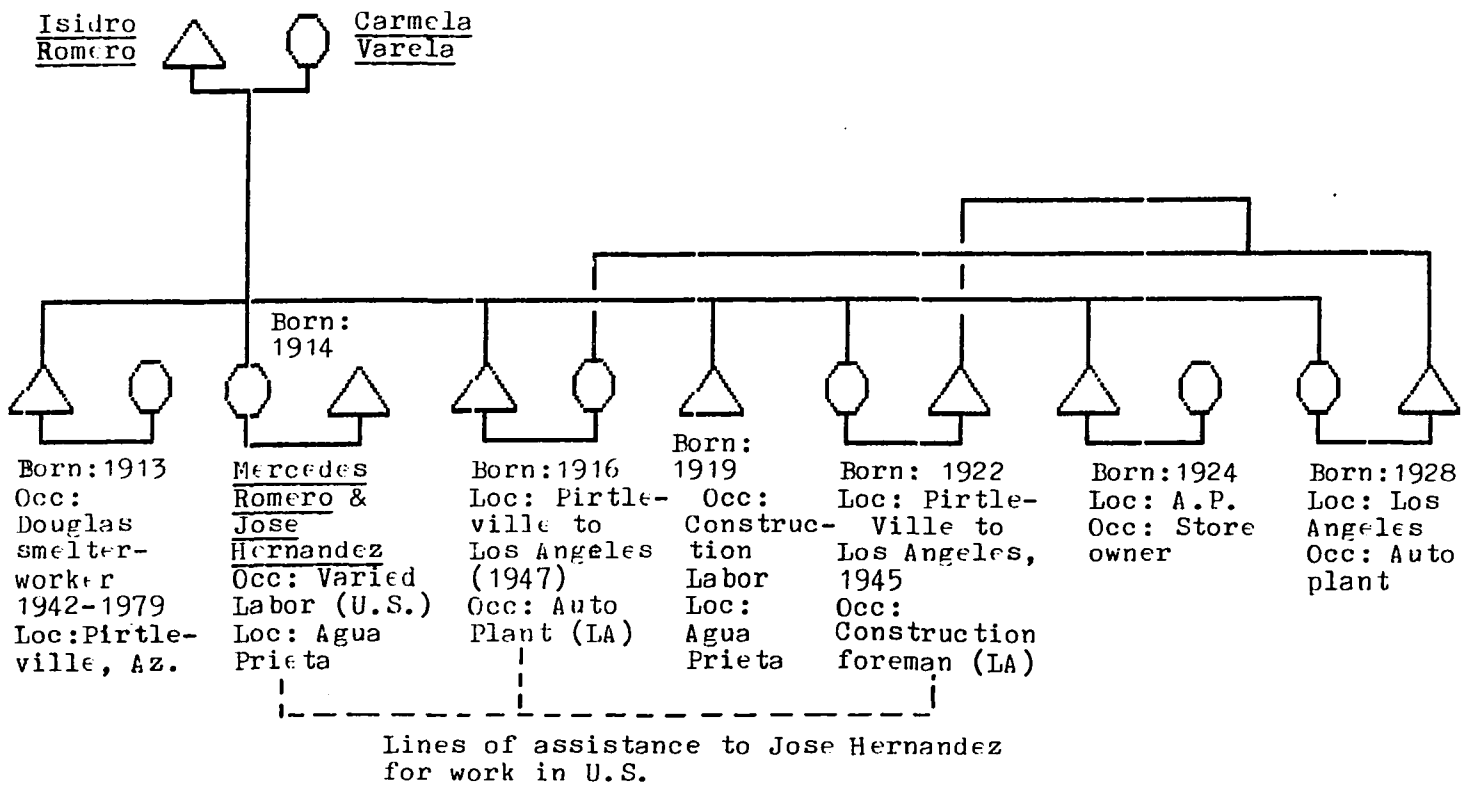


Chart 10: Jose Hernandez--Leverage in U.S. labor market.
Romero family--Post-1940 return to Agua Prieta and U.S. after 1930s repatriation.

1929-1939, the 1954 "Operation Wetback" expulsion, etc.), and reorganized. Mines also contributes the important distinction between more secure beachheads based on legal immigration (such as José's), and the extra-legal ones more vulnerable to expulsion; legal immigrants, such as José, have longer work careers in the U.S., enter relatively better labor markets, and are significantly better off in home communities.

José held many laboring jobs in subsequent years, facilitated by his "green card", which allowed him to live in Agua Prieta and work in the U.S. without fear of deportation so long as he maintained employment when he renewed the card every six months. José worked laying telephone cable in Los Angeles (a job he obtained through his brother in law), in construction for Ralph Parsons in Los Angeles, four years in the "Johnson Camp" zinc mine in Cochise County Arizona, and so on. Few of these jobs lasted for more than a year or two, and in between them Jose worked in agricultural field labor around Elfrida, Arizona (directly north of Douglas). He had been a member of the Laborers Union since he went first went to Los Angeles, and while in Tucson the union allocated construction jobs to him from their list, while the field labor he found out about from fellow Mexican workers.

Though particular jobs were erratic, he would take whatever was available in order to continue earning and sending money home. For example, when they were expanding

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their two room house in 1957, José was working in a mine in Arizona, and he sent money to hire masons and returned on weekends to supervise the work, rather than saving money and doing the work himself. Thus what appears on the U.S. side to be characteristically irregular, poorly paid secondary-market jobs for Mexican immigrants was, for José's family in Mexico, a substantial income made as steady as possible by constant effort. José was able to retire to Agua Prieta with a union pension which enables his family to live at a decent level few retired Mexican workers have.

Though José could have immigrated his family and joined his in-laws in Los Angeles, Mercedes remained in Agua Prieta with their children (ten in all, born 1937-1958), and also her parents and her youngest brother. Mercedes handled the combination of money from the U.S. to support two households. The history of their houses demonstrates her role. In 1945, Mercedes bought, with money from José, three lots on First Street in the Barrio Ferrocarril from the municipality (see below), one each in the name of her father, her brother, and her. Her father, her brother, and José when he was home from work, built two small adobe houses, one for her family and one for her father's family. The money for materials for her father's house came from her married sisters in California, and money for her house came from José. The wood roof and beams were bought from the Meza company in Agua Prieta, and José brought back lime and cement from the U.S. Later they sold one lot, and Mercedes

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and José bought a small house on Second Street for 5,000 pesos from José in the U.S. This house was rebuilt and expanded. One lot on First Street went to Mercedes' brother, and in the other her parents lived, with some rental apartments for income, until they passed away when the houses there went to two of Mercedes' daughters.

Resettlement and Neighborhood Formation in Agua Prieta

The neighborhood in which the Hernandez settled, Barrio Ferrocarril, received many immigrants in this period who either were arriving from closed mines, or from rural towns, some of them repatriated families returning to the border.[10] Barrio Ferrocarril had been a marginal settlement of families, many of whom worked across the border in the Douglas smelter (it was also the location of Agua Prieta's red-light district from 1918 to 1955). The changes in Barrio Ferrocarril give us a chance to explore the formation of a self-built, heterogeneous neighborhood characteristic of the transition era--in contrast with company-built neighborhoods in mine towns.

The reason why new arrivals to the border flocked to the neighborhood was the policy of renting lots by the ejido of Agua Prieta.[11] In the late 1940s, a lot cost 40 pesos--10 for the municipal sindico who controlled the sales, and 30 for the ejido--and subsequent rent of 2 pesos a month. This is cheap for urban land, for 40 pesos would have been about ten day's, or less, work, and two pesos a month rent less than a day's work. In the early 1950s, most of the

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Barrio Ferrocarril was "regularized", that is, taken out of the ejido and put within the city boundaries, an act that permitted families who had rented lots and built houses to officially own their houses; along the margins some families still pay rent to the ejido. Therefore, unlike the company houses graded by occupational level, the emerging border neighborhoods were diverse because lots were sold individually and houses varied according to each family's ability to pay for materials.

Young families arriving at the border first busied themselves with building a house. Over the years, however, with the settling of families community institutions began to emerge in the Barrio. In the long run, the Catholic parish, the governing PRI party, and baseball clubs were the most important. The PRI recruited followers in the neighborhood during the 1949 election by promising to regularize lots rented from the ejido, building an elementary school, and by removing the red-light district; but in the climate of political apathy encouraged after 1949 by the Agua Prieta PRI, party politics subsided in importance (see Chapter 7 for a wider context). Since the 1920s, the Barrio has been the center of baseball clubs in baseball-crazy Agua Prieta; in the 1950s, the predominant club was the "Fronterizos"; currently the "Rieleros" baseball and soccer club is a political base for the opposition PAN party in the Barrio.

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The current Catholic church, the Sacred Family, originated with a small chapel built, I believe, in 1952. The priest, Father Magallanes, who visited the chapel from the city center, organized certain male residents into a Catholic Action committee around 1960. This group organized processions in the neighborhood for the Sacred Family, with allegorical floats, and they petitioned for water and sewer lines; later they built a large church and a clinic. Since 1976, a new generation, especially women, has been developing committees and assemblies for a "Christian Base Community" (discussed in Chapter 7).

The history of the Barrio Ferrocarril since 1940 is important for understanding the organization of Agua Prieta today: young families arriving at in the border city built houses, elaborated neighborhood organizations related to outside power-holders, and as the family matured, spread out sub-families of their children. The Hernández are unusually prosperous but otherwise characteristic of this process.

## Border Balance Families

The Hernández family economy was based on the flow of dollars from the U.S. to a household in Agua Prieta. When José was paid, he kept money for himself, his room and board, and he conscientiously sent the remainder to Mercedes, who, in turn, would do some grocery or clothes shopping in Douglas, and then change the rest from dollars to pesos to pay utility bills, and so forth. With a steady income in dollars, José and Mercedes' children were able to

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stay in school longer, especially the two sons who obtained preparatory and commercial education, while three of the eight daughters had education past secondary school. Though several sons and daughters worked in stores and one daughter in an early maquiladora, their income was not vital to the family and it could be saved by the children for their marriages.

This a border balance family, that is, a family that receives its income from the U.S. side of the border but maintains its residence, its reproduction, and its social life in the Mexican border town. Why do families take this form? Jobs that would provide for a marginal existence in the U.S. gain enough dollars to provide for an unusually prosperous working class existence in Mexico: home ownership, appliances, well educated children, etc. Erratic jobs might be dangerous to the survival of the household economy in an American city, but home ownership in Agua Prieta adds to security. Above all, a poor Mexican immigrant worker is at the bottom of the hierarchy in southwestern U.S. life, but on the border he has prosperity and social standing, indeed, a role in local politics were he to seek it. As Piore suggests (1979), the immigrant will take work of low standing to enable a social life of higher standing than is usually possible at home.

Of course, the balance of U.S. wage and Mexican household is not assured: besides depending on the good health and continued legal immigration status of the wage

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-earner, it puts tensions between the interests of the husband who spends money on himself in the U.S., and the wife who receives the remainder for the family in Mexico. The wife and children are less secure, for the husband may stop sending them money or take up with another woman. The balance, when it works, has to be organized through the relationship between husband and wife. The experience of Luis and Angelita Aguirre, narrated next, show how these relations may operate.

## Settlement in Agua Prieta: Aguirre History, Men's Migratory Work and Women's Roles

The Aguirres were one of the families from a mine town which ended up living in Agua Prieta. This move is analyzed in three steps: the collapse of the mine way of life (including a description of small miners, and an analysis of alternative paths out of the mines to the border cities); temporary migratory male work in the Bracero program; and an exploration of women's work in the move to the border, including the analysis in changes in female household work. The Aguirre history leads to comparisons and conclusions about the border balance household.

On July 18, 1938, while Luis was at his usual place in the concentrator, the electric power at El Tigre was suddenly shut off. The men who were inside the mine were left in the dark and, because the hoist was stopped, had to climb on foot through the tunnels to the mine head. Though

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they did not at first know what was going on, the Lucky Tiger mining company of Cincinnati had abandoned the mine.

The company had planned lay-offs, but since they refused to pay the legal three month's pay indemnity, the union (a branch of the Cananea section 65 of the miner's union) sought support from the federal labor inspector and management left town. The union took the abandoned mine, store, utilities, and houses to set up a union cooperative, under a policy of the Cárdenas government designed to cope with the mine lay-offs of the depression (Ramírez, León and Conde, 1985: 61, 127; Bernstein, 1964 discusses the legal aspects).

The history of the union cooperative is hard to reconstruct from oral history. Apparently at first the union tried to run the mine similarly to the company, with the same managers and foremen. During this period Luis worked in the mill, doing tests of metal content in the ore. Workers were supposed to have been paid their day's wage and a share of the metal value, while money (10 percent?) was taken from the pay to repay the mine company for the expropriated mine--that very mine they abandoned. In reality, very little cash appeared, and miners took their pay in goods at the ex-company store, now leased to a private businessman.

One day this man told Luis that the union would never be able to pay him the 800 pesos they owed him, and that he should take it in merchandise. Gradually the cooperative

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declined and began to sell machinery, leaving workers to bring metal themselves out of the mine, while the cooperative operated as a ore-buying agency. By 1940 the cooperative disappeared, and the mine tunnels were left open to anybody, former worker or new arrival, who wanted to prospect in them for silver and gold bearing ores. El Tigre attracted unemployed miners from all over western Mexico--an indication of the desperation of that population.[12]

Workers at El Tigre who I interviewed felt that the cooperative collapsed because of mismanagement, and that equipment was sold for the benefit of union leaders; this may have been true, but it is also logical that the company abandoned the mine because it was failing, and it is certain that the Lucky Tiger management had not maintained and invested in equipment since the abortive closing in 1931. As Bernstein shows in history of mining in Mexico, the mine cooperatives were often failing mines, with little access to capital, and rarely viable; they were encouraged by the Cardenas government to limit outright unemployment, and for Luis it served this purpose.

Luis stayed in El Tigre to pick over the mine from 1940 to 1943. The skills of the gambusino (prospector/scavenger/ small miner) was one of the major bodies of knowledge brought in the Spanish period and retained in the rural Mestizo culture of Sonora (a valuable ethnography of this tradition is contained in Pena and Chavez, 1985: 244-247). Throughout the colonial and nineteenth century, Sonoran

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mines alternated between periods of organized development and individual mining, and even though the giant industrial mines apparently superceded the gambusino, when massive unemployment came in the 1930s and 1950s, small mining and prospecting reappeared, the recourse of Sonorans in need. Through the kind help of the Aguirre family, I was able to learn much about gambusino work in El Tigre.

Luis, like many gambusinos, worked in an equal partnership, with a man who had come from Jalisco to El Tigre after the mine had closed. They were looking for selected ores which, to their experienced eyes, contained relatively high contents of gold and silver, and could be sold. Their objective differed from the bulk extractive techniques of industrial mining. Selective mining was likewise a result of the lack of capital inputs--they did not have the power drills, so they drilled by hammer and bar; they restricted the use of expensive dynamite, replacing it with powder, or muscle alone. They had to do their own timbering and development work, with no one to pay them for it, and of course, there was no safety organization or compensation for accidents. Luis' wife laboriously ground the ore by hand (substituting for the mine's mill) so that dross could be taken off the top of the heavier gold particles and silver ore.

Luis sold his ore to one of the several ore merchants in El Tigre. I was able to determine certain things about the gambusino economy from a set of ore-purchase receipts

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for several periods from 1940 to 1943. These receipts total 84 weeks of sales, and the net earnings total 1813.60 pesos. This averages 21.6 pesos a week for the two partners, or 10.8 for each--an average of 1.8 pesos for a day's work (for a six day week), while Luis had made 3.60 pesos a day before the mine closed (and inflation in the early 1940s was high). The ore Luis and his partner brought to the ore-buyer was worth much more than they were paid. The receipts show the weight of the ore and the gold and silver content; I calculated that they brought in 614.55 grams of gold (21.66 ounces). At $35 U.S. an ounce, this was worth $758.10 U.S., or 3676.80 pesos (at 4.85 pesos for a dollar).[13] Not even counting the value of the silver, which was substantial, Luis and his partner produced twice the value of ore that they were paid for (3677 to 1814 in pesos). The difference included pricing gold for five and a half dollars less than its U.S. price, deductions for smelting expenses, double billing for transportation, two charges for "rights" (it is unclear to whom), and an assay fee by the ore-buyer. The bills did not show that the ore-buyer was selling supplies, and only twice were there deductions for advances, of small sums, so there appears to be no indebtedness.

The problem of low earnings was compounded by extreme variability, since all the risk accrued to the gambusinos. Payments varied from 60 centavos to 287.47 pesos. The sequence of receipts shows that some weeks several loads were sold, and other weeks no loads were sold. Over time,

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the trend of earnings worsened, so that receipts from 1942 and early 1943 were quite low. With multitudes of prospectors "high-grading" ores, and no geological development work being done, returns steadily fell. Prospectors had the dream that they could find a "bonanza", Luis told me, but after several years it became apparent that the gold of El Tigre was not making them rich. Luis and Angelita stayed in El Tigre until 1944, but with two growing daughters, and another child coming, they weren't making it. Regretfully, they left the town they had grown up and married in, and joined Luis' parents in the nearby Esqueda.

## Alternative Paths out of the Mines

Luis' father, Santiago, had already left El Tigre and obtained a job as a carpenter in a government agency that was making cattle pens and watering tanks, and he got Luis a job as a helper in construction, for 2.50 pesos a day. Even this little bit of work halted after a little over a year. In Esqueda, Angelita began to find, among the connections of her mother-in-law, scattered work washing and repairing clothes. Luis and Angelita rented a house, separate from the house of Luis' father, mother, and sister.

After a brief stay in Nacozari, Luis and his wife moved to Agua Prieta in 1947. There were advantages for both Luis and Angelita in living in a border city: Luis was nearer the U.S. where bracero workers were being contracted; and Angelita found that the bigger and more prosperous city of

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Agua Prieta, with customers also from Douglas, offered her more sewing market, for she was beginning to explore this business.

The turn toward the border by Luis and Angelita in 1947 set them on an alternative course from those of their siblings, and they demonstrate the differentiation of kin lines exiting the collapsing mine economy. Most of Angelita Leon's half-siblings ended up in Agua Prieta, but they took a very different path to the border (see Chart 11).

Angelita's mother María was widowed for a second time in 1936, when her second husband succumbed to silicosis. With three young children, the oldest 9, María took in sewing and washing and received the help of Angelita and Luis. When they moved to Esqueda, María came with them, though they lived separately. Her oldest son found work in various small mines, first near Esqueda and later in the Magdalena area, and as he wandered about, Maria came with him. He worked as a gambusino from the early 1940s until he died in 1981, and his family still lives there. The two younger sisters married quickly in Esqueda, also to small miners. From the 1940s to the 1960s, they moved from isolated prospect to prospect. Only in the 1970s did they settle in poorer, outlying Colonia Ejidal of Agua Prieta, where the majority of the children still are. This move was facilitated by Angelita Aguirre, who boarded two nephews in her home while they found work in maquiladoras in Agua

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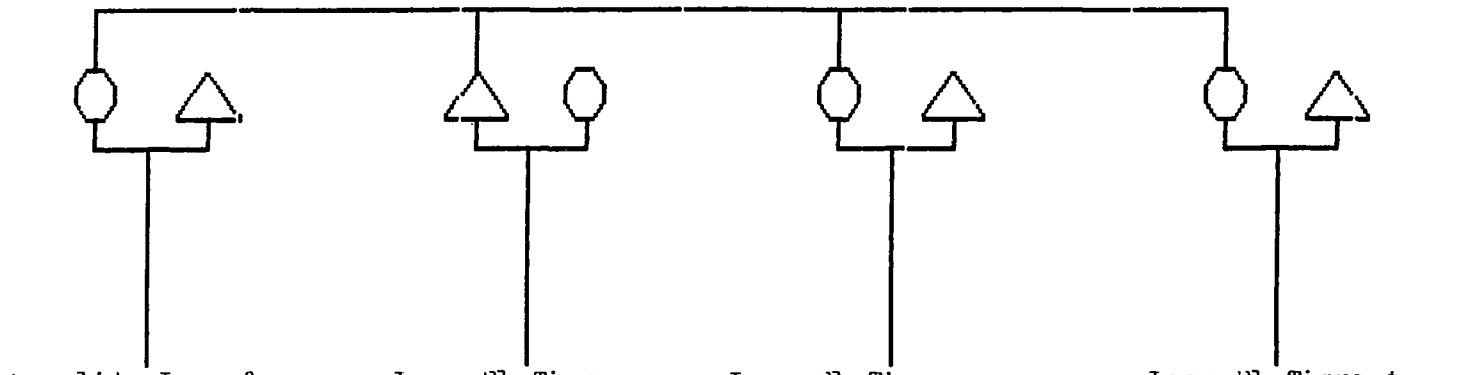


Chart 11: Angelita Leon and half-siblings--alternative paths out of closed mine



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Prieta; after working a spell, they bought a house and brought the rest of the family to the border city.

In comparison to Angelita's well educated and prosperous children in Agua Prieta, her half-siblings' children include 9 maquiladora workers, 3 domestics, 2 day laborers, and 2 daughters married to ejidatarios. Why such different fates at the border? Angelita and Luis went almost directly to the border in the late 1940s, Luis worked in the U.S. and earned dollars, Angelita herself worked and invested in businesses, and they kept their children in school; whereas this other group went through a long transition of irregular work in small places and did not arrive at the border until the 1970s, where the mine skills were of little use and they had few resources to sell except their labor to the factories.

The Aguirre family (see Chart 4 in Chapter 3), had already branched upon the marriage of three daughters to miners who went to Cananea, and as El Tigre declined, another son went there. Though this changed location, it preserved the Aguirre concentration in mine occupations. However, in the third generation (the children of Luis' siblings) there were only two miners/wives of miners. When Luis' father Santiago moved out of collapsing El Tigre to the nearby railroad-farm town of Esqueda, this family broke with the mine way of life they had had since the Peralta siblings left Bacerac thirty years before.

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Although Esqueda offered a temporary refuge after the mine collapse, like the rest of interior northeastern Sonora, it did not offer enough work or pay to sustain most of the families of the Aguirre siblings. Luis parents died in 1955 and 1956 living in Esqueda with a divorced daughter, and one other son worked there as a truckdriver. In the third generation, only 2 of 27 descendents were there. As the Aguirre siblings left Esqueda in the late 1940s, they had two basic options: the border (Agua Prieta and Douglas), or the coastal cities: one brother and one group of children of a deceased brother went to Hermosillo; one brother, Luis, went to Agua Prieta, and one brother immigrated to Douglas by marriage. In the third generation, 10 of 27 were in Hermosillo, spanning a diverse range of educational and occupations available in a large city. 5 of 27 were in Agua Prieta, 2 in the U.S. (Tucson), and 4 in the urban border state of Baja California. The Aguirre family is an exemplary case of the break up of the mine community.

## Bracero Work

When Luis and Angelita arrived in Agua Prieta in 1947, Luis spent several months without work. Angelita again supported the family by taking in washing and sewing. In the summer of 1947, Luis signed his first contract to work in the fields of the U.S. as a bracero (for general information about the program, see Chapter 2; my understanding of the rich details of Luis' story was helped

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and corroborated by Herrera-Sobek's "composite bracero oral history", 1979).

Bracero contracting was announced on the radio and by word of mouth; preference went to residents of Agua Prieta or those with "local passports" (a local form of permit to visit the U.S. side of the border). Until 1951, Luis got his contract at the U.S. port of entry at Douglas and he mostly worked nearby in Arizona. The workers took whatever assignment they were given by the U.S. authorities. Luis was sent to Elfrida, north of Douglas, where he weeded chiles. Having been a miner all his life, he didn't know how to weed efficiently, and the foreman grew so angry that he threatened to dock Luis one dollar for each plant he knocked down, but this was in the manner of warning and he didn't follow through. It was hard work, and he made about three dollars a day, but at 8.65 pesos per dollar, Luis could make about six times as much in the U.S. than Agua Prieta.

After the first three month contract was over, Luis returned to Agua Prieta, but in the late summer he obtained another contract to work in the chile harvest, cutting and loading trailers that went to packing plants in Elfrida. Luis continued to contract in Arizona until 1952, cutting onions, radishes, squashes, and most frequently picking cotton at $2.50 per hundred pounds, making 250 pounds a day. Each harvest was short, but with a three or six month contract, Luis could do several harvests and send home

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between $25 and $100 a month. He did have to pay for his food in the U.S., at $1.50 a day, and he liked to buy work pants and boots in the U.S.

In 1952, contracting was removed from the border and centralized in recruitment centers, such as the one in Empalme, Sonora, that Luis went to. At such centers, American doctors gave a "medical inspection" that ranged from listening to the lungs to checking for the callouses which showed experienced agricultural laborers. When Luis had contracted at Douglas, it took little waiting and investment of savings before he reached work. But when Luis contracted at Empalme, he had to have bus fare to the coast and money to live off until he was assigned a contract, after which he was given transportation to the U.S. Thus to get bracero work required savings, and involved the risk of going to Empalme and not being contracted. Luis recalled helping other workers from Agua Prieta who did not have enough money for food at Empalme. One way to reduced the risk was to get certification from the municipal president of Agua Prieta, who sold it for 12 pesos a month of erstwhile "tax." The certification gave precedence in contract assignment, and Luis paid it, rather than sneak across the border as many did.

From Empalme, Luis was sent to California, where at a contract center he was assigned to various farmers. Thus he worked in numerous and diverse jobs in agriculture, from the exhausting stoop labor of picking cotton, to one avocado

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orchard where they could pick from trees standing up and the farmer let them stuff themselves on avocados. In California, the pay was generally better than in Arizona--as little as seven dollars a day harvesting melons and as much as twenty two dollars a day culling peaches in 1960. Furthermore, Luis could seek longer trips that paid off in bigger earnings because he was not working for the daily bread of the family, but rather large lumps sums to invest; Angelita was working in Agua Prieta and supporting the family, and Luis could afford the cost and risk of the recruitment center trip. Except for six month's work in the Agua Prieta meat-packing plant in 1949, Luis worked consistently in the U.S. from 1947 until 1960, when the program was winding down and contracts were getting scarcer. After a few years of sporadic, poorly paid construction labor in Agua Prieta, he retired from work.

Luis generally regarded his time as a bracero well, and had few complaints. One grievance that he stressed was that the official contract only allowed 1,000 dollars insurance for loss of life, and 500 for a hand or eye, which he felt was hardly sufficient for his family. He recalled several disputes with employers, in particular when a farmer in New Mexico who, near the end of his harvest, had hired many men and then let them go without pay--a typical sort of migrant labor abuse--Luis took his complaint to the Mexican counsel in Douglas, but the employer had hidden. The counsel was the person to whom grievances were taken, and Luis did not

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recall having any contact with a union or even a mutual aid society. There was little enforcement of contract provisions in the bracero program before the 1960s, and real pay rates and conditions were set unilaterally by employers (Galarza, 1964).

Luis worked alongside undocumented aliens, and they were paid the same; the border patrol stopped trucks on the highways but never came on the farms, as far as he could recall. He noted that if one couldn't get a contract, one came to the U.S. illegally anyway, but he always tried to get the contract. He almost never worked alongside U.S. citizens--a few blacks, but never any Mexican Americans--and Mexican migrant workers stayed in separate encampments. Herrera-Sobek insightfully observed that the braceros had little contact with general U.S. society, and thus they were unconscious of discrimination that they were subjected to; that because their work in the U.S. was a means to a goal back in Mexico--their childrens' education, equipment for a farm or workshop--they judged their work in the U.S. not according to the heavy work and primitive living conditions, but by the positive results their income brought at home.

## Women's Paid and Unpaid Work

From 1944, when they had left El Tigre, until 1947, when they had arrived in Agua Prieta, Angelita had coped with Luis' unemployment by doing sewing and laundry; what is interesting is that after even after Luis started sending back dollars from the U.S., Angelita continued to sew, and

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indeed, she expanded her effort to take advantage of profitable business conditions on the border. Rather than subsisting on the money earned by Luis, Angelita allocated the money from her sewing to daily expenses, and as much as possible left the American money to long term savings and investments. The move to the border had magnified the role of Angelita, and it is worth exploring exactly how.

When they left Esqueda, Luis' mother had referred Angelita to a comadre who lived in Agua Prieta, and Angelita struck up an lasting friendship with her. Besides helping Luis and Angelita find an apartment to rent, and introducing Angelita to subtleties of border life, such as shopping in Douglas and pricing items in dollars, this woman introduced Angelita to many other women in Agua Prieta and Douglas who became her customers. As Angelita's skill as a seamstress became known, she could ensure herself a steady stream of work put-out from millinery shops, yarn work, dresses for weddings, confirmations, and quinceneras, and so forth.[14] She copied from catalogues and store displays, and she became extraordinarily capable at translating observations into patterns and measurements. She had a pedal sewing machine as old as she was, that she had bought from her mother when her mother moved away from El Tigre. She earned about one dollar a day for labor, in addition to materials.

Angelita's work as a seamstress took between two and six days a week--it was quite irregular, and at times she worked under deadlines, in addition to her house chores. My

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interviews with her and the material culture history of that household indicate that certain appliances she owned by the late 1940s helped reduce her drudgery and thus facilitated Angelita's new roles. When she lived in El Tigre, she had done her wash by hand. Washing took two days a week, working until late at night, and waking the next day with stiff and sore forearms. When she moved to Agua Prieta one of her first acquisitions (1949) was a roller-type washer, electrically driven. That undoubtedly enabled her to put more effort into sewing.

For grinding corn, she always used a hand mill (which occupied 15 minutes compared to an hour by metate), and she took about an hour a day making the tortillas. In cooking beans, Angelita did not begin to save time until about 1968, when she bought her first refrigerator, and the mid-1970s, when she bought a blender and a pressure cooker. Before the refrigerator, she made refried beans everyday; with the refrigerator, she could make them once a week and freeze them. Using a regular pot, cooking beans took three hours, while a pressure cooker takes an hour; and to mash them by hand takes ten minutes of hard work while the blender does them easily. The refrigerator also meant less frequent shopping, and meat could be stored raw, rather than dried in the sun. Angelita bought a gas stove in 1960; this saved the effort of bringing firewood into the house and stoking the fire, but getting tanks of butane is a notorious struggle in Agua Prieta, so much so that most families kept

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a firewood stove in reserve. Indeed, the cast-iron firewood stove, which dated to her mother's time, had already brought a considerable reduction in effort, for the pre-industrial technology, clay-walled ovens, collapsed and had to be rebuilt by women daily.

When Angelita lived in El Tigre, a small company store was nearby, and nearby ranchers brought fruit, cheese, and beef to sell, while in Agua Prieta Angelita did most of her shopping in Douglas (not only for food but also for her fabric and thread), until the 1976 devaluation. While shopping in Douglas was enjoyable--Angelita went with her friend--it could be a long trip loaded down with bags, especially on foot. As Simonelli (1985) points out, when children stayed in school longer, their labor was foregone. Angelita's oldest daughter left school after secondary school to go to work as a store clerk, to help her family, about 1953. But the other three children stayed in school until they married, and Angelita put the effort to keep them there throughout the 1950s and 1960s.[18] Finally, Angelita had to make up for tasks that her husband might have done if he were in Agua Prieta: specifically, several times she was responsible for the paperwork required to purchase a house.

Using this retrospective data, it is not possible to make a precise calculation of the change in labor time, but it appears that time savings occurred earlier, when women shifted rural to mine-town patterns, again with the washing machine that Angelita acquired when she came to the border,

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and in the craft of seamstress the sewing machine meant that much greater production was possible while still doing housework. Other appliances have come in the last two decades after Angelita's greatest needs were over.

## Women's Managerial Roles on the Border

The period of the transition to the border brought a tremendous outpouring of effort from women, although they were not yet wage workers. They kept their children in school longer, they set up small stores and artisan businesses, and they managed family investments, especially in houses, but also in businesses. Men continued to work hard, as they had in the mines, but their work took them to small mines in Sonora and migrant labor in Arizona and California, away from Agua Prieta. Women had the responsibility for settling the family on the border, and the developing their social position there (houses, education, etc.).[16]

With Luis' dollars, Angelita bought a two room house for 2,000 pesos in 1951, and through the 1950s added four rooms, with hired construction labor. Around 1960, Angelita and her oldest daughter Ana started a small grocery store (they rented the location) that was capitalized from the savings that Angelita had made of Luis' pay from the U.S. They kept the store until Ana married in 1972. This was in the somewhat prosperous but heterogeneous east-south extension of Agua Prieta.

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The family invested in the education of the younger two daughters and their son: their second daughter attended secondary school and normal school from 1953 to 1960, and she worked as a teacher two years before marrying in 1962; their third daughter had secondary school and three years of nursing training before she married in 1965; and they supported their youngest son through a master's degree in chemical engineering, and he has a teaching position in Guaymas. While their daughters did not use their professions, they married prosperously: one to a schoolteacher, and the other to a co-owner of several tortilla factories.

Around 1965 Angelita bought another small lot with two rooms that she started to rent out. She obtained a commercial bank loan in Agua Prieta, co-signed by the son-in-law with the tortilla stores, and used the money (10,000 pesos, about 800 dollars) to build two three room apartments to rent (Angelita's first bank loan, in 1963, was money sent to her half-sister in Magdalena to build a house). The construction labor was done by her other son-in-law, the schoolteacher. In 1970 they bought two large lots for 30,000 pesos, and the same son-in-law built two houses, one for his wife, containing a grocery store, and the other, in 1975, a good house for his mother and father-in-law, with materials they supplied him.

With these investments, Angelita provided for the retirement of herself and Luis, along with her divorced

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daughter and granddaughter. Even as the work career of a laboring man, for whom strength is the foremost resource, draws to a close early, around the age of fifty, women can develop businesses, if they have access to some capital, in their forties, fifties, and sixties. On the other hand, the elderly couple or especially elderly woman, who does not have a business, or who does not live with a married child who can provide for them (in return for childcare), can suffer greatly.

## The Husband-Wife Relationship

The arrangement in which Luis steadily sent remittances home and Angelita invested them, while she covered for daily needs with her businesses, is one possible result in the relationship between a husband who is doing migratory work and a wife at home, who may also have earnings. Two questions are useful in analyzing this relationship.

Will the man, making good money in a distant place, send it back to his wife, and in what quantities? For the woman, this is the point of greatest risk. Luis told me that he gave his earnings to his wife, because when a man is away he must make a decision to "cooperate" with his wife if he is to return to her. A single male migrant may spend his earnings on himself, and send a fraction home as aid to his parents. A man whose work is local or commutes nearby may hold his pay and leave his wife dependent on what he gives her. But an adult migrant laborer, with a family, must either abandon his family obligations or cede a certain

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power over spending to his wife when he sends money home.

The man may send the money home while he works steadily in the U.S., like Luis, which leaves control to the wife, or he may work a spell and then return to Mexico with the money to spend or invest himself, until it again is necessary to return. To the element of distance, we can add changes in the life cycle. Among plantation workers in Guyana, Chandra Jayawardena (1962) found that as men's earnings fall with age, and women respond by increasing their earnings outside the household, the balance of power shifts so that husbands either bring more money home, or marital conflicts worsen.

Even when the husband is a good provider, giving money to his wife for daily shopping (which leaves little room for discretion), who controls the long term investments, husband or wife? Simonelli (1985: 225), who worked in rural Sonora, suggests that women are closer to short cycle concerns, while male concerns with farms follow a longer cycle. While women in urban Sonora did indeed struggle with day to day budgeting, women also make decisions about long term commitments like houses and childrens' education.

Do investments of remitted money go toward appliances that women use, or toward tools and materials for a man to set up a workshop? Does the investment go toward spending among friends, promoting a man's local standing, or does it go into a woman's small business? These are questions that help indicate the balance of power. Frances Rothstein

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(1983) found, in Tlaxcala, that male wages, partly from migratory work, was invested by men, not women, and that women withdrew to unpaid housework in these families. While in Agua Prieta I found cases of this, Luis and Angelita Aguirre were diametrically opposite. One cannot say what determines the patterns of particular couples, but these appear to be the relevant lines of variation.[17]

The Aguirre history suggests that in the particular circumstances of the transitional period--exodus from the male wage dominated mines, migratory work by some men in the U.S., home based businesses, and especially investments in a new life at the border--some women had the opportunity to achieve considerable effective power, albeit in untrumpeted domestic locations: a historical phenomenon best demonstrated in long-term life history evidence.

## Córdoba History: Male and Female Residential Choices

The following family history will again show the relationship of husband and wife in families of the transitional period. This history concentrates on the differences of interest between husband and wife in residential choice in the process of migrating to the border city. The Córdobas are unusual in that the they went through the mine to border shift relatively late (1958).

Carlos Córdoba and Francisca Galaz married in 1940 in Santo Domingo; they lived neolocally in a wood frame company house, though nearby to Francisca's mother, of course, since

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Santo Domingo was not large. Carlos had begun work in Santo Domingo in 1936, in the mine's hardware shop, beginning at six pesos a day, and after a year he was transferred to the power plant. In 1940, Santo Domingo was shut down because the main engine had failed, and Carlos went to Pilares de Nacozari, then hiring because of the World War II boom, where he worked for the geology department on contract doing test tunnels, until he had enough tenure to enter the machine shop (the miner's union at Pilares insisted on placement by strict seniority).

But Carlos returned to Santo Domingo as soon as he could, in 1944, when a former boss there called for him and paid for the cost of his return. Francisca was happy to go back to Santo Domingo, where her mother was, and as for Carlos, he was a favored worker at Santo Domingo, while he was just another one of the thousand plus in the seniority system of Pilares (Santo Domingo was part of the Pilares section of the miner's union, however, and Carlos was a union member, if not an active one). Life in Santo Domingo was much the same as in the larger mine centers, though more isolated (a doctor visited only twice a week, and drinkable water had to be trucked in).

Carlos continued to work in the power plant, as a mechanic, until 1958, finishing with a salary of 15 pesos a day (worth just over one dollar a day at 12.5 to 1, while his salary in 1936 of six pesos was worth two dollars at 3 to 1). Santo Domingo operated irregularly during the 1940s

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and 1950s, because the owner, Susano Montano, contracted the mine out to a changing set of American operators, but Carlos stuck it out throughout the 1950s, while other mines were completely closed. Seven of Carlos and Francisca's eight children were born in this period. In 1958, the mine stopped and Carlos was dismissed with no indemnity, though he was owed over 1,000 pesos; though Carlos had obviously received favors from managers earlier, when I asked him to recall any favors, he instead replied with this bitter memory of broken promises in the expectation of help.

Francisca had already moved to Nacozari de García, where she kept house for the oldest son and daughter (born in 1944 and 1948) who were continuing in school there, while her mother kept house for Carlos and the younger children (see Chart 12). Thus, when the mine closed definitively in 1958, Carlos came to Nacozari de Garcia to look for work, but all he could encounter was occasional day labor. In 1959, Carlos was offered a job in Esqueda, at a fluorite mine, initially as a watchman, and soon advancing to maintenance of the diesel engines, his specialty (when Carlos left in 1972, he was making 50 pesos a day, four dollars at 12.5 to 1). Francisca would commute during the week to Esqueda to care for Carlos, and the younger children stayed with her, while the oldest two children stayed in Nacozari in school and Francisca's mother took care of the house there.

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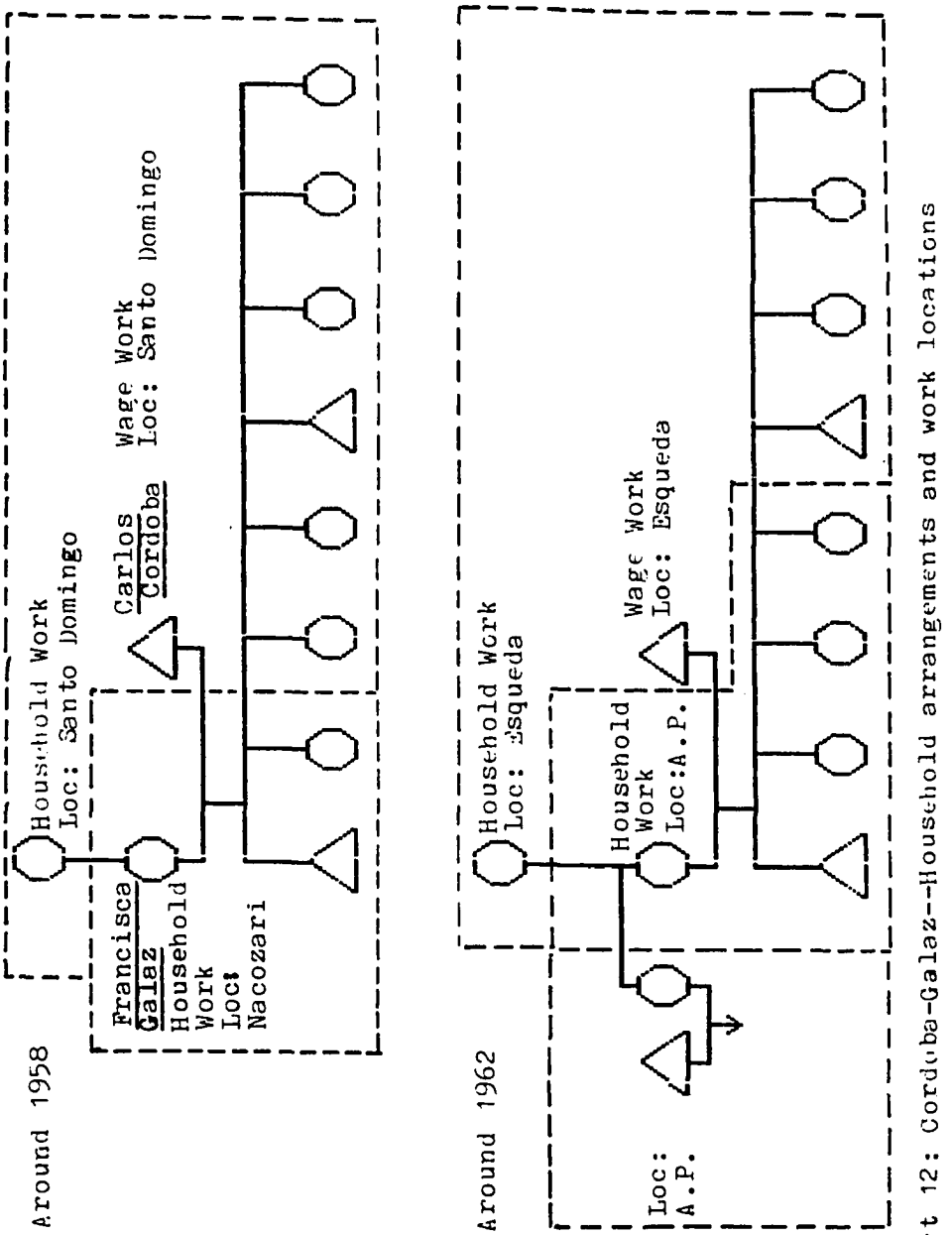


Chart 12: Cordoba-Galaz--Household arrangements and work locations

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As the next set of children were ready for secondary school, the Córdoba family repeated this complicated two household arrangement, this time Francisca moving to Agua Prieta from Esqueda with the oldest four children (three in school and one working), and her mother in Esqueda with the younger four and Carlos (Chart 12). From 1962, when Francisca came to Agua Prieta, she stayed two years with her older half-sister (who, when Santo Domingo closed, had preceded her to Agua Prieta where the sister's children found jobs), and then several more years in rented apartments. Francisca's mother later moved in with Francisca in Agua Prieta, where she passed away.

In 1965, Carlos and Francisca bought a house lot, on Seventh Street, to the east of the city, from the municipality of Agua Prieta (it was municipal, not ejido land). They paid 200 pesos for the lot and 50 pesos for a permit to build; at 50 pesos a day pay, this was inexpensive for Carlos. They noted, in response to my questions, that they did not need any "pull" (palanca) or personal favors to get the lot, a response repeated among many other people I questioned. The building materials were bought from Decorson, a hardware firm of Gustavo Teran, on credit given to Jorge, their oldest son. The plumbing was bought, straight cash, in the U.S.. They hired a mason to do the basic foundation, walls, and roof, but Carlos and his two sons did the ceiling, floors, windows and doors, wall plastering, etc., and Carlos baked the bricks himself in

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Esqueda. His sons did the electrical wiring. Carlos came to Agua Prieta on weekends to work on the house.

In 1972, Carlos was once again displaced as the fluorite mine in Esqueda closed. As he informed me, he had a job offer then, in the early development of La Caridad mine in Nacozari, but this would have meant going further away from Agua Prieta to a relatively isolated area. His wife and children (by then, the youngest was 13) insisted that they stay in the border city instead of moving to the mine development camp. The last two daughters were still in secondary school, and the oldest four children were all working in maquiladoras.

The Córdoba family history offers us an important opportunity to examine how the migratory destination is decided among different individual interests in a family. Francisca, who wanted to keep her children in school, and who wanted better housing and urban services, favored a move to the larger border city, while Carlos sought mine jobs, using his skills and friendships, that would have brought him to smaller and more remote places. When Carlos worked in Esqueda and Francisca lived in Agua Prieta with her children, they had found a way of balancing the two needs, since Agua Prieta and Esqueda are not far apart. But when the decision had to be made in 1972 to complete the move to Agua Prieta, or take a job offer in La Caridad, not only Francisca, but also the children, who were finding employment in border factories, prevailed in the migratory

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decision. The endpoints of family paths so often end in larger cities, in this case border cities, because women and children choose permanent urban destinations, while working men will wander far afield, as far as the U.S., in search of temporary wage labor but will return, in a cyclical manner, to the permanent abode (Wiest, 1973).

In Agua Prieta, Carlos found work helping in an electrical workshop, and when he had an opportunity to buy a used Sears lathe in good condition, he set up his own machine shop, where he continues to work (he was 77 in 1986). In the machine shop, Carlos can take advantage of his years of experience, from his youthful work with his uncle through the tool shops and power plants of the mines, to make money in his old age, when otherwise he would be retired or at most working as a sub-minimum wage watchman (in 1986, he estimated that he got daily 5,000 pesos, at that time more than ten dollars, for his labor, on top of materials, but of course, clients are irregular; he does not have a regular source of put-out work, though his sons in maquiladoras can steer work to him). More about the Cordoba family in Agua Prieta can be found in Chapter 6.

## The Border Settlement Process

Family histories in the period of transformation after 1929 have proven complex and many-branched. How could it be otherwise? Still, patterns appeared in the alternative branching of kinship. Expansive industrial employment in

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the mine towns and the U.S. southwest had enabled horizontally spread clumps of kin, siblings and children of siblings, to form each more or less parallel in their relation to wage resources. When the mining complex broke up, so did these blocs. Siblings/descendents of siblings split off to bracero contracting, small mines, etc.. These once parallel clumps differentiated as they arrived on the border according to the timing and resources their path brought to them. The family histories show in the course of this process a narrowing of effective kin to immediate lineal families, with great investments by women in housing and schooling the children as they arrived on the border, in contrast to the situation of the mines, where the contract system in mine work encouraged cooperation among lateral male kin, brothers, cousins, nephews, brothers-in-law. However, lateral ties did serve in several cases as leverage in moving to the border (see the Hernandez case above).

A parallel process seems to have taken place in people's understanding of their histories. In the mine towns, miners had common concerns--their pay, their seniority, the company store--and as the mine union emerged in 1930s, many issues combined into one single political arena, that of the union and the company. But as people discussed the mines, I noticed that issues which had once charged them--such as the protested closure of the El Tigre mine and the running of the union cooperative--no longer held their interest. There occurred a radical break with

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the militant, nationalistic tradition of the mine working class communities of Sonora. The closure of the mines, like the repatriation from the U.S., appeared in popular memories as a cataclysmic break with the past. This is resembles the patterning of oral history after similar events reported by Hareven (Hareven and Langenbach, 1978). What is significant about the Sonoran case is that historical narratives were repatterned under new circumstances: resettlement in the border city.

My informants organized their stories in a narrative of the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, beginning with a historical marker of the break with the past--whether mine closing or repatriation--and following a series of steps of establishing a good life on the border. This gave a markedly optimistic cast to their understandings, since they moved toward some sort of fulfillment--a house, a workshop, a store, the education of their children, etc.

This experience of fulfillment can be explained, to a great extent, by the patterns of real wages in these decades. Real wages declined sharply in the late 1930s and the 1940s, and hit bottom in the late 1940s, the very moment when people were starting their search for a new life. Unemployment and low real earnings combined to give the stories of families about this era a sense of great privation. In the following decades real wages increased, although slowly, toward a pinnacle in the mid-1970s, by which time consumer power was double that of the mid-1930s,

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and more than triple that of the late 1940s. In the same stretch of years families were arriving on the border, buying lots and building houses, sending children to secondary school (and a few to professions), when they themselves had had but a few years of school, buying trucks, washing machines, and refrigerators, and so forth. No wonder that people viewed the move to the border city as fulfilling their dreams of a decent life.

## The Return of Personalized Labor Relations: Small Mines

The period after the vast impersonal labor market in the mines closed, when people sought work in small mines, lumber mills, and border towns, was characterized by labor organized through personal relationships. The ties formed among men in Agua Prieta in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s continue to have great presence in Agua Prieta of the 1980s. The purpose of this section is to outline the patterns of personalized work relationships, including horizontal alliances and vertical patronage which emerged in workplaces of the transitional era. These relationships are couched in the idioms of male friendship and the male work/life cycle. The connected histories of the friends Juan Bautista Valenzuela and Trinidad Escarcega, small miners of the era, start our examination of this topic. We will then look more generally at how relationships established in transitional decades affect Agua Prieta today. We close with the history of Antonio Hernandez, who came to Agua Prieta through a

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similar path, and has established--through a patronized work relationship--an independent workshop; this enables us to look generally at the social relationships in these shops.

## Juan Bautista Valenzuela

Juan Bautista Valenzuela was born in 1939, on the hacienda Santa Rosa, in the municipality of Fronteras. Juan Bautista's father, Horacio, was a hacienda laborer (peón). He drove mule teams for the hacienda, hauling sawed lumber down from the mountains, and purchased goods in from Agua Prieta; for this he was paid--Juan was not sure how much--and given a garden plot.

When Juan Bautista was still very young, his father left the hacienda and lived on a succession of small farms in Bacoachi, Cuquiarachi, and Fronteras, probably share-cropping and making mezcal. By the mid-1940s, Horacio was in Cuquiarachi, a farm village near Fronteras, using a team of burros to bring soap, flour, sugar, green coffee beans, and kerosene from Agua Prieta to Cuquiarachi and hauling out fruit for stores and mezcal for bars in the border city. Horacio did not belong to the ejido of Cuquiarachi, so he could not pasture his animals; Juan Bautista had to haul hay to feed his father's burros. Because Horacio was footloose, and because his son started to work for him at an early age, Juan Bautista never was able to attend school.

In 1947, Horacio moved his family again, this time to Agua Prieta. Horacio had an adult son who lived in Agua

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Prieta--a half-brother of Juan Bautista--and they stayed with him until they found a house to rent in the Barrio Ferrocarril. They couldn't keep the burros in the center of the city, while to the side of Ferrocarril there were corrals. His father worked herding goats on a ranch for 6 pesos a day, plus the goat cheese, and it was Juan Bautista who went door to door selling the cheese. Subsequently, Horacio and Juan collected firewood in the hills near Naco, and hauled it back to Agua Prieta on burro trains to sell, roughly 20 pesos for three days work.

But in 1949, violent snowstorms destroyed their livelihood: some burros got loose and wandered across the border, where they were shot by American authorities (this was the era of the hoof and mouth disease animal ban); and the snow meant that they couldn't get to the firewood, so for want of food they began to eat the surviving burros, until the very last burro was led to the slaughterhouse. This poor animal was saved when the slaughterer gave Horacio some soup-bones, and Horacio, in a fit of sympathy, spared its life. The family fortune had hit bottom. Horacio abandoned the family for Hermosillo, where he died within the year. Juan Bautista's mother, Inocencia, went to work in a tortilla mill, making tortillas on piecework. Juan Bautista took to the streets as a shoeshine boy--he was so poor that he made his own shoe polish from blackened carbon steel and rust.

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Thus it was that at the age of 12, in 1951, Juan Bautista began to drift about mines and ranches as a helper, though not paid, scrounging food and serving an informal manner of apprenticeship. His first paid job, at the age of 12, was sorting ore--20 centavos a can--at several small mines, including one of a future employer, Jesus Gutiérrez. Juan Bautista was a day laborer for two and three month stretches on various farms and ranches, building roads, feeding cattle, hauling water, and he worked in a lime plant near Naco.

In 1953, Juan went to the U.S. to work for the first time (he was 14). Growing up on the border, he always was aware of the possibility of work in the U.S. He worked mainly during cotton harvest season, in the Elfrida area near Douglas--he didn't have the initial investment to get any further into the interior. He worked in the U.S. until 1956, always without papers, except for one occasion when the Southern Pacific officials arranged his immigration--probably on a bracero contract, since he was interviewed by U.S. officials in Douglas. The company then flew him to Willcox, Arizona, north of Douglas, to work in an emergency track crew--it was a memorable and disorienting experience for him to fly.

In 1956, after other intermittent jobs, Juan Bautista ended up in Magdalena, Sonora, where his old patron, Gutiérrez, was starting up several abandoned manganese mines. During the 1950s there were a succession of

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"boomlets" in various ores--manganese, tungsten, antimony, molybdenum, fluorite--and during this era when the great copper mines were closed or stagnant, many miners found employment, albeit erratic, in small operations scattered about the state.

Gutiérrez hired some miners who had worked together in Churunibabi and Esqueda, and Juan Bautista joined this crew. First the men put in a road, then timbered the old mines, cleared out the entrances, restored collapsed stairs and passages. After the mine began to produce, they mined by contract: 22 pesos a ton of mixed ore, 44 pesos a ton of first class metal. Working hard, and with good fortune, they could get six tons (one truckload) a day for the crew, enough to get a ton's pay per crew member. These mines were a bonanza for six or seven years: pure pick work, without the need for explosives. The supplies were paid for by the patron but the men had to buy their food.

## Trinidad Escarcega

Trinidad Escarcega headed the crew that Juan Bautista worked in. He had been born where his father worked in a coal mining town in Texas, in 1920. His father, mother, brother, and he returned to Mexico in the depression of 1921. They went to El Tigre, where his father found employment as a miner for several years before remarrying (Trinidad's mother had died), buying cattle, and moving to the nearby farm village of Tardecitos (in the municipality of Bacerac). When Trinidad was 15, he left his father's

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ranch, and went to work, also in El Tigre. He worked in the mines, putting in timber, until the company closed, and then with the union. When the cooperative closed in 1940, Trinidad worked four more years in El Tigre as a gambusino, joined by his father.

After El Tigre's shafts were sacked, Trinidad left for Esqueda, where he worked 13 years for the fluorite mine, first building flotation ponds and then in the mine itself. In 1956, he was laid-off, and he drifted about until he found a job on a ranch in Magdalena. He only worked there six months until Jesus Gutiérrez recruited him as the crew foreman in his manganese mine. Trinidad obtained several of his fellow workers from Esqueda, and he also gave work to Juan Bautista, who had the personal recommendation of Jesus Gutiérrez.

## Labor Relations in Small Mines

Juan Bautista, in a taped interview about his work career, and he and Trinidad in conversations sitting around Juan's backyard workshop, gave me a description of the social relations of the small mine crew--a very idealized portrait, a look in retrospect at how it should have been, not necessarily how a contemporaneous observer would have seen it--but in that manner a useful description of the ideals of the male peer group.

The patron would gather a crew, four, five, or six men, and he would give them a contract for a tunnel, let's say, for so many pesos a foot. The crew would get together and

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agree on "rules"--that they would split the money evenly; that they would work for each other, so that if one was ill or drunk, the others would work for him and pay him his share anyway; that all the food was bought by all and shared by all--if there were only beans, everybody ate beans. Everybody knew the different tasks, so that they were all drillers, or machinists, or all put in timbers, and so forth, according to need; thus, if one was missing, substitutes were available and the work was not held up. A young and inexperienced miner in this context could learn a wide variety of skills--drilling and empirical mineralogy, carpentry, welding and machining, plumbing, electricity, etc.

The hours they worked were according to necessity, not shifts--thus, if the crew needed money, they would work from morning to midnight or one A.M.. Each miner depended on the others for their safety--unsafe workers were shunned--and they wouldn't go into dangerous mines (though the incentive of the contract payment must surely have worked against this ideal). Certainly, though, small mines were worse than industrial mines; for example, Juan never used water-fed drills, and the mine was very dusty--he feels he left in time to save his health. Many enter the mine at dawn, Juan says, but few leave by dusk.

Sometimes friends and companions of work were embittered or separated--one pulled one way and one the other--but much of the time it was the same gang that "Díos

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los hace y ellos se juntan." One became very close to fellow workers--unlike a factory where there were tons of workers, on the ranches and small mines just a handful of men in a remote place became very close--a combination of feelings of friendship and equality in sharing work that is expressed in the term compañero. There was a reason for guarding this idealism among fellows: dividing the payoff, envy and rivalry could build to a murderous point, as B. Traven explored in The Treasure of the Sierra Madre. Yet, unfortunately, this was a temporary state of affairs, for every small mine peters out and the compañeros are scattered to the winds.

Juan Bautista and Trinidad described self-directed worksites, but the mine, the tools, and the supplies were not owned by the workers; indeed, they would have been hard pressed to have raised the capital to pay for the development work (roads, timbering, etc.) and to bulk non-precious ore. I found no evidence that the men received advances or were indebted to the patron, and indeed, so close to the U.S., it would have been hard to hold the workers in these manners. These manganese mines were owned by landowners, who leased them to an operator, who supplied the mine, paid the workers, and sold the ore--to mineral brokers who, in turn, were dependent on the large smelters in Cananea and Arizona.[18] As for miners themselves, about the only chance they had of working independently was placer

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gold; and even in this case, permission to enter private land had to be obtained, often denied.

Because small mines opened and shut frequently, miners attached themselves to a patrón, such as Juan Bautista with Jesus Gutiérrez, rather than with a mine or locality. Indeed, I was introduced to Juan in Agua Prieta via his former patrón. The patrón knows his workers like a father knows his sons, Juan remarked; he knows which one is good and which is bad. The reputation of a worker gets about among employers, and thus one who is "very (hard) working" (muy trabajador) gets work, and to a bad worker they "ponen la bola negra" (blackball). In this occasional labor market, without the money and tools to start a mine on their own, miners lived, or starved, off their reputation.

The small contract crews demonstrate the idioms of male work relationships in clear form. However, they underlay more complex forms of work organizations, and the effectiveness of contract system of the industrial mines for the American corporations shows that they recognized this form. When massive layoffs detached many men from the union and company organizations, they had recourse to these sets of ideas about how to organize their work alternatives. Patrón employment and egalitarian work groups, therefore, were prevalent during the transitional period, but they follow more general cultural formulas for organizing production.

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## Post-Mine Careers of Juan Bautista Valenzuela and Trinidad Escarcega

When the mine company of Jesus Gutiérrez began to slow in 1964, and the mine crew broke up, Juan Bautista Valenzuela returned to Agua Prieta, where his mother lived. The mines were dangerous, he remarked, but one feels tranquil in the solitude of the mountains as a single man; when one marries, then a steady home becomes more tranquil and healthy than an isolated mine. Juan married Guadalupe Barceló in Agua Prieta in 1964. She had been married once, in 1956, and divorced with four children in 1960. When they married, Juan and Guadalupe moved into his mother's old house in the Barrio Ferrocarril (she was living with a daughter in the same neighborhood), and Guadalupe's four children came with her, in addition to the five children she and Juan had between 1964 and 1976.

But Juan had not really settled down in 1964. He worked in numerous jobs for short periods--on a ranch, on a road crew, in a cotton ginning mill on the coast of Hermosillo, and even again with his patrón Jesus Gutiérrez in several small mines distant from Agua Prieta. He was wandering about, spending his money drinking, not helping his wife and children, who suffered greatly. Juan Bautista reshaped his life after a series of religious experiences, visions of God, which culminated in his conversion by missionaries to Pentecostal Protestantism. He feels great faith and inner peace, and he has stopped drinking. Juan

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commented that he now has "respect" for his wife, and she can now respect him, since he brings home his money rather than drinking it up with his companions. One might say that he is being ordered about by his woman, he said, but it is not that he is being bossed but that God has transformed him. Juan has a strong philosophical bent, though he has no schooling, and his religious faith seems to have made his personality whole.

Around 1970, Juan started to withdraw from casual labor, and he began to work at home. At first he made picture frames from scrap wood, a marginal business that sold out of the house, and graduated to carpentry for hire, making door frames and simple cabinetmaking. His first tools were a second-hand drill press he bought in Agua Prieta (which cost 1,000 pesos, then $80 dollars U.S.) and second hand carpentry tools. He later built his own large drill press, and a grinder which he also built, with a second-hand 125 horsepower motor, for which he buys used grinding wheels. His single largest purchase was an electric arc welder, bought for $125 dollars in Tucson. With these tools, he started working as a blacksmith and mechanic--putting heavy duty suspensions in pick-up trucks and building gas-burning heaters for harsh Agua Prieta winters--and set up a taller behind his house. He works this shop alone, though his son Juan, fourteen in 1986, is beginning to help him since he left secondary school.

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Juan's companion Trinidad, unlike Juan, stayed in Magdalena, working in small mines. But he commented that he suffered greatly in those years because there was little work. He came to Agua Prieta in 1976 because he had a married daughter there, and because he intended to re-immigrate to the U.S. He was a citizen, by birth, and in 1976 he finally obtained proof, because a cousin in Texas had located his birth registry and baptismal certificate.

To digress, Trinidad had tried in 1945 to reclaim his citizenship rights to enter the U.S., but he had been rejected for lack of a birth registry as proof. In the intervening years, he crossed the border without documents--"nearby, on foot, to Elfrida and Willcox [Arizona]"--where he worked picking cotton and chiles. He was twice kicked out as a "mojado", which he wasn't, and the second time threatened with "10 years" jail if he returned (uninspected entry is a felony, and this is used to frighten aliens to depart "voluntarily").

Anyway, in 1976 Trinidad reclaimed his birthright, and while still keeping his family in Agua Prieta, he went to Arizona. He picked chiles in harvest season for four years, and then, via a friend, he obtained a job more to his liking, as a miner working for a geologist doing test studies at Tombstone, Arizona (northwest of Douglas). The mine jobs, while better paid than picking chiles ($6.50 an hour, still puny compared to American miners), were intermittent--while I spoke to him, he was in Agua Prieta

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waiting for his geologist patron to recall him.

With the frugality of the commuting immigrant, he lived in a trailer in the U.S., fixed his own food, and sent money home to his wife; during the time he was laid-off, he would return to Agua Prieta, where, with his savings, he built a modest but comfortable house on the southern fringe of Agua Prieta, on a plot rented from the ejido. He has seven adult children, of whom only two married daughters reside in Arizona. Two single children live with Trinidad and his wife, both maquiladora operatives (a son and a daughter). Thus his household combines income from the U.S. and Mexico, though the U.S. component is far greater (Trinidad can earn in a day more than both children in a week). Two sons and a married daughter live in their own households elsewhere in Sonora.

## Male Relationships in Agua Prieta since 1940

During the period from 1940 to 1970, a complicated web of relationships formed among Agua Prieta men. These included both horizontal friendships among men of roughly similar power, and vertical friendships where one man had or would have much greater power and the other would be a follower. The purpose here is not to analyze these well-known phenomena of alliance and patron-client relationships (see in particular, Wolf, 1966; Strickon and Greenfield, 1972; Vélez-Ibañez, 1983; Friedrich, 1986) but to examine the historical context in which these relationships became

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salient, and the manner in which they continue to affect Agua Prieta.

In the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, Agua Prieta was booming, yet except for migrant labor in the U.S., there was no big impersonal labor market (as there had been in the mines). Wolf writes: "such ties [patron-client] would prove especially functional in situations where the formal institutional structure of society is weak and unable to deliver a sufficiently steady supply of goods and services, especially to the terminal levels of the social order" (1966: 17).

The Agua Prieta economy of the time was organized around enterprises of several elite families which were benefitting from the rapid construction and commercial growth of the border. Several families (the Mezas, the Terans, the Montaños, the Vildósolas), who owned lumberyards and hardware firms, supplied materials for house building; there were the established cattle families (the Morales, the Ortiz, the Valenzuelas, and others), and there were the restaurant and nightclub owners, always prosperous in a border city. Particularly important because of its timing, though short-lived, was José J. Ortiz' slaughterhouse and meat-packing plant (1948-1953), where many men arriving in Agua Prieta started working, both elite managers and working men.

In this context, men formed instrumental relationships, in which rich local employers obtained loyal and inexpensive

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workers by providing them with tools, contracts, and bank loans they otherwise would have found unattainable. In the Hernandez history which follows, and several other cases, workers were engaged for exclusive projects in exchange for payment in tools at the end. Such instrumental sponsorship, which was very common, might last a few years. In many of the histories, men were dropped by patrons when they were no longer of use, or they switched affiliations.[19] In the political situation of Agua Prieta before 1979, large groups of followers were not needed; the mobilization of followers, often on the basis of pre-1979 relationships, began in earnest after the 1979 election (see Chapter 7).

In the current maquiladora and palmillera period Agua Prieta once again has a large, partly impersonal labor market. However, the pattern of economic, and sometimes political vertical relationships characteristic of the transitional decades continues to profoundly influence Agua Prieta of the factory period, for this cohort of men are today at key ages, in their forties, fifties, and sixties. To demonstrate the lasting effects of horizontal and vertical relationships, we can look at an unusual piece of evidence provided by friendships formed on baseball teams.

At one point in my research, I had questioned one informant about the fates of the outstanding amateur baseball players of Agua Prieta of the 1950s. Without entering into the details on every person, two cases illustrate the persistence of youthful relationships for

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strategic ends. In the border city, two strategic ends stand out: political power, and immigration (legally or illegally) to the U.S.. One baseball player, an educated, professional man, was a municipal president of Agua Prieta who was elected on the PAN ticket; and another was one of his regidores (city councilmen) from the Barrio Ferrocarril. It turned out that the former had recruited the latter for municipal politics on the basis of a long-standing friendship from sports (as the latter man described the relation). My informant about baseball veterans himself legally immigrated to the U.S. in 1963 and in 1964 went to Tucson, where two of the major talents of Agua Prieta, "Surdo" Villacaña and "Indio" Villa, already lived. They recruited him to play baseball there, first for a team "Los Comerciales" and later for the team "Sonora-Arizona".

## Antonio Hernández History: Workshops

Many of the elements discussed here--the transitional employments in small enterprises, the patterns of patronage, the organization of settlement in Agua Prieta coordinated by husband and wife, and the accumulation of an independent workshop--are combined in the story of Antonio and Petra Hernández. Antonio Hernández, the younger brother of José Hernández, was living in Nacozari with his mother and brothers when José abandoned the family farm in Pivipa and came to Agua Prieta in 1942. Antonio also ended up in Agua

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Prieta, but by a different route, detouring through sawmill work.

In 1943 Juan, the next oldest brother to José, was recruited by Bernardino Meza[20] to work in the Meza sawmill in El Tapila, Sonora, in the high pine forest of the Sierra Madre Occidental. The Meza family had the largest enterprise in Agua Prieta in the pre-maquiladora period, a firm that cut lumber and sold construction supplies. Juan brought his three younger brothers and three younger sisters to El Tapila; Antonio went in 1943. María and Guadalupe, went with their children went with their children to El Tapila rather than with their eldest son in Agua Prieta. I am not positive why the Hernández siblings chose work in the sawmill rather than in the Nacozari mine, which was open from 1937-1947, but the consequences are evident: the Hernández family were no longer either peasants or industrial miners as they had been until the 1940s.

The Meza brothers, who had recruited a large group of new workers including the Hernández', fired their old workers (Antonio was not sure what the dispute was) and replaced them with the new crews. First they were on a labor crew laying the road into El Tapila, and later in the sawmill itself. Antonio worked driving a truck for the mill; growing up in Pivipa, he had not learned to drive, so that he learned on the job. He also became experienced with engines and truck mechanics, and with the skills, such as welding, that were needed in repairs.

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Antonio started at 1.50 pesos a day, and when he left in 1957, he was making 4.50 a day--rates that even by the standards of the day were low. The company provided free housing, and credit at the company store; they were nominally paid in cash, not scrip, but after deductions for the week's purchases of food at the store, there was little or no hard cash left over. Antonio remarked that many workers fled at night from El Tapila without paying the debts they had accumulated at the company store, which indicates that high levels of debt were accumulated to the Meza company by workers, not surprising in light of the very low wages there, but different from the American mine companies that limited credit according to the weekly paycheck. Unlike the mines that attracted more workers than they could employ, the sawmill in the isolated sierra had to trap workers who otherwise would have abandoned the mill for the border. In this regard, Antonio recalled that Juan and his brothers were about to leave the sawmill for Agua Prieta in 1945 after the road project was finished, and Meza kept them by promising to give them jobs in the sawmill, houses, and credit at the store.

Four Hernández brothers (all except José in Agua Prieta) worked in the sawmill, and all four married in El Tapila. All the three sisters married in El Tapila and their husbands worked in the sawmill. For example, Antonio married Petra Tánori, whose brothers worked in the sawmill. Her father was a landless laborer from Bacadehuachi, who

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hunted javelina (wild pigs) to sell the pelts, and later sharecropped in Colonia Morelos. In the late 1930s he moved the family to La Angostura, where Petra's older brothers worked in the construction of the huge dam, and her father made palm thatch houses for the workers. From there, her brothers obtained work in the Meza sawmills, and they sent for the rest of the family. Eventually, like Antonio and Petra, the brothers left the mill for border cities, first Agua Prieta and later Baja California, where they found work as musicians.

In 1957, the Meza company moved its sawmill from El Tapila, near Agua Prieta, south to Yecora (see map 2). This posed a challenge to the bloc of Hernández families and their in-laws. Would they go with the mill, or seek some other employment? Antonio and his youngest brother went to Agua Prieta, while the other brothers and the married sisters went to Yecora. When Antonio left the sawmill, receiving no indemnity to start off with, he decided to go to the border where he could use his mechanical skills to earn more money than in the mountains. He intended to go to Mexicali or Tijuana, and he passed through Agua Prieta where his oldest brother, José, lived. Instead of leaving for Baja California, José sent Antonio with a recommendation to a mechanical shop in Agua Prieta, so Antonio stayed.

Eventually, of the seven siblings who went to El Tapila, three brothers and one sister ended up in Agua Prieta, while one married sister and one brother (whose wife

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and children went to Agua Prieta) continued in the sawmill trade, ending up in Los Mochis, Sinaloa, and one sister was married to a man who had a political position in Chihuahua. José Hernández was the fulcrum that levered the majority of the other siblings to the border, so that today five of seven of the Hernández families are border residents.

Thus, today, we can distinguish an Agua Prieta bloc of Hernández families, or more precisely, two related blocs illustrated in Chart 13: the children and grandchildren of José Hernández, who came to Agua Prieta in 1941, and the children of the other five siblings whose families came to Agua Prieta in the 1957-1981 period. Let us consider the latter bloc through a brief summary of their residence and occupation: 15 live in Agua Prieta, 3 in southeastern Arizona (2 in Douglas) and 1 in Nacozari. Eight are maquiladora assembly operatives, 2 work in the La Caridad mine, 4 are employed miscellaneous blue collar workers (mechanic, truckdriver, etc.), and 1 shares a mechanical taller with his father (none are day-laborers or agricultural workers). Of 6 married women, 1 divorced woman, and 4 single women, 7 work in maquiladoras (2 married), and 4 are housewives. This bloc of families came from the sawmill to the border with no special skills and few resources but the labor of the children.

The family of José Hernández is older and earlier established on the border, so unlike the children of the other siblings, they antedated the maquiladora period (only

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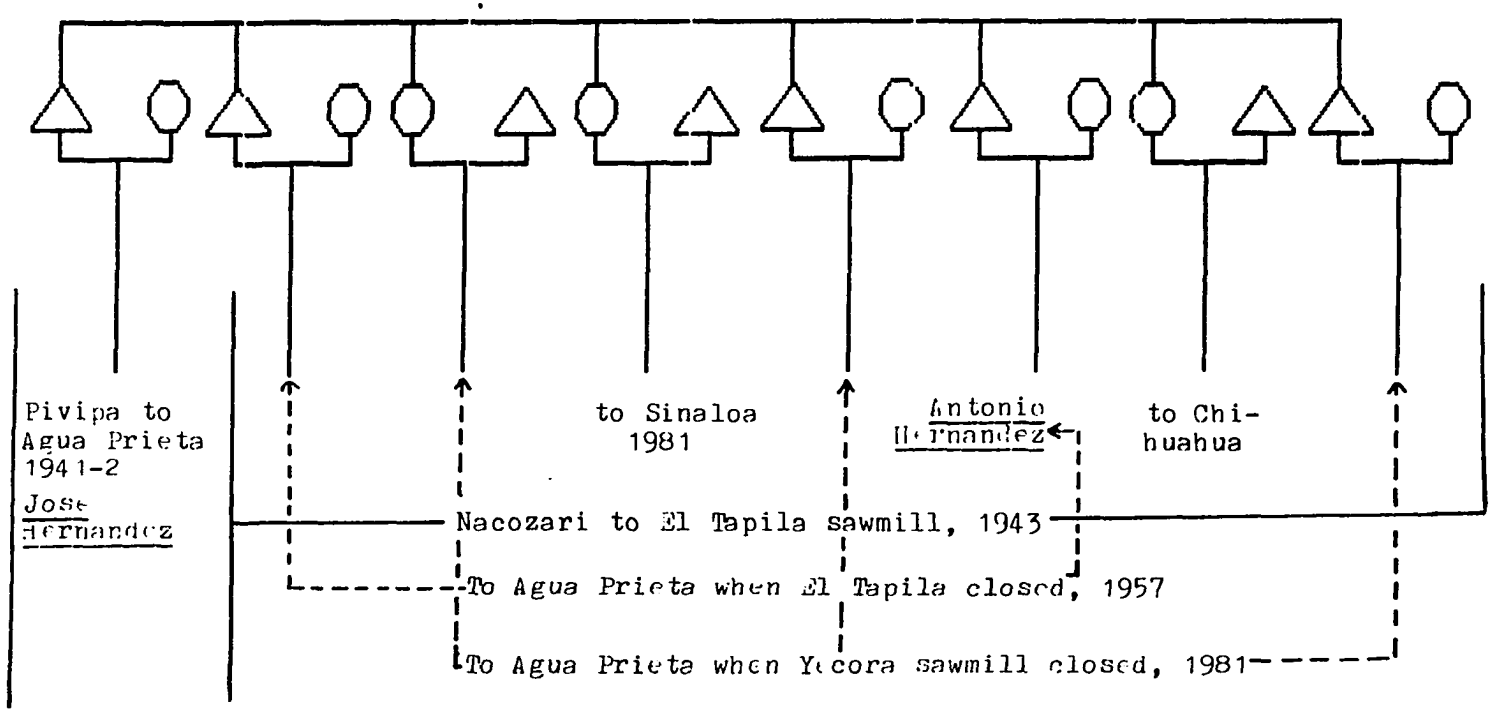


Chart 13: Hernandez Family--Multiple paths to border

the youngest two daughters worked in the early factories). With José's steady income from the U.S., this family married its children, if not to wealth, certainly prosperously, and the two sons were well educated. Six of them live in Agua Prieta, 3 in the U.S. (2 in Douglas and one in Los Angeles), and 1 in Hermosillo. Two daughters are married to men with workshops, 2 are married to postmen (one on each side), and 2 are married to employed professionals (an engineer and a government public health officer), and one daughter is married to a factory worker in Los Angeles. One divorced daughter is a nurse, and thus only 1 of 8 women work outside the house, though several have house-based workshops and businesses. The two sons are white-collar workers, one in the U.S. for the corporation of an Agua Prieta maquiladora, and the other a bookkeeper for a large ranch. Their children, the grandchildren of Jose and Mercedes Hernandez, are entering the border labor market predominantly with enough education to be white-collar or technical employees.

Let us return to the story of Antonio and Petra Hernandez, who, in 1957, were seeking a new base for survival in Agua Prieta. At first Antonio had very little work, and Petra supported the family by working, without legal immigration, as a domestic for a Mexican American woman in Douglas with whom she felt "much confidence." She earned $1 dollar for a three to eight hour day, five days a week. She crossed using a "local passport", meant for shopping, and not permitting employment. Petra commented

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that the border inspectors knew that she was working but they did not stop her, and that today they are much more severe. Petra said that she worked "to help her husband", even though she stated that she brought the main income for several years. This formulation limits the public worth of married women's work outside the house to its value as a sacrifice (particularly lowly domestic labor), so that earning wages does not constitute a valued step in a woman's life path, the way that home-based businesses did for women who had them.[21]

Petra pushed to acquire a private house, when Antonio had been satisfied to stay in rental apartments, and managing this was a source of pride for her. She paid a municipal president for a lot in public land, in the middle of then empty brushland to the east of the city. Three years passed without putting up a house for lack of money, so Petra and Antonio let Petra's youngest brother, who was newly married, build on the lot. He had made one room of adobe walls, no roof, and then separated from his wife, so Antonio and Petra paid him for what he had done, and they camped in the "house" while they put up a roof. Petra then went from hardware store to hardware store, seeking credit, until she got 300 pesos worth of cement, doors, and windows. Antonio did the work, with unpaid help from an older brother of Petra who knew how to lay the cement floor.

Antonio worked until the mid-1960s as a poorly paid helper in several mechanical workshops, adding to the

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mechanical knowledge he began to accumulate in the sawmill. One day a man who he had known in the Meza company asked Antonio to work for him building the machinery for a palmillera, a broom factory. His patron promised to leave the machine tools to Antonio when the factory was finished, which seems to be a common inducement to obtain workers in Agua Prieta.

With this equipment Antonio went on his own, and his workshop has thrived up to this day. He said that he preferred to work independently because though his work varies, he consistently does better than the minimum wage, and he has been able to save enough to replace his original equipment as it wore out. He now works in partnership with his adopted son (he and Petra, who have no children of their own, adopted two orphaned children of Petra's brother). Antonio intends to pass the workshop to the son (who lives in an independent household on the same lot).

## Independent Workshops and Working Class Lives

The independent workshop--car repairs, brick yards, carpentry shops--were commonplace in Agua Prieta, and indeed, in the anthropological literature where they are lumped into the "informal sector" hodge-podge. Yet in the life histories, they were a distinct phenomenon from other such "informal" activities as peddling or construction labor. In the life history, they constituted an achievement which took certain prerequisites to reach. These steps show

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that this form of production is part of the wage and skill patterning of life histories.

Let us here concentrate on male occupations, although similar statements can be made about women's work (see Angelita Aguirre, above). First, the man had to learn key industrial skills, such as automotive mechanics, usually through employment in the wage sector. Thus, a man who appears in the present to be an independent producer, when viewed over time appears as a "retired" wage worker. Second, the aspiring shopowner has to accumulate tools. I asked questions about the acquisition of equipment in several talleres, similar to the questions concerning household appliances. In the case of three men, a carpenter, a mechanic, and a truckdriver, they were supplied by a patrón who they worked for before becoming independent. One blacksmith-mechanic (Juan Bautista) made his own grinder and drill press, and only bought an arc welder from the U.S. One machinist (Carlos Córdoba) used savings to buy a used American lathe. Third, the worker has to have a reputation that will draw clients, a reputation that includes both technical skill and reliability. The man who has been accumulating many instrumental acquaintances since youth, in work and in play, will have an advantage here.[22]

Why should the workshop be a goal men seek? Laboring men find that their greatest resource is the strength of their youth, and that their wage-earning power declines with age (Balán, Browning, and Jelin, 1973: 199, show this to be

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true for urban, industrial Mexico). The seniority system in the mines offered protection, but the mine closings curtailed this possibility for Sonorans except in Cananea. Thus, as men mature, they are faced with a split in the path: their situation will worsen as wage laborers, or over time they have accumulated the requisites to launch a taller.

In the case of the workshop, the status of independent producer is a life-goal; we must distinguish those who choose independent work as a goal from those who end there by default, when they are retired, unemployed or disabled. A superior alternative to the category "informal sector", is a model of the life course beginning with the wage-labor market, branching toward accumulations and losses that cause very different "informal sector" results.

## Work Relations in the Workshop and the Setting for Communication

The work process in the taller is simple, since there often is only one worker, the owner. Additional workers are usually recruited along kinship lines--sons, nephews, or brothers.[23] Authority in the workshop comes from deference to parenthood, age, and work experience, reinforced by the hope of inheriting the shop (there was no formal model of apprenticeship in Agua Prieta, but there was implicit submission to learn by assisting).

Men stand around the talleres, telling jokes, commenting on the problems of the work, or complaining about

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the state of the economy; unlike a factory or a mine, movement and communication is free. I myself spent many hours hanging about the shops of Juan Bautista Valenzuela, Carlos Córdoba, Antonio Hernández, and others, and while formal interviews had to wait for the end of the day, visiting was encouraged.

Just as women have certain spaces in the house, such as the kitchen and laundry areas, where they talk, so a shop under a rusty roof alongside the house was the men's place; for instance, when my wife and I went to visit Juan Bautista, he kindly separated us, me to the backyard shop and her to the kitchen where his wife was ironing. Thus, the talleres become centers for men to congregate in at the end of the day or the start of the weekend, and the shopowners have social recognition--seen in the respect shown to their spoken opinion in conversation--that goes well above their small capital. If younger men are working in the shop, the organization of respect in the workplace adds to this pattern.

## Independent Workshops in the Social Organization of the Border Working Class

The importance of these workshops in Agua Prieta is that they were, and are, key social synapses in the organization of the working people of Agua Prieta. Men who came to Agua Prieta as unskilled or disemployed laborers in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, and were able to achieve all the prerequisites for a successful shop, stand out as

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important senior males in Agua Prieta of the 1980s, dominated though it is by maquiladoras. A similar process--described in Chapter 6--holds for the businesses of senior women.

## Conclusion

When people were uprooted from mines and repatriated to the U.S., the paths they followed were strongly influenced by their previous involvement in the industrial wage economy and by their purchased material culture, although on the surface they had left mass industrial labor behind. The fragmented branches of siblings as they spilled forth show repeatedly that people over the long run returned to urban locations, especially the border, and toward the powerful wage economy of migratory work in the U.S..

On the border, they began to organize a new working class life quite unlike the one they had left behind in the mines. Complicated coordinations of male wage seeking, female businesses, and female coordination of long-run family investments seemed to do well in the post-1940 era, for the real wage was steadily rising. Kin lines differed greatly according to the paths they embarked on, and how much they could invest in their children, and neighborhoods were formed of diverse home-building families rather than groups of similar miners. Men and women both sought advancement in personal relationships, particularly with prospering Agua Prieta elites. These patterns of Agua

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Prieta life persist in complex connections with a new order that began in 1967, an order in which massive wage work again began to predominate, but where young women and men were the preferred workers. That is the subject of the following chapter.

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1. I tried to obtain invitation lists for a return to Pilares de Nacozari party, in which I was ultimately unsuccessful, but which might have helped see the geographical distribution of the mine exodus. It would be worthwhile to investigate this topic.

2. Numbers of the post World War Two legal "immigrants" that I spoke to were U.S.-born children of 1930s repatriates.

3. Many repatriates did go to mine cities, even so, where they eked out a living prospecting or cutting firewood.

4. In comparison to other border ports, this ratio of cars and trucks to persons is considerably greater for Naco and Agua Prieta, and likewise for most of the other mechanical and household items.

5. Mercedes remembered that her MoMoFa, who died in 1930, received a pension from the U.S. government for campaigning against the Apaches, and that when he was older, he worked herding on ranches in the Las Animas area of far southwestern New Mexico and San Bernardino, east of Douglas.

6. Besides Mercedes, I also interviewed two younger brothers of Carmela Varela, that is Mercedes' MoBrs, one of whom came to Pirtleville as an infant and has lived there ever since.

7. The economic relationship between the farming and industrial ends of this family is of considerable interest, but of course it is difficult to reconstruct retroactively. From Mercedes' remarks, it sees that there was some food coming from San Pedro to Pirtleville, such as cheese and dried meat, but that mainly aid in the form of money and purchased goods (such as cloth) went from Pirtleville to San Pedro, since, as she said, we were rich and they were poor (that is, in cash). Likewise, during the 1930s, Carmela's siblings in Pirtleville sent her clothes and other such help.

8. It is worth noting how the knowledge of kinship reflected the various split paths. I obtained outstandingly detailed information, down to nephew's birth dates, from Mercedes, on her siblings and their descendants, even though most live in Los Angeles, because they were vital to her husband's work in the U.S. and the families are close. Isidro's siblings' descendents were described to me by a first cousin of Mercedes, who had grown up in San Pedro de la Cueva and later came to Agua Prieta. This group had had land in San Pedro. Lastly, for the descendents of Carmela's siblings, who had stayed in Pirtleville in the 1930s, I went to a younger brother, since Mercedes had lost track of this branch of the family.

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9. Men also made a local type of leather moccasin called tegua (see Owen, 1959: 30).

10. Though it is not possible to retroactively count the immigrants who arrived in this era, an approximation can be made using James Greenberg's 1981-2 census of 104 male and female heads of households in Barrio Ferrocarril; I found that for those who were not born in Agua Prieta, the average year of arrival in Agua Prieta was 1958 for this neighborhood (1953 if persons born outside Sonora are not counted, for some households of very recent arrivals lived in the Barrio in rental apartments). In terms of the locations of birth, I found a distribution not surprising for Agua Prieta: 71 from northeastern Sonora and 5 from coastal Sonora, while 22 were born in other states (predominantly the northwestern corner of Chihuahua) and one in the U.S. (Pirtleville). Of those born in Sonora, 20 were born in Agua Prieta, 21 in identifiably mine communities, and 30 in non-mine towns (which range from purely peasant localities like Bavispe to mixed rural, railroad, and mining centers like Esqueda and Fronteras). Besides the 20 from Agua Prieta itself, the single most common municipality of origin was Nacozari (Nacozari de Garcia, Pilares de Nacozari, and Churunibabi, totalling 13 persons). Out of 60 houses surveyed, 34 houses were property of the residents, and 7 were lent to the resident by kin, totalling 41 owned houses, versus 19 rented.

11. The ejido of Agua Prieta was created in 1916 to supply house lots to families who supported Calles in the revolution, and continuing to the present, it is a source of cheap residential space to the south and west of the city.

12. The cause of growing numbers of prospectors during the depression reflected not only unemployment but also the effects of the mine law of 1930 which facilitated claims and by pressure from gambusino unions to force companies to open up tunnels in closed mines (Ramírez, León, and Conde, 1985: 65-66).

13. The receipts priced metals in dollars, although the net payment was converted to Mexican currency (at 4.60 instead of 4.85 to 1).

14. This work was not true industrial putting out for mass manufactures, but rather individual pieces for particular customers, especially fine dresses for ritual occasions; the demand from Mexican American women in Douglas for cheaper handwork from Mexico helped this form of artisanry thrive.

15. Simonelli argues that the greater labor demands on women that came with migrant working husbands, more educated children, and new appliances lead women to restrict numbers of children in the 1970s and 1980s in the rural town of

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Baviacora. The women I interviewed in Agua Prieta underwent such labor demands in the 1940s-1960s, yet they consistently had large families--Angelita Aguirre had four, Mercedes Hernández had ten, Francisca Córdoba had eight, Juanita Yañez had eight--all cases that conform to the above scenario (of course, this is a qualitative picture, not a statistically usable sample). The relationship does not seem to hold for the transitional period in Agua Prieta, although I expect that a survey in Agua Prieta in the 1980s might find lower family sizes at comparable age-cohorts.

16. Richard Griswold del Castillo, in his history of the Chicano family in the southwestern U.S., comments that the authoritarian role of male heads of households declined and the managerial role of women heads increased as men went out to migratory work, even as early as the late nineteenth century (1984: 31-32, 34). Ina Dinerman (1982) provides a parallel case from Mexico wherein male migratory work increases the active role of women in production and managing household investments, and in relation, that remittances from the U.S. were invested in the education of children.

17. My reading of Bossen, 1984, also helped me formulate these questions.

18. Much work could still be done on the flow of credit between these different operators.

19. Wolf comments that patron-client relationships become more changeable and criss-crossed in a situation where the formal institutional structure is strong, and patrons serve to plug clients into those institutions. Although the institutional structure of Agua Prieta was not well-developed before the maquiladoras, I wonder if that situation obtained somewhat because of the great resources available from migratory work in the U.S., and because of the generally booming, not highly scarce economy of the post-1940 border.

20. The grandfather of Bernardino Meza, the municipal president of Agua Prieta elected in 1985 (the election violently disputed between PAN and PRI, with Meza the candidate of the PRI).

21. My understanding of this point was considerably aided by reading Ferree, 1986.

22. Indeed, Juan Bautista Valenzuela made an interesting observation that he varies his charges according to what he knows his customers can afford, and that in this way he builds up a set of clients who will return since they owe him favors.

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23. If a worker belongs to an independent household, he will be paid, usually the minimum wage, but sons still part of the parental household are not paid. Underlying this is a theory that adult men are responsible for bringing cash to households and therefore their work must be compensated.

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# CHAPTER 6

# AGUA PRIETA IN THE MAQUILADORA PERIOD, 1967-1986

## Grand-Families

From the observation of the manner by which I entered Agua Prieta families and met informants comes a sense of the kin groups in the working population of Agua Prieta. As explained in the Appendix in more detail, the study began with older people who had come from mine towns to Agua Prieta. In the "core" house of the older couple I became acquainted with children and grandchildren, mainly with those who lived with their parents. Other children who lived neolocally nearby in Agua Prieta and Douglas would congregate in happy, talkative assemblies at the grand-parental house on Sundays. Those who lived in distant cities (like Phoenix or Tucson) visited on holidays: U.S. holidays, like the Fourth of July, when they were off work; and Mexican ones, like Día de los Muertos, when kin remembrances are paramount.

Larissa Lomnitz and Marisol Pérez-Lizaur (1984) posit the presence in urban Mexico of this kinship unit, the "grand-family," composed of all the descendants (usually three generations) of a surviving elderly couple. This resonates well with the Agua Prieta material. However, their central ethnographic example is a grand-family built around ownership of an enterprise, and it is not certain to

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what extent working class families in Agua Prieta, who deal with external resource-controlling institutions, cohere in the same fashion. It is possible to look at this question by viewing the parts or the whole of the grand-family as they deal with the major institutions which structure their lives.

Three major institutional processes have power over people's lives on the border: the industrial concentration in maquiladoras on the Mexican side; immigration and the U.S. immigration policies; and consumption--prices and real incomes--in a context of the border where the dollar has always, directly or indirectly, dominated consumption. For ethnography, however, it is sometimes difficult to encompass these large scale processes in the relations among persons. Using grand-families as a tool of inquiry enables us to define relationships, roles, and interests of members--which may differ greatly--in dealing with the major processes of Agua Prieta life in the 1980s.

## The Córdoba Grand-Family

The Córdobas illustrate the development of a grand-family immigrating to the border in the decade immediately preceding the early maquiladoras. The Córdobas arrived as a group in Agua Prieta in 1962. At this time Carlos Córdoba was working in a mine in Esqueda, outside Agua Prieta, and bringing his paycheck to his family on weekends. But their household economy was maturing from the income of one older working father, to multiple incomes of older children who

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found work in the border city, while younger children completed secondary school before also entering the labor market. The Córdobas, then, are representative of grand-families formed in Agua Prieta as a result of the arrival from the interior of Sonora, beginning in the 1940s, of unemployed persons with large but immature families, which subsequently matured and subdivided during the maquiladora era.

By 1969, when the family had finished their house and moved into it, five children were working in maquiladoras--three daughters as operatives, one son as a foreman, and one son learning maintenance. Three of them worked in one maquiladora where the eldest son, Jorge (born 1943) had established himself. As described in Chapter 5, Carlos had come to Agua Prieta to work in 1972, when the Esqueda fluorite mine closed, and after several years of work as a minimum wage helper in small repair shops, he was able to start a machine shop of his own.

The Córdoba family relied heavily on employed children living at home and bringing several wages, a group we can call "working children". Positions, skills, and careers differed substantially between men and women (brothers and sisters) who work in the maquiladoras. The household was therefore organized around the relationship of the younger working generation with the parents--the father an independent producer, the mother an active manager of

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household interests--in terms of the flows of money, of unpaid household work, and of skills.

The late 1960s and early 1970s, when most of the children were living at home bringing in paychecks, was a period of prosperity for the Córdoba household: Jorge obtained house materials on credit in Agua Prieta, for his father, and Carlos and his sons did the work; they bought their first refrigerator in 1969, and the children combined funds to replace it in 1972 with a larger one that could hold a whole cattle that a padrino of Jorge's marriage was contributing; Jorge bought his mother a new sewing machine in the U.S., and the parents bought a new set of dishes and later a set of used American furniture to accompany the new house. Francisca Córdoba, the mother, was the recipient of purchases of these appliances (as recollected in the material culture history), and she also represented the household in a neighborhood group which petitioned the city for water and sewer services. The list of these consumer investments indicates the consolidation in these decades--in this context of maturing and expanding families shopping in U.S. stores with undevalued pesos--of a border standard of living.

Through the 1970s, the children (save one) married out of the household. One son moved into a small house in the family lot, and the rest resided neolocally upon marriage. Since the marriages were spread out between 1972 and 1984, the household always had at least one working child still at

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home to add to Carlos' machine shop. Although I was not able to get a complete work history from all of the children, the material did show a pattern in which the women worked for a wage, outside the household, while they were still at the parental home (that is, in the role of daughter), but that upon marriage[1] they left the labor market. In effect, male wage-earner nuclear households hived off from the complex wage-earning parental household. In contrast, sons stayed in the labor market, and marriage brought no direct change in their jobs; therefore the males could continue following a work career (in the Córdoba family, mechanics and foremen), while women left one behind (an act on the part of women that accurately reflects the lack of advancing careers in factory jobs).

Let us look at the composition of the Córdoba grand-family in 1984-1986, the time I was visiting them (Chart 14). In the core household of the elderly parents live a divorced son, without his children (they live with his former wife), and a unmarried daughter, with her daughter. Carlos pays the bills (gas, electricity, water, taxes) from his variable workshop income, as well buying groceries with whatever is left; Francisco, who earns two and a half times the minimum wage as a maintenance mechanic at a maquiladora, contributed 5,000 pesos and a 1,200 peso store credit slip to his mother for food costs; and Teresa, who is a minimum wage factory operative, contributes roughly a third (2,000-2,500) of her earnings to her mother, plus supporting her

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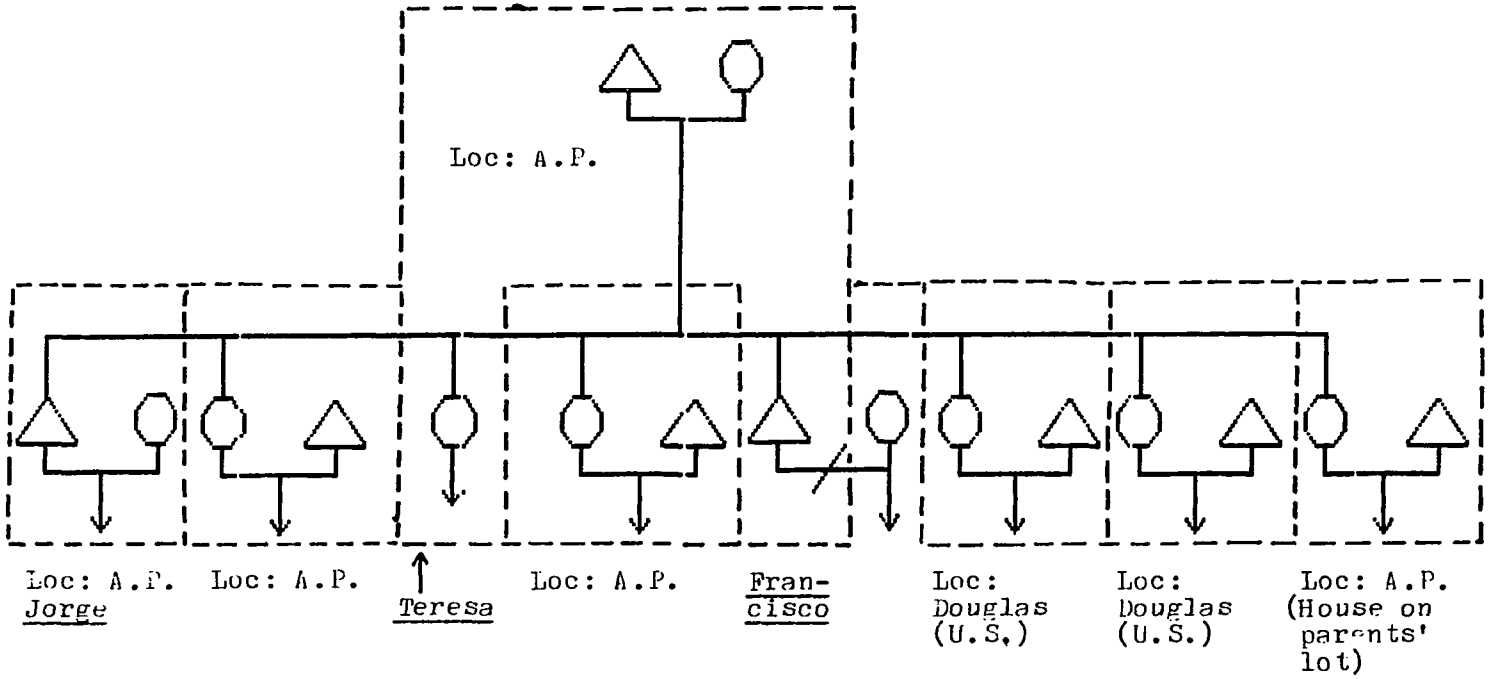


Chart 14: Cordoba Grand-family--Household compostion and location

Loc = Residence
↓ = children in household

daughter. Both may increase their contributions if their father does not make enough in a given week.

The other children do not regularly contribute to the parental household, but they do bring bags of food, especially for weekend get-togethers. In turn, their mother sews dresses for her grand-daughters, and the material culture interview indicated considerable exchanges over time of china and glass between the mother and her daughters/daughters-in-law. Teresa's mother takes care of her granddaughter, enabling Teresa to bring money in from outside work, and Teresa, in turn, has taken care of the household at times when her mother had bouts of rheumatism. Francisco, like most men, needs a woman--mother, wife, or sister--to provide him with the household work he himself does not do.

The remaining six children each live in neolocal, nuclear households (all but one of them in a owned house--one daughter and her family rent an apartment in Douglas). One married daughter and her husband live in the small house behind the main family house. In terms of the household budgets this was described to me as a completely separate household, but there was considerable sharing of childcare and housework. None of the five married daughters work; the married son is a foreman at a maquiladora (his wife does not work). One daughter married a Mexican American and lives in Douglas, and another married a man in Agua Prieta, and they later immigrated and live in Douglas. Though the Cordoba

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grand-family does not have a branch in the U.S. as numerous and far-flung as other grand-families, the presence of children in the U.S. still proves to be of value on occasions when Carlos and his family make shopping trips to Tucson (he buys some supplies for his shop there).

Although they are scattered in two cities and two nations, the Córdoba is an effective grand-family because of automobiles, which facilitate visiting and exchanges of goods and labor. The small size of Agua Prieta and Douglas permits this, which also requires possession of "local passports" for visits to the U.S. side within 12 miles and 24 hours. Indeed, periodic visiting among kin may be the best circumstance for arranging and exchanging favors, such as job contacts. The grand-family does not have to be a residential unit in this context.

At the same time, however, each household of the grand-family has its distinct economy and interests.[2] In the Córdoba case there are seven households, six based on one single male earner, and one with multiple earners. Three households are involved in the maquiladora economy, but four (including two in the U.S.) are not. Two households have residential rights in the U.S., and the other in Mexico.

To speak of grand-family or other units we must define very carefully just in what respects kin can have an effect as kin on their life-conditions (U.S. immigration policy, maquiladora employment, and purchasing power), and in what other respects they cannot. The Córdoba family could

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exercise some collective control over relatively small domains of their lives, which is not to say that these were unimportant to them. For example, they had managed to help all but one of their married children to own their own house, a fact they were very proud of (and which helped reduce potential conflict in the future over the parental residence). In Agua Prieta, land pressure was not so great that the grand-family had to share a lot--only one of six of the neolocal households was located on the parental lot. The Córdoba family could pull together resources among working children to make major purchases, and members in the U.S. could provide access to small favors on the more prosperous side.

The family had no real control, however, over immigration to the U.S. (the U.S. immigration system follows kinship lines, as described below, but it is next to impossible to immigrate married siblings). As for employment, the one business controlled within the family was too small to employ more than one person. Though members could pull jobs for other members, nobody could prevent layoffs, as the Córdoba siblings found out in 1980 when the factory that employed a son and two daughters laid all three off without any warning or the proper legal compensation. As far as the question of purchasing power goes, separate households could share some of the burdens--younger households with more cash income but less investment in appliances and cars could exchange with the parental

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household--but this was marginal to the rapid fall in the value of the peso which all but the children in Douglas were subject to.

## From Grand-Family to Border Ethnography

This is a new era of working class formation, different in every detail from the working class of the mine era, but similar in that a population dependent on selling its labor and buying its subsistence has emerged and is concentrating.[3] This process of formation is taking place on top of a whole body of existing occupations, relations, and skills, standards of living--indeed, persons--from the decades of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. This means looking at the relationships of generations within grand-families, the economic and social flows between members, and the changes from older to younger women, older to younger men.

The structure of border life in the 1980s centers three principal institutional processes: employment in the maquiladoras; immigration to the U.S.; and border consumption. Anthropology can address these structures through the ethnography of persons dealing with larger-scale institutions. Grand-families, because they are not unitary, give us the individuals and relationships needed for ethnography of these processes.

The study of the Córdoba grand-family has shown the importance of looking at the "working children" in households as a key category of labor, as well as the different roles of men versus women in the maquiladoras.

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The Córdoba grand-family showed the importance of border consumption in their accumulation of houses, cars, and appliances; among the households grouped in this grand-family there were relatively new households with one male wage earner and a complex central household with multiple earners, which stimulates the question of how the decline in purchasing power has affected these different economies. The Córdoba grand-family was a cross-border family, and in its history had involved both permanent and temporary work-seeking immigration to the U.S.. Basically, the value of looking at these distinctions is to understand that the border working class is made up of diverse persons with different interests placed in the three major structures of border life.

## Maquiladoras

The maquiladoras are plants, mostly owned by U.S. companies, where parts are assembled (requiring many workers) for export. The basic reason the manufacturing is located in Mexico is the low price of wage labor, and since steady devaluations of the peso against the dollar began in 1982, the advantages of this labor has grown--and correspondingly the numbers of factory employees in border cities. For the same reasons, and at the same time, buying power in Mexico has fallen. In this situation I predict that the proportion in household labor forces of maquiladora

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wage workers will rise. The process of deepening industrial wage labor will not occur in all types of workers but in the greater use of a specific category--the working children, especially women. Demonstrating this process would show that working class formation is speeding up in the 1980s context of falling real wages and growing export employment.

The maquiladora working class is forming in a complicated web of relationships, both relationships in workplaces and those outside. One line of relationships are those between maquiladora workers with privileged careers, predominantly males, and those who are common operatives, predominantly female; understanding this relationship helps us understand systems of management control in the workplace, and to understand differences of interests in grand-families. The other line of relationship concerns the younger generation working in the maquiladoras, and the older generations with other work and household activities, and complicated by the differences in each case between men and women. If it proves true that the maquiladora working daughter segment of the Agua Prieta working population is growing and concentrating, then we need to understand these complicated relations in order to know how their interests, their labor issues and wages, stand within the broader working community.

In order to understand the social processes in the ethnographic section which follows, it will be useful to review information about the maquiladoras: the level of

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employment in Agua Prieta and evidence about periodic layoffs; the composition by gender and age, and Fernández-Kelly's analysis of the concentration on women; and the basic character of work, and the system of pay, bonuses, and loans utilized by the factories.

## Employment Level and Fluctuations

The overall level of employment in maquiladoras in Agua Prieta (as reviewed in Chapter 2) has had, roughly, three phases. It grew steadily from its beginning until 1974. In late 1974 and early 1975 a severe wave of closings and layoffs hit the factories. Employment again slowly grew through 1982, when a smaller wave of layoffs struck. Since the 1982 peso devaluation, factory employment surged dramatically. By spring 1986, when I measured the intensification of wage labor, maquiladora employment in Agua Prieta was probably over 6,000.

Even in ordinary years, the number of factory jobs vary greatly because the factories raise and lower their workforces. In 1970, for instance, the low was 500 workers in June and the high 1,100 in November, falling to 800 by May, 1971 (Ladman and Poulson, 1972). Rapid ups and downs are part of the maquiladora system: the products, such as garments and electronics, are characteristically those which change in form and quantity most rapidly; the technology of production is often simple, flexible, and even easy to move; the factories respond quickly to global competition either by moving themselves, reallocating production locations, or

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reducing output (see the literature summarized in Fernández-Kelly, 1983; a valuable analysis of electronics is Volk, 1979).

I constructed a measure, using three dates, of the fluctuations in Agua Prieta maquiladora employment over one year, February, 1985 to February, 1986.[4] This is the average of the difference between the highest and the lowest number of employees listed for each firm in these three dates, whatever the net change. Eleven firms reported an average change in one year of 198 employees, when the total employment per firm in February, 1986 was 488. The range of fluctuations were 41 percent of the average total employment.[5] This does not even speak of individual job turnover, voluntary or mandated. Rapid fluctuations created an environment of job insecurity in Agua Prieta maquiladoras, in turn suggesting two topics: work careers and changing employment for different social types of maquiladora workers (in this Chapter); and mass layoffs as a labor issue for worker, union, and factory managements (in Chapter 7).

## Gender and Maquiladora Labor

Maquiladoras employ more women than men, and they especially favor women for the operative jobs, the core jobs of the factory, while men are used more frequently for maintenance, supervision, and warehouse-stock work (Agua Prieta data will be presented below about male and female factory workers, their tasks, and pay). Maria Patricia

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Fernández-Kelly (1983) explains why. She notes that factory managers choose women workers, according to an image that managers hold of women workers as docile, patient, dexterous, and physically weak, but of course not suited to be managers. Fernández-Kelly goes on to correlate this image with the objective need for large numbers of cheap, inexperienced, and malleable factory operatives, found in early, competitive phases of expanding production.

Yet, as Fernández-Kelly notes, managers may demand, yet it is the people who have to supply their labor. This Fernández-Kelly locates in certain conditions specific to women that brings them to enter poorly paid, exhausting, and dead-end jobs. Not only will they enter them, but workers will return to the factories again and again after they have been laid-off or left for personal reasons. Women as well as men take responsibility for supplying money to their households--indeed, women are often more responsive than men for the specific demands of children, aging parents, younger siblings, etc. On the border, many men are unemployed or work erratically at low wages, while women are in demand at factories. On the other hand, men can leave home for long periods as migrant workers, but women are expected to return home each day to do the housework and care for children and parents. This is exacerbated by the lack of adequate childcare (outside the family) and expensive, inefficient public transportation that limit options. The combination of border factory demand and local responsibility means that

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women seek out maquiladora jobs even at the minimum wage. At the workplace itself, women chafe at the abuses, but because women are not "supposed" to be wage-earners, they lack a claim to seek better work and wages.

## Maquiladora Work, Pay, and Bonus Systems

I made extensive interviews with maquiladora workers, done off the job, but since Fernández-Kelly (1983: Chapter 5) provides an outstanding workplace ethnography, and since these interviews confirmed her findings, this is limited to a summary of selected points about the character of the work. Work in the maquiladoras is repetitive, fast, and long. The work week is 47.5 hours in five days, plus overtime in afternoons or Saturdays at double time, which is often required and even ambivalently desired. Factory jobs are divided among direct operatives, product inspectors, line supervisors, and stockers, as well as higher levels of managers and engineers, and support positions such as mechanics and maintenance, warehousing, and truck drivers.

The direct operatives usually work in one place, with one or a few types of pieces, and performing one or a few clearly defined, limited, and repetitive operations--sewing hems or pockets, soldering wires and connectors, stamping forms, etc. To give an idea of this sort of work, my informant Ana Maria Duarte described her task--to cut a minimum of 950 collars a day by machine, or five every three minutes. Work is tagged and measured, and individuals are accountable for amounts and exact specifications. The

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situation of the experienced line supervisors, then, is not to lead but to nag workers to keep up the pace, setting foremen against their group. Work is organized centrally--indeed, in one electronics factory I visited, there was a computer link, via Douglas, to the home plant in Chicago, and operations, inventory, and even individual productivity and pay records were transmitted.

The maquiladoras should be contrasted with the mines as work settings, as described in Chapter 3 and in Nash (1979). Miners were given assignments to particular sections by company geologists, but then left on their own to carry out the extraction, rewarded by the contract system. The ore body was varied, and tasks could not be exactly specified in advance. The mine system required the leadership of senior contractors, who organized and paid the work crews. The maquiladoras do not provide a similar setting for small group leadership.

The maquiladora production worker has a fairly specialized--though quite important--role in the household economy, to bring in spendable cash (while other household members may deal in unpaid tasks, longer-run investments, social network transactions, small businesses dependent on personal clients, etc., and non-production maquiladora workers may be as concerned with careers and personal networks of managers, described below). The minimum wage payable to the maquiladora workers has fallen substantially between 1982 and 1986. This makes the maquiladora worker

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especially responsive to systems of bonus payments or piece-work rates which add to the minimum wage. In this respect, the maquiladora workers are comparable, though perhaps not as extremely vulnerable to management pressures, as the Columbian immigrant factory workers in Venezuela described by Margalit Berlin (1983).

The minimum wage in the first half of 1986 was 11,550 pesos--seven days' pay, including a bonus paid day, for a full 48 hour work week. There are two manners (described later in the chapter) of measuring how much this would be worth in 1982 terms: the dollar value or the price index deflator value. Workers, in January, 1982, directly before the first 1982 devaluation, earned 1,960 pesos a week; at 26.26 pesos to the dollar, this was worth $74.64 dollars. In 1986, when the dollar was worth approximately 500 pesos, the 11,550 maquiladora wage obtained $23.10--only 32 percent of what it obtained at the beginning of 1982. Alternatively, using the price index, the 11,550 in April, 1986 was worth 809 January, 1982 pesos--or 42 percent of the original 1,960 peso wage. Either way, one can readily see the factory worker's need to add to the paycheck.

Seven factory bonus systems were reported to me during the 1986 resurvey, varying from 500 pesos a week for attendance to 35,000 earned in a month of afternoon overtime by one widow, the sole earner for her family. This certainly understates the occurrence of these payments, since many people assumed the simplest answer, that they or

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other family members made the minimum, without completely describing their paychecks.

Another form of payment in Agua Prieta were slips that allowed workers to buy groceries from certain stores that had arrangements with the factory. Francisco Córdoba received 1,200 pesos in this form in addition to his pay. Some maquiladoras in Agua Prieta lent money, without interest, paid back in installments taken from the paycheck, which workers used for emergencies or big purchases. In the 62 households in the 1986 resurvey, four reported factory loans totalling more than 65,000 pesos total debt (one loan amount was not reported). Factories could not hold indebted workers, but workers had to repay their debt in full out of their final paychecks.

Factory managers had more subtle ways of rewarding and punishing workers that work especially well in the context of a crisis in buying power, when everyone is scrambling to survive. Tasks in the maquiladoras are measured in quotas, and workers are paid in piece-rate systems: usually, the daily minimum wage for 80 percent of the quota, plus piece rates above that (see Fernández-Kelly, 1983: 114, 128 on piecerates in maquiladoras). Managers could discriminate in the assignment of tasks to different people, giving tasks to some that it was easier to make the piecerate extras, or giving out more or less material to be worked with.

Men and women who have special household needs, for loans, extra work, or time off, petition managerial favor or

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disfavor. Women who had to bring children or elderly parents to doctors would have to ask special permission to take time off without the risk of losing the job (not to speak of being paid). Unmarried young men and women, on the other hand, had less pressing needs, yet they too wanted breaks from work to play sports, or date, or just as relief from the tedium. After all, many were sixteen or seventeen year old kids.

The combination of low real wages, high cash needs, extensive loan and bonus payments, and piecework permit factory floor and personnel managers to manipulate their relationships with individual workers, to favor some or punish others, to encourage rivalries and envy, etc. (see Iglesias, 1985 for extensive case studies in maquiladoras, and the case study below of managerial patronage and punishment behind an Agua Prieta strike).

"Working Children" in the Maquiladora Labor Force

In the 1980s situation of wage employment growing in volume but declining in real wages, I hypothesized that households would provide more persons to factories--that is, increase the wage labor content of potential household labor. If supported, this constitutes evidence of the concentration of the industrial working class in 1980s border cities. From the ethnography of Agua Prieta grand-families, we expect to search for evidence of this process in the specific role of "working children" (defined below),

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rather than among all catagories of potential labor in households.[6]

In March and April 1986 I recontacted 63 households of James Greenberg's 1982 survey of 93 households in Barrio Ferrocarril and Colonia Ejidal, two poor neighborhoods of Agua Prieta.[7] In 1982 these households had 41 maquiladora workers; in 1986 they had 47. In 1982 26 households surveyed had members in the maquiladoras and 37 not; in 1986, 32 had and 30 did not. In aggregate terms, then, the maquiladora economy is expanding its presence in household economies. But are particular households intensifying their contribution of labor to the factories?

The method tries to recognize that the number of wage earners is determined both by the labor market and by the life cycle of the household members that determine who is available. "Available workers" are taken to be all persons over 16, male or female, whether or not working (with no other assumptions, such as housewives not working, which cannot be presumed in the maquiladora context), plus those under 16 who were already reported as working by the families. The question is, were specific categories of available workers entering the market more heavily? The households were divided into three groups: all households containing available (not actual) "working children" as defined in the text, whatever else their membership was (Table 1); those households solely with one or both available working parents (Table 2); and miscellaneous,

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which mainly consisted of solitaries and joint families formed by married and unmarried siblings without parents in the house (Table 3).[8]

The category "working children" is defined as single, separated, divorced, or widowed children and grandchildren living in a household with their parents or grandparents, whether or not they have offspring of their own. As above, the available persons in this category was contrasted with those actually working. The 27 households which included potential "working children" in 1982 supplied 14 female working children to the maquiladoras and 7 such males. This group had 26 female potential workers, so 54 percent were so employed, while only 21 percent of males were. In 1986, 28 households who included potential "working children" supplied 19 female "working children" to the maquiladoras (66 percent of the potential 29 workers) while the number of male "working children" stayed constant at 7 (of 35 potential). Five of the net increase of six maquiladora workers from 1982 to 1986 can be accounted for by the increased number of female "working children".[9] This gives support to the hypothesis that the category of female "working children" is being used more intensively in the current maquiladora economy. On the other hand there has been no greater mobilization of male working children.[10]

Although the data does indicate expanding employment of female working children between 1982 and 1986, which was anticipated, it indicated yet another expanding category:

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Table 1. Maquiladora Labor Force Participation:

Households with Available "Working Children"

| Available Workers | 1982 No. | 1982 % | 1986 No. | 1986 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Available Female "Working Children" | 26 | 100 | 29 | 100 |
| Total Working | 19 | 73 | 20 | 69 |
| Maquiladoras | 14 | 54 | 19 | 66 |
| Available Male "Working Children" | 33 | 100 | 35 | 100 |
| Total Working | 19 | 58 | 15 | 43 |
| Maquiladoras | 7 | 21 | 7 | 20 |
| Available Male Non-"Working Children" | 21 | 100 | 24 | 100 |
| Total Working | 17 | 81 | 23 | 96 |
| Maquiladoras | 2 | 10 | 1 | 4 |
| Available Female Non-"Working Children" | 20 | 100 | 25 | 100 |
| Total Working | 9 | 45 | 5 | 20 |
| Maquiladoras | 3 | 15 | 2 | 8 |
| Total Available Workers | 100 | 100 | 115 | 100 |
| Total Working | 64 | 64 | 63 | 55 |
| Maquiladoras | 26 | 26 | 30 | 26 |

Note: 1982 27 households; 1986 28 households conforming to this type.

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Table 2. Maquiladora Labor Force Participation:

Households with only Parent(s) Available For Working

| Available Workers | 1982 No. | 1982 % | 1986 No. | 1986 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Available Male Workers | 28 | 100 | 27 | 100 |
| Total Working | 28 | 100 | 27 | 100 |
| Maquiladoras | 6 | 21 | 6 | 22 |
| Available Female Workers | 30 | 100 | 27 | 100 |
| Total Working | 9 | 30 | 8 | 30 |
| Maquiladoras | 5 | 17 | 3 | 11 |
| Total Available Workers | 58 | 100 | 54 | 100 |
| Total Working | 37 | 64 | 35 | 65 |
| Maquiladoras | 11 | 19 | 9 | 17 |

Note: 1982 30 households; 1986 27 households conforming to this type.

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Table 3. Maquiladora Labor Force Participation:

Other Households

| Available Workers | 1982 No. | 1982 % | 1986 No. | 1986 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Available Male Workers | 12 | 100 | 11 | 100 |
| Total Working | 11 | 92 | 8 | 73 |
| Maquiladoras | 3 | 25 | 7 | 64 |
| Available Female Worker | 9 | 100 | 7 | 100 |
| Total Working | 3 | 33 | 2 | 29 |
| Maquiladoras | 1 | 11 | 1 | 11 |
| Total Available Workers | 21 | 100 | 18 | 100 |
| Total Working | 14 | 67 | 10 | 56 |
| Maquiladoras | 4 | 19 | 8 | 44 |

Note: 1982 6 households; 1986 7 households conforming to this type.

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male maquiladora employees who are not working children. Indeed, in the 63 households in 1982, there were 18 male maquiladora workers and 23 female, while in 1986 the gap had closed to 22 male, 25 female. This was without any net rise in male working children. Instead, males, non-"working children",[11] had increased their maquiladora employment from 11 to 15 (out of 58 potential in this category at both dates). Ten of them in 1982 were married men, 12 in 1986--the next largest group of maquiladora workers to female working children. On the other hand, the female non-"working children"--married women and one working widow--decreased their maquiladora employment slightly, from 9 to 6. It seems appropriate at this point then, to examine the male and female positions and interests in these plants in a closer ethnographic manner.

## Male and Female in Agua Prieta Factories

Maquiladora jobs divide into operatives and privileged staff--unequal relationships to workplace communications, autonomy and mobility, to pay, to job-changing, to local managers, to skills, and to careers; because of the gender division of labor in the factories, these two sets tend to correlate with women and men, though there are a few women in privileged roles.[12]

Among the Córdoba siblings, all long-term maquiladora workers, Jorge, Francisco, and Teresa we can see differences in interests and careers. Francisco was a mechanic at an electronics maquiladora, a subsidiary of an American firm,

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which has no union and very pressured work pacing but which is well-regarded among Agua Prieta workers for bonuses. He made more than twice the minimum wage. Francisco, who was divorced, also supported his parent's household, where he resided, by bringing part of his paycheck, and part went for his children. Teresa worked at any number of maquiladoras--four in the two years I knew her--including a period of putting-out assembly work at home.[13] She has been an minimum wage operative since 1969. Teresa lived at home with her parents and her daughter. Jorge, an experienced factory mechanic and foreman (the oldest brother, he had been working in Agua Prieta since 1963), had recently been hired as a supervisor at another electronics factory, a branch of a huge American consumer electronics corporation. This plant, however, had had considerable problems with slipshod manufacturing and employee turnover and Jorge was specifically hired as a "troubleshooter" for one department. Jorge, who earned more than the minimum wage, had his own household, and his wife was not then working, though she had intermittently been a factory operative.

Teresa, as well as Jorge and Francisco, had had a secondary education. But Jorge and Francisco had schooling specifically as mechanics and electrical technicians, as well as a great deal of hands on experience with their father who was a skilled machinist. Even when Francisco was still in secondary school, in 1967, he worked as a technical trainee in a maquiladora. Francisco, when I knew him, was

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studying time-motion technology (he told me) on his own. After 17 years, Teresa still worked as an operative in electronics factories (and in one factory she worked as an inspector of quality control). She, like many women, took factory jobs according to the needs of her household and did not accumulate a career or a saleable body of technical skills.

During the time I was in Agua Prieta, Teresa had left work one time while her mother was ill with rheumatism. Upon returning to work, she moved through three plants before settling on one that was satisfactory because it was close to home and not pressured (thus leaving her with energy for her daughter). In general, women respond to rapid job change--whether caused by household responsibilities, or employment insecurity of the type outlined earlier--by recycling through the same types of jobs in different factories.

Men are also subject to maquiladora job insecurities: Jorge, who had lost a long-time foreman position in 1980, passed through several positions as mechanic and laborer before he received the position as trouble-shooting line foreman in 1985. Jorge's ability to find new positions depended on his personal reputation as an experienced and mechanically knowledgeable foreman, and even more importantly, on his network of relationships with supervisors in numerous factories and enterprises. Jorge's response to the insecure maquiladora job environment was to

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invest in a career, a term which refers not only to objective skills and experience but more importantly to personal relations. Evidence presented later in this chapter shows that one of the better hedges for men against inflation which erodes the minimum wage was to invest in Agua Prieta relationships to obtain a better-than-minimum wage job. And, of course, men felt that their "household responsibilities" were bringing home a paycheck rather than leave a job for household tasks.

I had many opportunities to talk with all three Cordobas, together and separately, about the factories. One conversation with them and their parents near the end of my fieldwork, was particularly revealing. Jorge had been saying that people constantly switched between jobs, and that this was a real problem for him, as a supervisor. Francisco expressed his opinion that workers don't want to do a good job, but they respond to special bonuses and a policy of "human relations".[14] Teresa, explaining her latest job move to me, commented that one plant she went to gave a 5000 peso bonus (then, 10 dollars) for perfect attendance, but only after three months; this was too long to wait for such an amount, and she has her child who sometimes takes her away from work. She suggested that the "extras" (various ways of paying money above the minimum wage) were not enough to keep her at a plant that was more pressured and took her vacation days away. Her brothers disagreed; the problem was inconstant workers.

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The focus of this conversation was relatively small differences in extra pay between individual factories, and it was typical of the constant sharing of information among Aguapretense about which maquiladora is better or worse to work in. The discussion did express general viewpoints about the maquiladora system in a hidden manner, but at the explicit level it did not rise beyond the particular "good" or "bad" of various plants.

The Córdoba siblings are not unrepresentative. In the 1986 resurvey, 23 women of 25 were operatives; one was in quality control; and one was an administrator of import-exports. Among the women, 24 of 25 worked for the minimum wage, not counting bonuses. Among the men, 14 were operatives and 9 were not: 2 supervisors, 2 technicians (one in training), 2 truckdrivers, 1 maintenance man, 1 administrator (materials), and 1 watchman. Of these, 17 made the minimum, and 6 earned at least one and a half times the minimum. Many men were operatives, but almost all women were; the preponderance of positions either supervisory or ancillary were male-filled.

Those men who work as mechanics, technicians, and even stockboys have the opportunity to roam the plant, converse with many different people, and learn diverse, often broadly applicable skills. Operatives, male or female, are fixed to one place; they learn very specific motions and machinery; and though, within one location, they have considerable communication with fellow employees, sometimes this is in a

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context of tense rivalry over piecerates and assignments. Line supervisors and quality control inspectors--positions that overlap between men and women--though posts with more authority, are likewise fixed in location and task, and bring to the role great tension with the workers they regulate.

A former maquiladora line supervisor, pointed out to me that workers who get positions such as foreman, technician, mechanic, etc., after they are given the formal personnel interview, are subject to what in Agua Prieta was known as the rebuscada, the "return search", the word of mouth among the factory managers. The key manager in this process is the (male) personnel manager of the factory, who is usually a Mexican and knows local people (though the general manager of the factory may be Northamerican). The rebuscada is fundamental to explaining the differences in job careers, responses to job insecurities, and points of view between privileged and non-privileged workers in maquiladoras, and thus to the system of labor control itself.

That contention was demonstrated in a 1985 strike at an Agua Prieta maquiladora, manifested in the different roles of two participants I interviewed, a man and a woman, ostensibly on the same side of the strike. This factory had originally been under U.S. management. Work was steady because orders came directly from the home corporation, and the operative felt that the American managers had distributed assignments in a fair-handed manner. In 1981,

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the factory was bought out by a local manager. This man has several important brothers-in-law, one a lawyer and the other a maquiladora owner; he also appears to have an alliance with the local management of another maquiladora that is one of the oldest and larger factories in the city.

The maquiladora now operated as a sub-contractor to U.S. buyers, and thus production varied sharply from contract to contract; sometimes there was too little to go around, and other times workers had to be pushed to the limits of exhaustion to fill the contract. In this situation, a manager can significantly add to the minimum wage by divvying out materials and tasks to favor one individual over another, eagerly participating in personal rivalries and suspicions of envy. Many young people, some under the legal working age of 16, had been hired without permanent contracts, and they were encouraged to work enthusiastically with extra assignments, while workers with permanent contracts, whose seniority was approaching fifteen years,[15] were discouraged from staying by poor assignments and harassment. The factory was lending money to workers and charging interest out of the paycheck. Legal obligatory Christmas bonuses (fifteen days pay) were not paid out, supposedly because the factory was broke--while others got loans.

For three years, this factory had operated without a formal union contract, though it was nominally affiliated to the CTS-CROC maquiladora workers union in Agua Prieta. In

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1985 the Junta de Conciliación y Arbitraje called an election to decide union representation between an "Sindicato Independiente" proposed by the manager and the CTS-CROC union. After a disputed election, the group of workers who favored the CTS-CROC union tried to bring their banner inside the gate of the factory, the recognized symbolic way of showing union affiliation. At the doors of the plant, the strikers were met by hired goons from another maquiladora who attacked them with chemical fire extinguishers. After the two sides were separated by municipal police, a representative of the "Junta" was called up from Hermosillo to end the besiegement of the plant. The settlement permitted strikers to return but no contract was signed, and those who did return found that they were so heavily pressured to exit the factory that six months later only seven were left.

Both of my informants participated in this strike on the side of the CTS-CROC union. After the strike my female informant stayed, enduring constant threats by the manager until she completed her fifteenth year. She had lost her sewing job, which offered bonus pay, to a fourteen year old, and was inspecting seams. On the other hand, the young man had been transferred up from operative to trainee technician. What is very interesting is that when I spoke to him after the strike he was leading a drive to start a new maquiladora union, seemingly with the favor of the

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manager-owner of the factory against which he had just struck.

He showed me petitions gathering signatures to start a new maquiladora union with grandiose promises of a consumer store, 200 houses, sponsored sports, extra paid holidays, etc. This union would be affiliated with the CROC because the old maquiladora union had changed its affiliation to another confederation, the CROM in the summer of 1985. The petitions had started with the very factory that had so vehemently opposed the CROC union in the first place, and included large numbers of signatures from several plants allied with that factory's manager; on the other hand this unionist said that he was being prohibited from going to certain other maquiladoras. Managers of those factories he named were the principal figures in the "Asociación de Maquiladoras", the core management group of the (unionized) Agua Prieta factories (more on these groupings in Chapter 7).

## Maquiladora Generation and Older Generation Mothers and Daughters

The maquiladora period of the working class has developed within the community formed by the prior generation(s) which moved to the border; the important relationships are between maquiladora-working daughters and their mothers (or grandmothers), and young men and their fathers. A useful angle on the relations among women is provided by the notorious "double-shift" of work performed

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by women who work in the factories and then at home. In the era of maquiladoras, women have two spheres of involvement and responsibilities: bringing in cash to the household economy, and unpaid work at home. What is striking about these spheres is that women's work relationships and powers are so strikingly different, and we cannot assume that it is the out-of-house, paid work which conveys power.

In factories women have positions which are supervised, the tasks are narrowly defined, restrict movement and circumscribe conversation, and few realistic possibilities of an advancing career. If anything, the older you get, the worse your factory employment gets (see Fernández-Kelly, 1983). The work in factories does not convey readily applicable, broad-based skills, in contrast with those which have been developed by Sonoran women in craft and home settings. For example, industrial sewing machines are designed to repeat a limited set of motions, and every woman I interviewed who had worked in a garment plant told me there essentially was no relationship between the sewing they learned at home and at work.[16] This non-transferability of skills also contrasts with male mechanical knowledge applied in factories described below.

Housework is equally tedious, and perhaps more restrictive if the woman does not leave the yard. However, if we recall the women's activities dating to post-1940 arrival at Agua Prieta we see that housewives dealt with key public actions on behalf of the household: house lots and

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services obtained from the municipality, children's education, shopping in the U.S. for appliances, etc. Women in Sonora, especially in the decades before the maquiladoras, went into house-based businesses and craft production, even investment in real estate. If we look at the work setting of home-businesses, we see that it offers an arena for open conversation, for visiting, for the accumulation and use of generalized skills, and the exercise of authority by the woman who operates the business over daughters and daughters-in-law who help her.

In one household a woman in her forties had a kitchen business, utilizing common household skills and equipment like an electric sewing machine, a pressure cooker, and a blender, to manufacture on order of clients food, clothing, even a substantial order of curtains for an entire motel. This business, depending on orders, usually accounted for more half of the household income, notwithstanding the decent and steady job held by the husband. When business was slow, it could be handled by the woman herself, but when important and large orders had to be rushed, she could draw on the combined labor (by my observation) of six younger women: two single daughters living at home, one employed in the offices of a factory, an employed married daughter living next door with two infants, an unmarried daughter living at home with a child, a daughter-in-law (a forewoman in a maquiladora), and a young woman living across the street (very close friends of this family). The claims she

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had on these women included inclusion in the household budget,[17] and childcare for her daughters with children while they worked. This case in a setting of factory work and industrial household technologies adds to Judith Brown's discussion of the widened "authority" of middle-aged women in non-industrial settings, particularly over the labor of younger women (1985).

The generation of women who work in the maquiladoras and the older generations are tightly knit together. In this relationship, the older generation has substantial advantages in autonomy and recognized authority, whereas the women who work in factories mainly have claims based on their cash wage. However, even this is mitigated by the claim housewives have on daughters by exchanging childcare during the workday for either part of the pay, or for unpaid labor at other times. Underlying this situation, in turn, is a fundamental element of social structure: women, not men, are responsible for children, and when couples break-up, divorce, or women are abandoned, they, not the men, are left with the children.

Among the 25 female maquiladora workers in the 1986 resurvey, 5 were single, separated, or divorced, with children, living with parent(s) or grandparent(s). Six more were married, working and with a household with children--a situation which Agua Prieta observation shows, requires that children be left with some woman (usually mother/mother-in-law). On the other hand, 14 were single working daughters

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living at home. The household's ability to draw on these workers for wages is more difficultly negotiated, and many working children in Agua Prieta only give a portion, usually half, to their mothers and spend the rest on themselves (evidence for this is presented below, in the section on consumption; daughters with children do this too, but the money they spend on their children in effect supplements the household budget).

## Fathers and Sons

The maquiladora period has brought less change to male roles. Even when men find maquiladora work a new type of industrial employment, they are continuing existing patterns of working outside the household for wages. The 1986 survey showed 10 men with maquiladora jobs who were married male wage earners, and seven (single or divorced), who filled the role of "working children". In the case of the latter, the relationship with the household economy comes not through responsibilities for children, but through the nearly complete inability by men to care for themselves, leaving household duties to women.

The jobs often entail the same mechanical, electrical, and transportation skills which Sonoran men have utilized since the start of industrialization. We saw the patterns of continuity in the Córdoba family history; Jorge and Francisco had learned the basics of mechanical and electrical skills (as well as underlying orientations toward these tasks) in the company of their father, a former

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maintenance and power-plant worker in mines, and then supplemented this start with book learning. At the level of social relationships in factory jobs, the reliance on personal connection in work careers, amidst constant job changing, continues from the pre-maquiladora transitional period, though it differs substantially from the seniority system in the mines. In a new period of maquiladora labor, men are renewing established patterns of wage and skill seeking life paths in evidence since the late nineteenth century.

## Immigration

The next section deals with the "border", specifically immigration to the U.S., as it structures people's lives in Agua Prieta and the U.S. side. The border is important as the setting for extra-legal crossing to the U.S. side by persons from Mexico's interior states. However, here we consider only immigration specifically by border residents and their kin. The setting on the border makes a large difference in immigration strategies.

The case study, the Durazo family, is a characteristic Agua Prieta grand-family with permanent resident children (and their families) in both Sonora and Arizona (Chart 15); it demonstrates the complex lines of legal and extra-legal immigration at the border. The Durazo family perhaps is more spread around than most, but lest they be thought exceptional, James Greenberg found in his household survey

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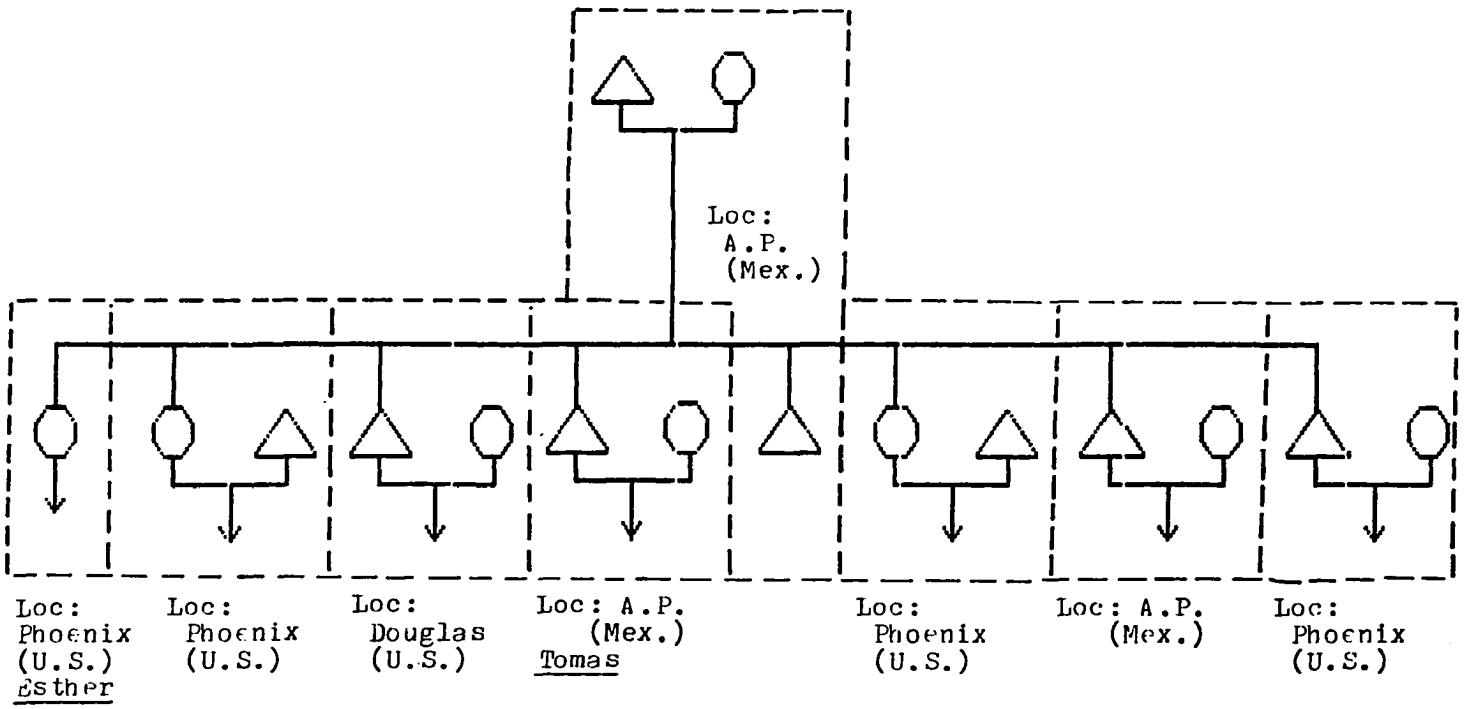


Chart 15: Durazo Grand-family--Cross-border family; household compostion and location relative to border

Loc = Residence; ↓ = children in household

data that almost 60 percent of households on each side of the border had relatives living in the neighboring community (Greenberg, n.d.: 8).[18]

The U.S. offers resources and opportunities which can be solutions to many different life-situations, from young men seeking short-term work, to regular commuting workers, to families seeking a new, permanent home. The Durazo history will offer cases of young male undocumented job-seeking, long-term undocumented immigration by a divorced woman and her family in desperate straits, and legal change in permanent residential status of a young couple and their children. To carry this out, people choose within two structures of immigration: immigration legally, that is, structured by the quotas and kinship model of U.S. laws, and immigration extra-legally, structured by what the laws do not allow for, by the border enforcement apparatus, and by the organization of persons and money to avoid detection.

The Durazo family came to Agua Prieta from Moctezuma in 1946 (for the purposes of maintaining confidentiality, certain details of this family history have been changed). In the Agua Prieta of the 1950s, Pedro found much work, though of an irregular character, including working as a gardener in Douglas without permission. Eventually he gradually withdrew from work. Thus Pedro, who had started his work life in the U.S. in the 1920s, and for several decades had moved out of the casual labor market, reverted to the insatiable demand in the U.S. for labor, though now

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without the chance to immigrate legally as he had had in the 1920s.

However, in Agua Prieta the Durazo family mainly subsisted off the work of their eight children, beginning with the two eldest daughters, Esther and Adela. They worked as secretaries as they left secondary school (1946 and 1947) and brought money home to the house. This anticipated the pattern of the maquiladoras that started a generation later. Esther married in 1950 in Agua Prieta, while Adela continued to live with her parents and work until she married in 1957, going to Phoenix with her husband, an American citizen.

Esther, on the other hand, was left by her husband in Tijuana in 1954 with two tiny sons. Finding work was hard for a divorced mother in those days before the maquiladoras, so Esther decided to slip across the U.S. border and search for work. Crossing in Tijuana, she made her way to Los Angeles, and there she found work in a garment factory, stretching her pay to cover childcare and household expenses. In 1960, Esther remarried, this time in Los Angeles, though she was there without documents. Again she was divorced, and again she returned to work in the U.S., though for a year she moved back with her parents, working while her mother took care of her sons and two daughters from the second marriage. Esther decided to return to California to raise her children in the U.S. where, she explained, they would have better chances for schooling and

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work. Esther finally legally immigrated as the mother of a U.S. citizen dependent child, and she lives in Arizona.

Tomás, a younger brother of Esther and Adela (born in 1943) also went to the U.S. as an undocumented alien in 1965, but rather than going in response to necessity, he went out of a sense of adventure and exploration, like his father before him. He crossed the border openly with a "local passport", but then he violated its conditions by leaving the 12.5 mile perimeter and looking for work. He went with a brother-in-law, who was a resident alien, and they hitched a truck ride to New Mexico where Tomás found work in a guano mine. His brother-in-law didn't want the job, so they separated, and Tomás worked in the mine as a winch operator for $1.50 an hour. He worked for four months until the worksite was raided by the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service). When Tomás was caught, he was owed a week's pay, which the INS obtained for him, but they took away his local passport and threw him out at El Paso-Ciudad Juarez, leaving Tomás to figure out how to get across the Sierra Madre to Agua Prieta in the winter.

After working in Agua Prieta at various unskilled jobs, Tomás returned to the U.S. This time he headed for California where he stayed with his sister directly in front of the immigration office. They even had a small business together serving banquets. Tomás did agricultural field labor there, mixing in among a crew of legal workers who were bused into the fields. Tomás bought a truck, just as

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his father had in the 1920s, and he returned to Agua Prieta with it to hire it out.

But work was slow, and by 1971 Tomás had sold the truck, and gone back to the U.S. He went to Phoenix this time, where his sister Adela lived. Tomás found a permanent job, in a lumberyard, owned by an Anglo American but with a Mexican American foreman and almost all undocumented Mexican workers. He was once thrown out by the authorities, but this time returning within 15 days. He worked there three years, obtaining a driver's license, a social security card, paying taxes--every element but a wife. Indeed, it was to his bachelorhood that Tomás attributed his decision ultimately not to stay in the U.S.--without a wife and family, it seems, Tomás said he was unable to save money from his paycheck, nor build himself a business of his own.

When Tomás returned to Agua Prieta in 1975, he bought a used construction backhoe in Douglas with a thousand dollar loaned obtained through a brother who was by then immigrated to the U.S. side. Tomás has worked since 1975 as an independent contractor, mainly hiring out himself and his backhoe to ranchers and contractors. He has had a patron, a member of an elite family, who bought equipment for him, as well as work arrangements with the Meza and the Montaño firms to pay for house-building materials.

The history of Pedro Durazo, and his son Tomás, shows a cycle in which each generation of young men repeatedly enter themselves into the wage-labor market, especially the bottom

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rungs of the southwestern U.S. labor market. Working people in twentieth century Mexico who manage to accumulate a few resources, such as a truck, a workshop, etc., do not seem to be able to pass much of that accumulation on to their children.[19] Sons and daughters have to recreate this economic foundation, and by far the fastest, most lucrative way to do this is to work in the U.S. a few seasons. Often, they are repeating the experiences of their parents, in, however, a changed legal context which constantly puts their stay and earnings at risk. Tomás, like his father, has become a prosperous "owner", who works for hire but is not immediately vulnerable to the vagaries of day labor. But Pedro had finally failed in his business before Tomás began, and both men sold their youth in the U.S. in order to get started. The difference was that Pedro, in the 1920s, was in little danger of deportation, and indeed finally regularized his immigration status, while Tomás always worked without documents, and was kicked out several times.

Two other of Tomás' brothers work in Agua Prieta maquiladoras, but both at higher levels than operatives. Three more siblings are legal immigrants to the U.S.--a sister and a brother by marriage to U.S. citizens, one Anglo American and one Mexican American, and one brother by his work. Overall, then, in 1986 the Durazo family has the parents with a divorced son in Agua Prieta, two married sons in Agua Prieta, and five children living in the U.S..

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## Undocumented Immigration

Let us take up first young male, temporary job-seeking immigration, such as that by Tomás Durazo. Here I will consider undocumented crossing by border residents.[20] Undocumented crossing by persons from the interior entails substantial investment, expenses, and risks. They have to have money, often borrowed at high interest, to get to the border, to find a place to stay there, and to pay for bus fare or other transportation from the U.S. side of the border to a more secure interior destination; in addition, the crosser may pay a smuggler, which reduces risks of being apprehended (but increases risks of being ripped-off or abandoned). Furthermore, if the crosser is apprehended, he will probably be "voluntarily departed" to a border port distant from the one where he was caught, so he has to have money to either cross again or return home. Every crossing also entails the danger of being robbed by thieves who prey on crossers, as well as dying from thirst in open desert, closed boxcars, etc. (this is summarized from Samora, 1971: Chapter 6).

The undocumented crosser from Agua Prieta can substantially reduce the upfront investment and the risk of being caught,[21] though the work situation in the U.S. remains insecure because of possible apprehension and employer manipulation of undocumented status. The key to reduction of risk and investment is kin and personal networks which cross the border, as well as a homebase at

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the border. Tomás' story demonstrates each point. Rather than perform a risky run across the border fence, Tomás crossed openly with a "local passport" designed to allow shopping and visiting. One journey, Tomás lost his passport and he was kicked out by the INS from Ciudad Juarez, from which he had to pay to return to Agua Prieta, but the other times Tomás managed to keep his passport safe by leaving it with friends in Douglas. In each of his three major journeys to the U.S., Tomás crossed with, or went to stay with, close kin (twice with sisters and once with a brother-in-law). The ability to reduce risk and investment derives largely from kin and friendship networks in the U.S.. Tomás told me that he never borrowed money before he came to the U.S., nor did he ever pay a smuggler, and the other persons who I interviewed reported the same.

Another factor in not having to pay a smuggler is border residents' familiarity with the U.S. southwest, its geography, and the appearance of "normalness" so necessary to avoid apprehension. Tomás found an employer in Phoenix, who kept a regular job waiting for him when he was booted out of the country,[22] helped him to obtain a social security card and a driver's license (see Ellwyn Stoddard's discussion of "institutionalized support of an unlawful practice", 1976).

Nevertheless, Tomás was caught twice, and one time he almost lost a week's pay owed him (the INS did recoup it for him). The steady increase in tactics and technologies of

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border control makes jobs for undocumented workers more insecure, both because they accept work in undesirable labor markets, and because they are open to abuse by unscrupulous employers who can hold the threat of expulsion and the need for secrecy over their heads.[23] For Tomás, a young, single man with a family to return to near the border, being caught and losing his job for a spell was regarded by him, in his interview with me, as a small, not a great, disaster.

On the other hand, undocumented life--loss of jobs, capture by the INS--poses a more profound risk for families attempting to establish permanent or long-term residence in the U.S., first because it makes it difficult to establish regular residence and earnings needed for stable residence, and second, because families with children grow up in a climate of tremendous insecurity (documented by the outstanding videotape ethnography produced by Louis Hock, The Mexican American Tapes: A Chronicle of Life Outside the Law, 1984). Families driven by great desperation are likely to undertake this sort of existence, and the case of Esther shows this: she went to the U.S. after she was divorced with no income and two small children, and she described her first sojourn in the U.S. as traumatic.

## Legal Immigration

Esther eventually obtained permanent legal residential status in the U.S.. Indeed, Portes and Bach found that the majority of legal immigrants from Mexico to the U.S. were returning or regularizing once extra-legal status (1985:

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65). The patterns of legal immigration are structured by the kinship model contained within U.S. quota and non-quota categories, and by influence of U.S. employers on the non-kin quotas.

There are nine legal preferences under which people can immigrate. The general principal of all but two of them is "family reunification", that is, favored elements of bilateral kinship and marriage. Three preferences--spouses of citizens, unmarried children under 21 of citizens, and parents of citizens over 21--do not have to wait out the national quota, and thus enter within a few months. These preferences, especially marriage, are quite important along the border; in a study of Nogales, Arizona and Sonora, Robert Stone, et al., found that 201 Mexican American males from Nogales, Arizona, married Mexican females from Nogales, Sonora, while 181 married Mexican American females from Nogales, Arizona, and without citing numbers, they also found Sonoran men married across the border (1963: 22-23).

Four kinship preference categories must wait the quota, which for Mexico can reach a maximum of 20,000, and in light of the kinship between the two nations, this can be an very long wait (the quota limit, however, has only been in existence since the 1965 immigration "reform"). They are unmarried sons and daughters, over 21, of U.S. citizens; husbands, wives, and children of legal permanent residents; married children of U.S. citizens; and siblings of U.S. citizens over 21 (each preference has its own percentage of

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the quota). Limited as these preferences are to 5,000 or 10,000 persons each annually, they do not have great numerical impact.

There are two more preferences, both of which are based on employment. One is for professionals, artists, and scientists; and the other, the sixth preference, is for workers who can show a job offer and certification by the Department of Labor, based on study of want-ads and unemployment compensation records, that U.S. workers are not available. In the latter there occurs a hidden pull that enables employers to obtain certification for employees, and Mexican workers find "help" (as it is said) among Arizona "influentials", local politicians, and Labor, Agriculture, and Justice Department bureaucrats.

This was a topic which people were reticent about. However, in the family histories I ran across a few examples--Marion Williams, who at the time owned the San Bernardino ranch west of Douglas, helped José Hernández obtain his immigration back in the 1940s, though Jose did not go to work for him. This topic in the political ethnography of the U.S-Mexico border would be a way to go beyond abstractions like "the state" and "labor." Before 1965 there was no quota applied to immigration via employment, and it largely depended on these certification mechanisms; since 1965, this has been curtailed, and more recent generations of job-seekers have had to go the disadvantageous undocumented route.

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## Types of Immigration and Cross-Border Families

In the Durazo and other grand-families the lines of grand-family kinship offer chances for favorable "leverage" of movement across the border. (Leverage starts with the idea that the structures of immigration, legal and extra-legal, are instituted powers which persons do not control on their own, but that they may have some advantageous access to some part of this structure, so they can offer help to some kinsperson, and thus "lever" them across. This is analogous to the analysis in Chapter 3 of how siblings levered each other into employment in corporate mines.) For this reason, the grand-families today in Agua Prieta resemble cross-border families of earlier periods.

However, because the structures of legal and extra-legal immigration differ from the past, so does the form of the cross-border family. The legal structure of U.S. immigration contains a model of a simple nuclear family household: married couples, children, or parents of citizens. Surrounding the open, non-quota nuclear family core are quota kin, limited in numbers to the point of ineffectuality, who are bilateral consanguines one step removed from ego (siblings, married children, etc.). Assistance in immigration to more distant or non-recognized kin--cousins, nephews, compadres--must be extra-legal, and assistance to quota kin probably is extra-legal. Since kinship is a valuable way to reduce risk of capture, robbery, or even death, the powerful border enforcement

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mechanisms of today probably have the ironic effect of making kin ties stronger, more worthwhile investing in.[24]

The cross-border families of the turn of the century could freely switch legal residence between the U.S. and Mexico with little risk, and thus they took the form of mobile households. Today, constant side switching can only be done by legal commuters with U.S. permanent residence; but in general persons have a definite legal right on one side or the other, and movement outside this right can only be done at considerable risk (hence the desperation of whole families extra-legally in the U.S.). Thus, today, nuclear or extended households of grand-families are divided into permanent U.S. or Mexico branches, and leverage rarely can effectively, legally bring households from the other side, as they had in the past. Thus border grand-families tend to take a form in which there are bases of legal residential households on each side, and individuals who pass extra-legally between them.

## Costs and Standards of Living

Mexico has had an on-going consumer crisis since the late 1970s, marked by devaluations since 1982. During the period from September 1984 to May 1986 when my wife and I lived in Agua Prieta we witnessed several dramatic outbursts within the longer crisis. In late 1984, after the peso had held below 200 for a year, the supply of dollars in Agua Prieta dried up, according to rumor because persons with

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connections to banks in Mexico were holding dollars in anticipation of a devaluation. Since this was at Christmas season, Aguapretense shopping in Douglas were paying up to fifty pesos extra in store conversions (a practice later reformed by Douglas merchants).

In June 1985, the peso declined abruptly from 250 to over 400 to the dollar--the Mexican government gave up supporting the peso artificially, which it had been doing before the 1985 state elections. This devaluation brought a loss of nearly half the peso's value and yet another bout of fear, intimately connected to the political scene in the bitterly contested elections; rumor ran rampant, and dollars were hoarded, as people felt in the free-falling peso a sign of (much exaggerated) national crisis.

Yet the moments of unpredictable panic were only one aspect of these years; equally to be feared were the predictable biannual periods right before and after New Year and mid-year, when the government-set prices (gasoline, electricity, butane heating and cooking gas, sugar, cooking oil, subsidized flours) made quantum jumps, and new minimum wages were announced. On these dates inflation, which is ever-present, is manifested in the TV headlines and the Conasupo supermarket in numbers for which the government was directly responsible. I recall, in January, 1985, sitting in the living room of one house--a family of mechanics, employed and free lance--while they spoke bitterly of President de la Madrid's responsibility for the price of

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gasoline jumping from 55 to 90 pesos a liter.

In late spring 1986 everybody in Agua Prieta was anticipating that the peso would again collapse (because oil prices had collapsed and Mexico once again had to renegotiate loan payments under austerity dicta). The foreknowledge of the devaluation did not bring security, but rather nervous tension, for few knew when and how much; only those who did, and had access to purchased dollars, could profit from the panic. Within a month, the peso was on its way to 1,000 to the dollar, and it stands over 2,200 as I write (1988).

The cost of living crisis in Agua Prieta was dramatic, if somewhat chaotic. The anthropological approach to the consumer crisis begins with basic aggregate data on the decline in real income, but it goes on to specify working class "standards of living" in historical and ethnographic terms, and to look at the impact of consumer crisis on varied segments of the community.

A history of consumption on the border shows where standards of living have come from, and how and why devaluations hurt. Data from 1986 about "necessary" food purchases versus household income shows differentiated impacts on different types of households, and this in turn exposes some of the lines of internal organization and tension in working class households. Likewise, inflation in the price of important life-goals like housing and education poses key challenges to the standard of living. Alternative

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interests and strategies in the face of rapid inflation are discussed. In this manner, the crisis exposes lines of relationship, interests, and alternative actions which might be hidden in normal times.

## The Context of Border Consumption

Northeastern Sonorans since the turn of the century have shopped in the U.S., directly or indirectly. The transportation network connected Sonora to Douglas, and Douglas was the commercial center of the region; furniture, fabric, and sewing machines were obtained in U.S. company stores or by peddlers returning from Douglas. Agua Prieta itself was virtually isolated from the rest of Mexico, so much so that its special status as a "free perimeter" until 1979 allowed U.S. goods to be brought to the city without tariffs (the city was surrounded by a fence and gates to the Mexican as well as U.S. side!).

An idea of the degree to which Aguapretense consume on the U.S. side (before the 1976 devaluation changed the scene), can be obtained in the study of Jerry Ladman and Mark Poulson (1972). They surveyed 347 maquiladora workers, who reported that they spent an average of 39 percent of their paycheck in Arizona (managers reported spending 59 percent). Furthermore, Ladman and Poulson estimated that indirectly as well as directly, a total of 52 percent of maquiladora wages and benefits ended up in the U.S. side.[25]

Within the general dependence of the Mexican on the U.S. side, there are certain specific mechanisms through

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which Mexicans obtain large U.S. goods, and leave them particularly vulnerable to devaluations of the peso against the dollar. There is a huge trade in used or second-hand goods from the U.S. to Mexico, including housing materials and hardware, tools, cars and trucks, clothing, and appliances of all sorts. Goods are bought in dollars but sold in pesos, and thus upon devaluations these goods become relatively much more costly (see the discussion of house materials below). New items were bought in Douglas stores by Aguapretense on credit, and even U.S. bank loans (extended with the co-signature of Mexican American kin). These debts became doubled and tripled in peso terms after devaluations.

Besides those items which were brought directly from the U.S., many of the used refrigerators, televisions, cars, beds, etc. which circulated in the person-to-person market within Agua Prieta originally were bought with dollars, and their market prices reflected the peso equivalent of dollars. Household use of these channels of consumption appeared in only a few cases in the 1986 survey--as it would in any given "slice of time" data--but the six household material culture interviews showed that over the long-run (the household's entire history), virtually every durable consumer good was obtained through one of these channels.

In this context, people in the working class of Northeastern Sonora have developed expectations about a "decent" standard of living--that is, a standard of living

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which is expectable, widespread, and conveys a public standing above miserable poverty. Such decencies in Agua Prieta usually include refrigerators and gas stoves, bedroom and living room furniture, televisions, used cars and trucks less frequently, and above all, brick houses with good roofs, concrete floors, and glass windows. In Seligson and Williams 1978 survey, maquiladora workers reported that among themselves 73.2 percent owned refrigerators, 49.3 percent owned washers, 42.3 percent owned sewing machines, and 34.1 owned an automobile. In their houses, 93.5 percent had indoor plumbing (seligson and Williams, 1981: 51-53). In order to understand how these standards of living came into existence, we must see how it has been developing over the last four decades.

The real wage declined through the 1940s, and hit a bottom in 1947. At nearly the same time--1948 through 1953--there were a series of devaluations, and the descriptions of panic and suffering by contemporary historians of Agua Prieta and Douglas (Sandomingo, 1951; Jeffrey, 1951) sound strikingly like the 1980s. After 1953, however, there were twenty three years of stability in the peso (12.5 to 1 dollar until 1976), and simultaneously, the real wage index rose--almost fourfold--until it hit its peak in 1978.

In order to understand the formation of a standard of living, it is necessary to correlate this economic history with the periods of family histories. These people had mainly come to the border in the late 1940s through the

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1960s. They had come to Agua Prieta, expelled from the mines or depressed farm towns, with few possessions and large, young families. For twenty three years while these families established and furnished their maturing households, real wages grew and the exchange rate for goods bought in Douglas was stable.

However, the real wage by 1983 had fallen at least to two-thirds (67.2 percent) of 1978, and probably substantially further since then; indeed, virtually all the surge in real wages since the 1960s has disappeared. Therefore, the question facing the generation in grand-families forming households amidst the 1980s crisis is, can they reasonably expect to obtain what their older siblings/parents/grandparents were able to obtain during the 1940s-1970s?

## Real Income

Real income fell among the households which were surveyed by Greenberg in early 1982 and recontacted by myself in March and April, 1986. 58 of the 63 households recontacted gave information on their total household income from all sources (the other households, mostly headed by widows, relied on aid from married children in-kind, so that their income could not be quantified).[26] The average income of 58 recontacted households in 1982 had been 3,213 pesos a week; in 1986, it was 30,253 pesos a week. However, the latter figure was greatly inflated by the presence of one household that owned an prosperous bakery and in 1986,

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reported 180,000 pesos a week revenues. Dropping this case from both 1982 and 1986, the average for 1982 was 3,217, and for 1986, it was 27,626.

It remains to figure out what these numbers mean in constant purchasing power.[27] There are two alternate manners of doing this, each with its own faults. One can convert the pesos into dollars at the free market exchange rate of the time; the exchange rate deflator was 19.0.[28] This deflator assumes that all border spending ends up in dollars; 52 percent of Agua Prieta spending did in 1971, but after repeated devaluations we cannot be sure to what extent people have shifted from more expensive dollars to less expensive Mexican products.

Alternatively, one can deflate using the official price indices published by the Banco de Mexico (Indicadores Económicas, May, 1986: Cuadro III-9). The problem is that there is reason to suspect that these figures are held below the real increases in the cost of living. The figures for the border city of Ciudad Juárez were used as the best approximation of Agua Prieta. The ratio between the indices for April 1986 and January 1982 is 14.3.

Using the price index deflator method, real April, 1986 household income was 1932 pesos weekly, or 60.1 percent of what it had been in January, 1982. Using the more extreme exchange rate method, 1986 household income was worth 1,454 in 1982 terms, a fall to 45.2 percent of 1982. The real

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decline probably lies somewhere in-between; whichever figure we choose, the injury is palpable.

## Household Consumption

But this figure conceals as much as it reveals; it mixes households that are doing relatively better with those driven virtually to starvation. One of the best ways of objectively measuring how Agua Prieta households are doing is to compare their income with a standard measure of how much income they would need to feed a household of that size. The purpose is to determine how adequate household income was for the task of buying families a minimum level of nutrition, and to identify those households which were at risk of not being able to do so. In order to do this, a nutritionally "necessary food budget" for each household was constructed for each household--rather than the actual amount they spend on food, which undoubtedly co-varies with income, poorer families starving themselves and better off families eating meat more often, fresh milk from Douglas, etc. Unfortunately, while I was in the field, I failed to think out clearly this question, and so I collected information on how much people actually spent on food, but I did not collect prices for a "market basket" of food.

Instead I have resorted to a post-hoc estimate for necessary food expenses for each household, and compared it to the actual reported income.[29] It starts with a recommended food basket to Mexican tastes designed for minimal nutritional adequacy, elaborated by the Sistema

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Alimentaria Mexicana and priced for Mexico City in 1981, reported by Antonio Juárez (1984: 107-110).[30] For one person (Juárez does not report age or sex), in 1981, the market basket cost 29.4 pesos a day. This figure was inflated to April, 1986 prices, using the national food price index (Banco de Mexico, Indicadores Económicas, Mayo, 1986: Cuadro III-1; this does not specifically refer to prices on the border, which may have risen more rapidly), with the result that the basket for one person for a day cost 374.85 pesos--2624 pesos per seven-day week in round figures.[31]

Another assumption was that one could calculate the nutritionally-required household food bill simply by multiplying the individual figure by the total number of persons in the household, without allowing for differences by age or sex. This is a crude assumption, and though it may seem likely that small children eat less than the typical basic basket, there is no documented way of assigning proportions to household members.[32] Inequalities of access to food, favoring adult males, while basic to discussions of malnutrition of women and children, was not a topic that could readily be figured into the overall numerical balance of income and food needs. Roberta Baer (1984: 217-218), in a study of nutrition in Sonora, did find that adult males had preferential access to food within the household, and that in particular this may have harmed the nutritional standing of pregnant and lactating women.

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Therefore evidence of overall household income inadequacy should be taken as a probable indication that women are malnourished.

In order to calculate the household income available to buy food, we must take notice of the fact that household members do not always give all their earnings to the household fund. Baer found in urban Sonora that what she calls "available" rather than total income determined food spending. She found that all of the wife's income, if any, went to household expenses, and that the husband's income was almost entirely directed to household expenses. However, "in those households where children or other relatives are working, the pattern in Sonora is that these other workers generally contribute only a portion of their earnings to the husband or the wife of the household, retaining the rest of their income to dispose of as they choose" (1984: 191).

The 1986 Agua Prieta interviews confirmed her observations; people explicitly said that their working children only contributed a portion to the household fund, and most of them were able to specify what share they put in. Therefore, I calculate an "available income" which was different from the total income for 16 households (15 of them reporting food expenses), assuming conservatively that in several households which did not report such reductions, all income from working children went to the household.

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Among the 15 households, "available income" was 69.1 percent of the total income. For the other 42 households, the income available for food was considered to be the total income reported for the household.

The proportion of household available income required to meet the food needs of the members are shown in Table 4. The median figure is 67.6 percent of income (the median represents this data better than the mean, because the mean gives undue weight to three very high income households). 67.6 percent of income, before paying utility bills (see Chapter 7), rent, medical bills, children's schooling, etc., is a shockingly high figure.

But even a mean of 67.6 percent of income disguises much worse situations for certain types of households; indeed, 10 households would have had to spend over 100 percent of their income to obtain sufficient nutrition, amounting to 72 persons, 42 of whom are children. 11 more households were in the 80 to 99.9 percent range--that is, 21 households out of 57 were subject to nutritional risks.

Households which are early in the developmental cycle, and have few earners and many mouths to feed, are most likely to be at risk; indeed, the manner in which I constructed this index makes this tautologically true. Twenty four "young families" were identified as non-extended family households, in which one or both parents had children, all below the age of 16.[33] Their nutritional

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Table 4. Necessary Food Bill as Percentage of Available Household Income by Decile, 1986

| Percentage Deciles | Number of Households | Median |
|---|---|---|
| 0%-9.9% | 1 | |
| 10%-19.9% | 2 | |
| 20%-29.9% | 2 | |
| 30%-39.9% | 6 | |
| 40%-49.9% | 5 | |
| 50%-59.9% | 8 | |
| 60%-69.9% | 6 | ----------67.6% |
| 70%-79.9% | 6 | |
| 80%-89.9% | 3 | |
| 90%-99.9% | 8 | |
| 100% plus | 10 | |

Note: 57 cases.

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standing is summarized in Table 5. This table shows a markedly dichotomous distribution. Seven of the ten households above 100 percent are young households; but so are eight of the sixteen below 50 percent--that is, the best off households as well as the poorest ones. This shows that the developmental cycle is not the sole stress.

Among all the young families above 100 percent, there was one wage earner, and that person earned the minimum wage or below; and of those households 80 percent or higher, all twelve had one source of income, and only for two was it greater than the minimum wage. In contrast, of those households below 50 percent, every single one had incomes at least twice the minimum, including two prosperous businesses: only one by husband and wife pooling two minimum wages, and the rest because the husband (4 cases) or husband and wife together (3 cases) brought in much greater than minimum pay.[34]

The cost of nutrition shows once again how the "austere" minimum wage harms people in Mexico (11,550 pesos a week with a paid bonus day, or roughly $23 dollars). The minimum wage, reset twice annually, has repeatedly been capped below the rate of inflation as part of the redesign of Mexico's economy to attract export industries like the maquiladoras, and to garner foreign exchange to make payments on the debt to U.S. banks. It is next to impossible to raise a young family on the minimum wage.

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Table 5. Necessary Food Bill as Percentage of Available Household Income, 1986: Young Families Versus Non-Young Families

| Percentage Decile | Young Families | Other Families | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0%-9.9% | 1 | 0 | |
| 10%-19.9% | 1 | 1 | |
| 20%-29.9% | 1 | 1 | |
| 30%-39.9% | 3 | 3 | |
| 40%-49.9% | 2 | 3 | |
| 50%-59.9% | 2 | 6 | |
| 60%-69.9% | 0 | 6 | ---median |
| 70%-79.9% | 2 | 4 | |
| | ----median | | |
| 80%-89.9% | 1 | 2 | |
| 90%-99.9% | 4 | 4 | |
| 100% plus | 7 | 3 | |

Note: 24 "young families"; 33 other households.

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Husbands without special skills who are trying to support a new family are at risk, as well as widowed, divorced, or abandoned women who work in maquiladoras to support young children, and who are not part of a extended household. One such widow with seven children lived in a two room rental apartment in Barrio Ferrocarril (a sure sign of poverty in Agua Prieta), and barely sustained her family by working at one of Agua Prieta's largest maquiladoras, accepting as much overtime as possible, working on her vacations in the U.S. without documents (in kitchens at Christmas season, for example). She kept her eldest two daughters in school, studying business administration, although undoubtedly they could have lied about their ages and found work in a factory.

Conversely, these data also demonstrate the value to a household of wage-earner(s) whose well-being (better than minimum wage pay) comes from their privileged position working in maquiladoras or the enterprises of Agua Prieta elites. Four of the seven young households above 100 percent had one earner in a maquiladora, making the minimum wage; while three of the eight households below 50 percent had maquiladora supervisors, administrators, and a truckdriver. In three others the husband worked for a business I could identify as that of an Agua Prieta elite.

These calculations about available income versus household needs also expose some of the tensions within the households of "working children" so basic to the maquiladora

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system. The non-"young families", most of which fell into the "working children" category described earlier in this chapter, tended to concentrate around the median income-food percentage--16 lay between 50 and 79.9 percent, and 7 more to 99.9 percent, totalling 23 of 33. There were 8 households below 50 percent--including two with income from rental apartments and one with a pension in U.S. dollars--and 3 above 100 percent, all cases placed there by severe reductions from total to available income, in which the earners brought little home (see Table 5).

In the "working children" households, "available income" was the result of a balance between the amount the wage-earner held for her or himself, and the amount the household budget received. That is, the relationship lay between the older generation, especially the senior woman, and the younger working children. As we can see, household budgets were under severe pressure. At the same time, the consumer economy was very attractive to young people of both sexes, especially new clothes (which are sold to young people on time payment in Agua Prieta).

Conflicts within families was a topic on which my informants were normally quite reticent; they tended to present an "official front" to the interviewer (for example, reporting that children's income was split in a formulaic manner, such as half-half). However, by listening to subtle complaints and descriptions (and from whom it is better left unsaid), I came to realize the presence of considerable

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tension, if not arguments. For example, see the description above of the ability of housewives to draw on the income of daughters via childcare, while the pull on sons or unmarried, teenage children of both sexes was weaker. Just as the husband-wife balance characterized the working class households of the transitional and migratory era in Agua Prieta, so the working children-senior generation relationship characterizes the working class households of the maquiladora era.

## Investments in Housing and Education

The balance of income and food budget tells how the household is doing in the short-term, but it is through the ability to achieve aspirations that younger generations of households measure their standards versus those of their parents. Though a standard of living is a complex combination of many expenditures and aspirations, house-building and education of children were most strongly demonstrated as long-term goals in family histories.

These families had come to the border city from either the mine-towns, where houses were provided by the companies, or from the countryside, where land and materials were more or less open resources for housing, and house-building was relatively easy. In Agua Prieta, on the other hand, one was responsible for their own house. Renting, though cheap, was a steady drain on the household economy, whereas a private house gave the security that even with a dip in income, one would not lose one's shelter; so all of the Agua Prieta

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families interviewed invested in a house within several years of arriving in the city.[35] Furthermore, in the mine towns houses were graded by work hierarchy, and neighborhoods had a certain homogeneity. In Agua Prieta, however, neighborhoods are mixed, though there are undeniably rich and poor sections, and the social standing of the family is visibly represented by the materials and construction of the house.[36]

How has the reduction in real wages affected the homeowning dream? First, we must realize that in Agua Prieta, most materials are purchased, not made of local materials--locally produced crude fired bricks, rather than raw adobe; sheet metal roofing rather than cane and dirt.[37] Second, we need to realize that certain of the materials, especially plumbing and electrical systems, are brought in from the U.S., and therefore the price is unduly increased upon the devaluation of the peso.

A former second-hand store owner, who was kind enough to show me his records, indicated that he got his start through buying a foreclosed house in Los Angeles for one dollar, tearing it down, and hauling the wiring, plumbing, roofing, doors, windows, etc. to Agua Prieta to resell; his main business was in used sheet metal roofing and construction supplies (from 1956 to 1980, the era of expansion in Agua Prieta). Since 1976, and especially since 1982, less second-hand construction material has come in from the U.S., reducing a source of cheap materials. New

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materials from the U.S., such as plumbing, though desireable, have become prohibitively expensive.

The kind help of a friend in Agua Prieta has made it possible to estimate the inflation in construction material costs from 1982-3 to 1986. He had built a six-room, one story brick house--in size and style, typical of decent but not extravagant houses in the city--starting 1982 and mainly, in 1983 (by which time inflation and devaluation had already had considerable effect). A conscientious record-keeper, he had written records of his expenses, and he estimated what equivalent materials would cost in 1986.[38]

The increase, considering materials alone, was 251,841 pesos to 1,846,750 pesos. Converted into to dollars, this represents virtually no real change--from $3597.70 to $3693.50. But considered relative to earnings, it represents a doubling of the amount of time required to work to buy those materials: the 1983 figure is 79.1 weeks of work at the January, 1983 minimum wage; the 1986 figure is 158.5 weeks of work at the January, 1986 minimum wage (using other wage figures, the number of weeks would differ but not the proportions). This does not allow for the cost of labor, on the assumption that people could do their own work--they often do--especially to save money.

Likewise this did not allow for the cost of a lot, on the assumption that a family trying to save money would rent a lot from the ejido to the south or southwest of the city. (The Colonia Ejidal, in which lots began to be rented in

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1971, and heavily settled in the late 1970s, formed in a similar manner to the Barrio Ferrocarril described in Chapter 5.) In 1986, ejidal rents were only 500 pesos (one dollar) a year.[39] However, to the east of Agua Prieta, a person could buy a lot from one of the large private landholders who had obtained large blocks of land from the municipality in the 1970s. These lots offer higher status than the ejidal ones. Such a lot in 1985 would cost 400,000 pesos (at the time, equivalent to $1,800; unfortunately, I lack a price dating to 1982 or 1983 to see if land prices were rising in real terms).

One of the most strongly and explicitly held long term goals is raising the educational levels of their children. The relatively desirable maquiladoras require completion of primary school for simple operative jobs, and secondary, technical, and preparatory schools are prerequisites for obtaining better than temporary and minimum wage laboring jobs.[40] One consequence of low earnings is that children may have to drop out of school. In the 1986 survey, of 47 maquiladora workers, 4 ho were below the legal working age of sixteen, and this undoubtedly understates what was an extra-legal practice.

Let us examine some representative school costs from Agua Prieta. Primary and secondary schools are free, but students have to buy their textbooks (2,500 pesos in 1985 at the secundaria) and more importantly, uniforms and shoes. A reasonable estimate for these was $40 U.S. (the side where

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clothes, especially shoes, may be bought)--that is, at 500 pesos to the dollar, 20,000 pesos, or more than a week's minimum wage, with no allowance for food, etc. Agua Prieta also had a "Centro Bachilerato Technológico", which charged, in 1984, 10,000 pesos to matriculate (at the time, the minimum wage was 5,712 weekly). Agua Prieta had a local college-preparatory high school, but families whose children went to university had to find a way to support them in one of the expensive and distant coastal cities.

## Popular Understandings of the Economic Crisis

But how do people go about understanding a chaotic process of devaluations panics and daily inflation: what do they decide hurts them most; how do they attribute the causes and blames; and who is it that articulates their understanding? These questions surfaced in conversation most often at the times of year when official prices rises were announced, and a new minimum wage awaited. In the conversations I witnessed in core houses of grand-families, the persons who lead the discussions generally were from the older generation--both men and women--who themselves were not the wage earners in the household. One statement was repeated so often that it was a stereotyped model for understanding the consumer situation. They said that it would do no good to raise wages, because inflation would just rise to match it; instead, prices had to be lowered. (Indeed, I heard this several times from persons making minimum wage).

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There was some sense to this idea. The minimum wage (paid in the maquiladoras) has deliberately been held below the rate of inflation by Mexico's government, and there has been a more or less effective cap on contractual wage increases transmitted through the Congreso del Trabajo (Bortz, 1986). Aguapretense recognized that wages would fall behind inflation. This is not to say that factory wages are not important, even of growing importance, in the household economy, since they remain major sources of cash input on a weekly basis. But, for good reason, they are not the most valued strategy.

Furthermore, in a highly inflationary situation, and one where continued peso devaluations against dollars were foreseeable, getting and holding earnings (wages or profits) in pesos was not a desireable strategy. The best way to hedge against the future economy was to acquire dollars, buy goods in the U.S., or buy used goods in Mexico whose market prices were peso equivalents of their value in dollars in Douglas. Different classes in Agua Prieta had different levels of access to these transactions. Significant purchases of dollars to speculate against devaluations was the domain of persons with connections in banks or enterprises to buy dollars. Better off working class people could go to the U.S. and buy appliances, or invest in clothing to be resold later, whereas the very poor probably did not have any accumulated savings from week to week to make such investments.

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It is in this situation that Aguapretense form their ideas for action with respect to the consumer crisis. Struggling for wage increases seems ineffectual, at least in the absence of viable independent unions. The members of the working class community who have the most voice in articulating consumer concerns are not necessarily directly involved in the wage economy, and they may be more concerned with inflation hedging strategies which emphasize the value of the dollar. This sets the scene for the discussion, in Chapter 7, of the patterns of action and inaction on wage and consumer issues in the border working class.

## Conclusion: The Social Organization of the Agua Prieta Working Population

In the Appendix, I described how my inquiries were steered within grand-families toward "spokespeople," and how I tried to widen the range of people interviewed to include those who were not as accustomed to public "voice." The material in the present chapter enables us to understand these patterns perceived in the organization of the working class communities--families, workplaces, and neighborhoods--in Agua Prieta at the present. We can contrast it with the mine company towns.

Ethnographers who have worked in places dominated by a single enterprise have contrasted them with other locations which were more diverse in occupation, in which families were not solely male-wage earner supported, in which

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residences were not rented from one firm and not distributed according to the hierarchy of work, and most importantly, in which the organization of power did not concentrate on the workplace, but was distributed into several domains (see the contrast drawn between mine site and town site in Southern African cases: Wilson, 1941; Epstein, 1958; Powdermaker, 1962; the differences of factory and neighborhood politics analyzed in Kornblum, 1974; or the typologies of community and enterprise developed for Northeastern Brazil by Aguiar, 1983; examples which no doubt could be multiplied).

Agua Prieta, likewise, is heterogenous. The plurality of working people are in the maquiladoras. But, as we saw above, they do not form a unified bloc of labor; rather, they are sharply divided between operatives, predominantly women, and foremen, maintenancemen, and supervisors, predominantly men. The former are frequently "working children" in their households (they move in and out, back and forth among poorly compensated factory jobs to keep cash wages coming in to consuming grand-families during an time of heightened needs for income), but only the latter form careers and skills in the factories, and in the process develop views and relations to managers sharply opposed to their sisters and daughters on the line.

This is not to say that women in Agua Prieta are as a group powerless. Indeed, in heterogeneous communities some women have access to greater public voice and economic power than do women generally in homogeneous, male wage earner,

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industrial towns; for example, a female anthropologist, originally from Mexico City, who resided in Cananea, remarked to me that in Cananea all women were ranked according to their husband's position in the mine company ladder, and that they had little public role outside of this status. In contrast, I remarked to her, people commented constantly on the visible activities of women in Agua Prieta party politics and neighborhood pressure groups (cases are discussed in Chapter 7).

Senior women were nominally housewives, and their domain restricted to the interior of the house and lot, but they gained local presence and motivation for involvement during the generations of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s when they were active managers, while men were absent, of household budgets and accumulations in houses, appliances, and schooling, and when some were independent businesswomen with stores or workshops. With their knowledge of kinship and of long-term family investments, senior women could bring together the members of grand-families. The younger generation of women employed in maquiladoras did not have the technological skills or control of workshops and accumulations that their mothers did, and often depended on them for childcare, so that despite their access to wages and seemingly more public role, they did not have the same degree of "voice".

These observations remind us that not all workplaces in Agua Prieta were maquiladoras, no matter how numerically

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preponderant those were. Workshops, though employing few if any workers other than the owners, were ideal places for open communication about public controversies of the day, and in conversation the respect accorded to the successful workshop owner subtly but effectively controlled the articulation of issues. This applied, in my observation, equally to the kitchen enterprises of women as they did to the backyard car shops of men.

Working class men, when they came to Agua Prieta from the interior of northeastern Sonora, had to build relations with local patrons in order to work and prosper in the border city, booming but with no dominant industrial employer. This gave the men of the 1940s through 1960s a particular bent to patron-client ties, and this group of men is today the mature male cohort which predominates in local politics.

Moreover, the recent economy of the border has reinforced this pattern for some men: one of the fundamental social facts is the differentiation among males in Agua Prieta between those who have no connections and no resources, and exist--but not survive--by selling labor, often irregularly, at the minimum wage; and those who have more secure and better than minimum wage employment, either as workshop operators, or as favored employees of maquiladoras and Agua Prieta property owners (hardware store operators; ranchers and cattle businessmen; construction contractors, etc.). The data on consumption show that it is

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the former whose families suffer the most horribly from Mexico's austerity and erosion of real wages, but that it is the latter who have the most "voice" and relations to powerholders to prevent or protest the harm to their standards and goals.

I have generalized here about the social organization of the working people of Agua Prieta, and I have tried to point out how this allows concerns of certain persons to be articulated, and those of others kept silent. This is necessary, but not sufficient, however, to understand the actions--and inactions--of Aguapretense dealing with the major determinants of their lives. We must now take the investigation forward to people's relations with powerholders in power domains that determine the fundamental conditions and futures for people.

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1. Or possibly more accurately, upon the birth of the first child--people in Agua Prieta often merged these two transitions when they recalled the past, but my observations and discussions with women who had children in the time I was in Agua Prieta indicate departure from the labor market upon the latter event, though non-married mothers may later return to work.

2. As well as the tension in each couple of the married child between grand-families on each side, husband's and wife's, commented upon by Lomnitz. From my observations the choice of grand-family affiliations which resolves this tension has much to do with the relevant resources each side can offer, such as a house lot, childcare, material aid, or job contacts and even employment. Residential proximity to one or the other side, which visibly facilitates visiting and personal closeness, also makes material resources and aid more useful and relevant.

3. I want to clarify that, besides the immigration into the Agua Prieta maquiladora working class from the mines and other prior working classes, there is also continuing immigration from the countryside of northeastern Sonora. I collected a major genealogy and life history, including maquiladora worker interviews, which came through this process; I have not included it because of space limitations. I would say tentatively, that in general terms rural immigration to the Agua Prieta working class has responded to similar processes which I discussed in the formative mine period: to wit, land and water shortages in a context of farm communities pinned in by large ranches, are expressed through disputes among siblings over bilateral inheritance, resolved when branches move into the wage sector. This process could have occurred in any decade since the land distributions slowed in the 1940s. In addition, in the 1970s and 1980s rapid increases in the price of cattle in outside markets, as well as technical improvement and capitalization of ranching, has revolutionized rural Sonora (Sheridan, 1983; Peña and Chávez, 1985). Land prices have increased dramatically, farm land previously dedicated to wheat for subsistence and sale have been converted to purely forage crops for cattle fattening (crops which heighten competition for water), and Sonoran peasants are raising calves to sell to ranchers to fatten. This new form of production has had two implications: the near total cash/commoditization of rural food and daily life; and a very high degree of risk-taking in raising calves for sale. This has made some rural Sonorans substantially richer, and made others failures, who then move out to the urban, wage locations, either the coast of Sonora or the border (and, of course, such divergence may be expressed in disputes among bilateral kin).

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4. Arizona Daily Star, February 19, 1985: Section 4, page 2; November 10, 1985: J2; February 25, 1986: H2.

5. Seligson and Williams (1981: 54-56) report that one-quarter (25.4 percent) of maquiladora workers in Agua Prieta said they had been unemployed in the previous twelve months, but they do note that many workers were unemployed from previous, non-factory jobs, since in their overall border sample, only 15.7 percent had ever been laid-off from a maquiladora job, and they emphasize the relative stability of long-term maquiladora workers--in contradiction to my understanding of Agua Prieta.

6. And working female solitary heads of households (there were 4 such households in 1982 and 1986; one of these women worked in a maquiladora both in 1982 and 1986). Because of the circumstances of the construction of my tables, these cases are counted under the rubric of working parents only.

7. The non-contacted households almost entirely were renters who had moved and could not be relocated. This reduced the number of young couples and new immigrants to the border that were part of the resurvey, biasing the second sample toward families that were homeowners in Agua Prieta and further in the developmental cycle.

8. Other notes on the method not otherwise recounted in the text: in the counting of adults of working age, I dropped 14 persons in 1982 and 12 in 1986 who were either too old to work or disabled. One of the 63 households in 1982 which was recontacted in 1986 had merged into a daughter's household, so there are only 62 cases in 1986 as far as wage-earning is concerned (I kept this household in 1986 for other purposes). I classified households according to the primary criterion of whether they contained "working children" as defined in the text; 3 households contained both unmarried and married "children" which were included in the former category, not the joint category, Table 3, they would otherwise be placed in--this resulted in 2 more maquiladora workers in 1982 and none more in 1986.

9. An alternative approach to the same information can come from tracing the actions of the same households between 1982 and 1986, rather than working with two sets of different households. This viewpoint tries to get at the question if each household over time increased their utilization of working children. For example, I examined the 1982 data of those households which had "working children" in 1986. The number of female "working children" in maquiladoras in 1982 was 13 of 23 in 1982, 57 percent, increasing to 19 of 29 in 1986, 66 percent; the number of males went from 4 of 25 to 7 of 35.

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10. Underemployment of men continues unabated from 1982 to 1986, which brings women into the maquiladora labor force, as Fernandez-Kelly has pointed out. I examined the 1982 and 1986 surveys for male unemployment and underemployment--money earning work at very low rates of return or erratic employment. The latter I defined in a conservative fashion, so as not to overestimate it, and according to my observations in Agua Prieta, as including work for others in talleres and other informal businesses, day laborers, work below the minimum wage, and so on. Thus I do not include jobs such as watchman or taller owners who might truthfully be considered to have such occupations for want of full employment. I found that in households with potential "working children" in 1982, 22 of 33 male "working children" were unemployed and underemployed, and 4 of 18 fathers. In 1986, I found 25 of 35 such male "children", and 2 of 20 fathers. There has been no improvement in male underemployment from 1982 to 1986, and the number working in maquiladoras stayed at 7, while the female contribution to the factories rose. In 1982, 19 of 26 potential female "working children" worked, and in 1986, 20 of 29 did--a distinctive contrast to male underemployment.

However, ethnographic observation tells me that I should consider the young men who work in the U.S. as well. In a impersonal survey, unlike the families who were my major informants, members in the U.S. without legal permission were rarely mentioned to me. I have tried to estimate, however, the number of sons who were in the 1982 survey and unaccounted for in the 1986 survey, as well as inferring the difference between reported income and visible quality of life. On this basis, I counted 7 such young men, of whom 2 were openly reported as undocumented immigrants.

11. This category is a composite of three figures from the tables: all males in Tables 4 (working parents only) and Table 5 (miscellaneous non-"working children"), as well as working parents from Table 3, families with working children.

12. For example, the CTS union president prior to 1985 was a women, a former quality control inspector at a seat-belt factory, and her predecessor was also a woman.

13. As far as I was able to determine, putting-out work was not extensive in Agua Prieta, though it intermittently recurred since the late 1960s.

14. This phrase, heard quite often in Agua Prieta, was imported directly from the U.S., and indeed, several factories had hired teachers, with whom I spoke, from the local technological school to teach it. Of course, it was the usual material--the need to communicate ideas from below and orders from above, to explain rationales to workers, to have morale boosting contests, sports teams, etc. This

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system, in my opinion, is overrated as the real manner for organizing work in the maquiladoras--I emphasize instead the system of monetary bonuses in the context of low real wages--but it did express the viewpoint of a particular group within the hierarchy.

15. After fifteen years workers acquire the right to twelve days pay a year of tenure when they leave employment (Nueva Ley Federal del Trabajo, 1986: Articulo 162).

16. I was curious if one could see how maquiladora work affected women's skills and their access to resources they have used in the past by examining material culture. I chose sewing machines because of the important roles they have played for Sonoran women. Working women several times remarked that they didn't have time to make clothes so they bought them--with wages they made in maquiladoras. I asked 62 families if they had sewing machines, and 23 had them. Of the 39 households without machines, 17 had a woman working, but of the 23 with sewing machines, 10 had a woman working, so there seems to be no proof for this hypothesis. It is possible that today on the border ready-made clothes, including second hand clothes, are cheaper than sewing (Seamstresses describe that they mostly make fancy, frilly girl's dresses for special days like confirmations and quinceneras, at the rate of 1000 pesos (then $2.00) for labor plus the cost of materials, for a day's work. On the other hand, the consensus was that everyday clothes are easier to buy than make or have made.) It is possible that sewing machines are too expensive for many families to invest in. It did seem to me--in the manner of an impression--that the older generation of women keep sewing on machine but younger women are buying ready-made clothes. I suspect that this generation of women who work (48 hours a week, plus overtime, plus travel time), have to conserve time in order to have money, whereas the older generation of women who worked at home (even for money) do not trade off money for time, and they can afford the time and effort to save cash expenses.

17. The line between unpaid labor and paid/shares in house businesses, whether women's or men's, seemed to be that the worker was paid if they had to support/belonged to a separate household budget.

18. The presence of permanent immigration along the border can be found in the study of population in The Douglas Report (Bureau of Ethnic Research, University of Arizona, 1975: Chapter 3). They found that 38 percent of Douglas' population were born in Mexico. 7 percent were born in Agua Prieta, in itself large for one source; unfortunately, the report lumped the remaining 31 percent as "villages and towns deep in the interior of Mexico." Yet my experience is that current immigration to Douglas comes not from far away,

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but from Northeastern Sonora, and while many were not born in Agua Prieta, this was the funnel through which people flowed. The overall picture of Douglas in the Report is a steady in-migration from Mexico, almost two-fifths of the population, and a steady out-migration of native Douglas young people to the U.S. southwest. The significance of this information for Agua Prieta families is that there is a steady draw on adult siblings across the border into the U.S. and thus many families have both Agua Prieta and Douglas branches, and often Tucson, Phoenix, and Los Angeles branches as well.

19. The reasons for this go beyond this dissertation to the political economy of twentieth century Mexico, though certainly they have to do with the steady erosion of earnings and purchasing power documented in Chapter 2.

20. Ellwyn Stoddard (1979) also discusses the contrast between border and non-border undocumented immigrants. In particular, he contrasts a group of Mexican border residents who have regular employment in cities and farms directly across the U.S. side, with the immigrants who cross from the Mexican interior through the border to the U.S. interior.

21. However, I need to clarify that a certain group of border residents--the women with families in Mexico who have to commute without legal permission everyday to work as domestics, babysitters, etc.--have very great risks, because they have to undergo the actual border inspection repeatedly, and thus they risk this using their local passport. If they lose their local passport, their livelihood is lost (see Fernandez-Kelly, 1983).

22. At that time, hiring undocumented workers was not in itself illegal; it became so in 1987.

23. For example see Mines and Anzaldua, 1982.

24. It is evident what U.S. kin can do for Mexican immigrants, but it remains an open question to me what immigrants can do for U.S. kin, especially considering the legal penalties for harboring illegal entrants.

25. Ladman and Poulson made this estimate at a time when Agua Prieta bought its electricity and water from Douglas, which later was changed to the national system.

26. I asked about regular wages and businesses, and also extra ways of bringing in money--in my experience, Agua Prieta households are pretty conscientious about describing their cash income, unless, for some reason, one wished to keep it hidden (as, for instance, remittances from undocumented workers in the U.S.).

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27. I do not know whether people responded to the economic crisis by increasing use-value production, and substituting for purchases. On the other hand, it is also a plausible hypothesis that in the context of increasing female employment in the maquiladoras, that former use-value production like sewing was being replaced by greater purchases of ready-made clothing, etc..

28. 26.26 pesos in January, 1982; 500 as a reasonable approximation of a sliding rate in Spring, 1986. Their ratio is 19.0.

29. My application of the 1981 market basket is certainly a jerry-rigged method of estimating food needs in 1986, and I use it on the grounds that something is better than nothing--that it was more important to figure out how much poor people in Mexico are hurting than to await a perfect method. Some confidence can be gained in this method by comparing the predicted and real food expenditures: 59 households which reported food expenses in March and April, 1986, reported spending a total of 868,273 pesos, while the estimated expenses should have been 865,920.

30. A market basket for Sonorans, and other northerners, might be more expensive, as it would reflect their taste for wheat tortillas, beef, eggs, and cheese, but I have no way of compensating for this.

31. The food index, fixed to 1978 = 100, was 186.7 in 1981, and 2,381.0 in April, 1986. The ratio, the price inflator, was 12.75 (April 1986 prices were 12.75 times those in 1981).

32. I actually did an alternate calculation of household food budgets counting all children 12 and below as one-half the "price" of an adult. Surprisingly enough, I found that the unadjusted food budget figures did much better at predicting the food bills reported by households. Using the alternative calculation, the theoretically necessary food bill of 59 households was 726,848 pesos, and the reported total food expenditures were 868,273, while the unadjusted theoretical total was 865,920, substantially closer to the actual total food budgets. While I am unhappy with the unadjusted food budget calculation, I decided that it was better to use the simplest assumptions in a situation where the basic variables are not known.

33. The consumer earner ratio for 57 households as a whole was 1 earner to 3.3 total consumers; for the "young families", it was 1 to 4.5, while for the remainder it was 1 to 2.8.

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34. Indeed, this data understates the presence of this group because three such cases were dropped from the "income/food" calculations because they either received in-kind pay (food) from their jobs, or their wives, who I spoke to, did not know how much their husbands earned.

35. According to the 1982-1986 survey information, following seven households which were renters in both years, I found that 1982 rents averaged 750 pesos a month, versus 6,029 pesos a month in 1986--cheaper in real terms in 1986 than in 1982 whether deflated by the dollar or price index methods. (The 1986 resurvey tended to lose 1982 renting households which moved frequently and could not be recontacted with the help of neighbors.) In terms of the logic of building a house rather than renting, I counted six households, not renting, in which imputing an average rent of 1,507 pesos a week would have turned them from nutritionally "surplus" (less than 100 percent of income) to nutritionally deficit households. Of course, building costs also reduce available income for food, so this is just a first approximation.

36. Brick is better than exposed adobe, though plastered adobe on older houses is respectable. Windows should be glass, and doors sometimes quite fancy carved wood, but usually forged iron; iron fences or chain link fence is much better than fence made from tall, narrow rows of the spiny ocotillo plant. Evidently bought materials appear better than local, natural materials. Roofs may be sheet metal, better new metal than used, and I never saw a single dirt and cane roof despite its utility in the desert heat. On the other hand, the appearance of the yard is unimportant, though women conscientiously sweep wind-blown trash out of the yard; yards are often car workshops and blacksmithies, or gardens and chicken coops. Lest it be thought that I am over-interpreting or imposing my ideas on the people there, I should not that one of the most characteristic items in Agua Prieta was a polished wood sign near the door, written in burnt script "Familia Valenzuela" or "Familia Tapia" or whatever.

37. Although it would be too lengthy to demonstrate here, interviews with house-builders in Agua Prieta indicated to me that the choice was rooted in the imposition of wage value to labor time. Traditional techniques, specifically adobe walls, mud floors, and dirt roofs, were nominally cheaper in direct cash terms but required constant upkeep and reconstruction every few years; and in a wage context, time is money. On the other hand, cash was more readily available in the wage (or rural commodity) economy, so materials which required an upfront expenditure, such as brick walls, concrete floors, and tin roofs, could be purchased, in the interest of long-run durability--and despite their heat retention. I insist that the fact that

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this change in building materials and methods is so widespread indicates there must be some logic at work.

38. I used 1 dollar to 70 pesos as the exchange rate for the 1983 costs, and 1 to 500 for 1986.

39. However, during the period I was in Agua Prieta, plans were being made to "regularize" the land tenure in major areas of the Colonia Ejidal-- that is, to convert it from extra-legally rented community land of the ejido outside the official city's boundaries, to privately owned lots of land within the city's boundaries. An official agency, CORETT, carries out this transaction essentially by paying the ejido for the land, and charging it, in payments, to the occupants. Therefore the inhabitants, who had been renting land so cheaply, would in the future be required to come up with land payments. At the time I was in Agua Prieta, the amounts to be paid were not yet known publicly, and so it would be impossible to know how much of a burden this might pose to families already so low on discretionary cash. In spite of this, people were markedly optimistic about this transaction; I asked households that I interviewed, and all but one felt that it was better to own one's lot than to rent it, a sentiment related to the desire to own a house. One element in this process I could never penetrate, though I sought it out--the leadership of the ejido and its relation to non-ejidatario residents of the zone--a level that might have much to say about the "regularization."

40. Though women even with secondary and vocational education often find that maquiladora jobs as minimum wage operatives are the best they can find (see Fernandez-Kelly, 1984).

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# CHAPTER 7

# AGUA PRIETA POWER DOMAINS, 1984-1986

When I arrived in Agua Prieta in the fall of 1984, the contest between the government Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) and the right-wing opposition Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) was the source of endless intrigue and rumor; soldiers camped in the baseball stadium and rode about town in pick-up trucks, a tense excitement was building in anticipation of the July, 1985 state and municipal elections, and even something as simple as the 1984 Fiestas Patrias parade of schoolchildren was divided in two by party rivalry. The why's and who's of party politics in Agua Prieta were important, to be sure; but the study of party politics does not exhaust the subject of power in this border city.

## Power Domains

This is a sketch of the involvement of Aguapretense from the level of working people in several power domains which were major determinants of their lives.[1] Richard Adams defines power domains as "a relationship wherein one player has greater control over the environment of a second than the second does over that of the first" (1974: 84). The virtue of thinking of in terms of power domains is that it enables us to consider more than one context in which

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power is exercised and contested, from the factory floor to the immigration office to the church pulpit. It does not restrict the phenomena in advance; this is especially important because the border is a particularly complex setting. However, "power domains" are formalistic, empty boxes, which need to have substantive content given to them.

In order to give content to power domains, Edward Hansen (1977: 5) approaches the study of power beginning with the key, or critical resources, and then examining the conflicting claims of differing social groupings on these resources. In the complex situation of Agua Prieta, there are more than one domain of critical resources, and differing relevant alignments.

This chapter will examine the following domains and groupings. The maquiladoras are by far the largest block of capital and source of wages in Agua Prieta; the young factory workers operate in a domain controlled at the higher level by U.S. companies, acting through local personnel managers and the maquiladora union local. Another domain related to the question of wages is the cost of living and the peso/dollar exchange rate structured at its highest levels by Mexico's relationships to banks, the International Monetary Fund, and the U.S. government, and mediated through actions of the national government.

The domain of party politics, does not seem in itself to address important class relationships such as those above. The objective, then, is to explain why party

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politics is important to local elite families and to some persons in the Agua Prieta working population who are recruited as actors by them. Finally, the U.S. border as an important power domain for people who live on the Mexican side; the implications are explored of a situation in which the people are dislocated from a power domain, but some cases are described when cross-border coalitions were formed despite these barriers.

Not only are actions in these power domains an important topic, but also the phenomenon of inaction and how differ groups of people are kept from acting. Allen Johnson (1975) cautions students of society that we cannot go directly from an analysis of objective conditions to consciousness and action, or the lack thereof. In impoverished northeastern Brazil, he showed how between objective exploitation and political acquiesence there lay a framework of individualistic patron-client relations. People do act on some of their interests and concerns--that is, that we cannot assume complete deception--but we must ask the questions, what are the concerns, who selects them and articulates them in public, how they organize themselves and others to act, and, above all, in whose interests?

## The Maquiladora Power Domain

Let us look first at the maquiladoras.[2] The maquiladoras are designed so that the highest and most powerful management figure the workers deal with is the

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personnel manager, or sometimes plant manager or assistant manager, usually of Mexican nationality; as I spoke with maquiladora workers about their jobs, they did not discuss the official American head of the plant but instead the person who filled this role of local manager. An effect of this system of hidden management is that to the workers conflicts appeared to be a matter of a particular abusive local manager and thus disputes were contained to one factory.

Using the local personnel manager insulates the American managers and hides their policy setting decisions. From circumstantial evidence there appeared to be a bloc (besides and within the formalistic maquiladora association) of U.S. managers who coordinated policies, such as recognizing the CTS-CROC and later CROM union local.[3] The most talked about cases, good and bad, appeared to be breakaway managers (sometimes Mexican sub-contractors), as in the case of the strike I described in Chapter 6 where the owner-manager refused to recognize the official union, and later sponsored an alternative union petition, which met the resistance of those very factories I would identify as the core management bloc! The American managements were almost obsessively concerned with avoiding any public presence or controversy, a basic social fact I did not realize until I returned and reviewed my notes, interviews, and newspaper clippings, and found that virtually nothing appeared even

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amidst the varied and violent controversies that rocked Agua Prieta.

As described in Chapter 6, the Agua Prieta personnel manager can manipulate local gossip and acquaintances to select, reward, and punish employees, with the added incentive of monetary rewards significant relative to the poor minimum wage. This separates privileged workers whose interests come from personal relationships with managers versus the line operatives whose interests lie in the terms of sale of their labor. The division of labor in the maquiladoras between American general managers and local personnel managers enables U.S. corporate power to utilize personal rivalries and conflicts while appearing even-handed and above controversy.

All but two maquiladoras with over a hundred employees in Agua Prieta were organized in one maquiladora union, which had been affiliated to the CTS-CROC confederation until September, 1985, and the CROM confederation after then.[4] Despite what we may assume, unionization in the maquiladoras is not necessarily discouraged. We also cannot assume in advance what the purposes of labor unionism would be. The maquiladora union in Agua Prieta served as a employment agency regulating hiring and firing for factory managements.[5]

New workers seeking jobs go to the union office and are assigned to factories, while those who go directly to the factories have to be cleared through the union. Even the

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sound trucks which paraded through the streets and radio announcements calling out for experienced operatives told them to go to the union office to sign up, rather than the factory itself that was doing the advertising.[6] The control that the maquiladora union has over labor supplies to the factories with closed-shop contracts gives it particular form of power over both workers and managers. Strikes, though ostensibly for certain monetary benefits (more paid holidays, a higher Christmas bonus), have other motives--a well-publicized strike in September, 1985, in which a group of American managers was locked inside the plant, followed the changeover from CTS-CROC to CROM affiliation and appeared to have been a flexing of muscles by the new union leader.

The maquiladora union also negotiated with factory managements the terms--always below the formal legal requirements--of lay-offs and closures. In this manner, the union in Agua Prieta reduces costs and undercuts the legal basis for workers to appeal the settlement. Indemnities upon termination can be very expensive in Mexico; basically, they are 20 days' pay a year worked plus three months pay, and whatever vacation, Christmas bonus, etc., days were owed, plus, were the employee to have fifteen years' tenure, 12 days' pay a year (Ley Federal de Trabajo, 1986: Artículos 50 and 162). Recalling, from Chapter 6, that employment fluctuations are ever-present and indeed, inherent, in the maquiladora system, the repeated abuse of these legal rights

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is the single most characteristic labor grievance of the maquiladoras.[7]

In the layoffs of 1974, for example, the Agua Prieta newspaper El Sol (January 14, 1975) reported that the manager of Alpha Mexicana (which no longer exists) suddenly asked his employees to join the CTS union; 40 joined, and the others were left off in two groups of 80 and 39 in November, 1974, and January, 1975. When Alpha definitively closed its two plants, neither administrators nor union leaders were to be found. Some employees guarded the plant to prevent the equipment from being taken out (as a negotiating lever for indemnities), but the "Junta de Conciliación y Arbitraje" denied the worker's appeal, and informed them that the leader of the CTS had already accepted an offer of one week's pay, rather than 12 days for each year of seniority.

In these circumstances, labor action occurs only when management or unions have reasons to bring it about. I have described two such strikes: one that seems to have been an assertion of power by the new union leader, and the other (in Chapter 6) that almost certainly was provoked by an autocratic subcontractor who wanted to completely remove the union for a reason. More important, however, is non-action: the recurrent failure to mobilize labor on important grievances. It should be clear that factory workers are kept from action by the instituted labor system (unions,

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management, and reward system), not that they are unaware or incapable of action.

This is readily demonstrated by a case study of inaction, which cannot be attributed to passivity of a female worker, nor to lack of network connections within the working community, nor to family pressures. Rosita González de Romero, a granddaughter of Jose and Mercedes Hernández, left school at 16, after completing secondary school, and immediately went to work in a maquiladora. It was not that it was necessary to leave school to earn money--her father, a postman, and her mother, who has a kitchen workshop, have a decent standard of living--but she preferred a factory job to being ordered in a store. That gave her spending money, and she gave money to her parent's household whenever they asked. Rosita had left her first maquiladora job in 1984 when she married, but that same year she went back to work in an electronics factory. She told me that her husband didn't object to her working, and she brought her wage to her new household.

She found a job in a smaller firm, owned by a local Mexican American, who took on subcontracts for electronics. This plant was poorly run--they used alcohol, acetone, and trichloroethylene without masks, gloves, or ventilators, and the used solvents were thrown down the bathroom drain. She worked at the plant while she was pregnant, and the manager refused to have her entered in Seguro Social, which would have paid the medical costs of her childbirth. Rosita

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finally obtained this legal right through the federal Work Inspector in Agua Prieta.

Soon afterwards, however, the factory closed owing the workers two weeks pay as well as the indemnity upon layoff set according to job tenure. Rosita was owed, in her estimation, 100,000 pesos (then $4,000) with interest. Rosita had gone to several other workers, both men and women, and persuaded them to put in their claim with the Inspector. Rosita had a strong network of support--several female first cousins also worked there, and for a time her brother was a foreman, as well as non-kin coworkers. Her father was actively using his connections to help her. They were frustrated, though, because the manager had hid on the American side, making covert appearances in Agua Prieta to negotiate deals with individual workers. The factory was rented and the machinery was unsalable (which could have provided a settlement). The maquiladora union wouldn't intervene because it hadn't officially represented the workers.

The only official recourse available to workers if a settlement cannot be reached through the local Inspector or the union is a trip to Hermosillo, the state capital, to present a case in the "Junta de Conciliación y Arbitraje". in the state capital. Without union help, the individual worker has to pay the costs of the trip and the stay, and the effective application of a settlement will still be doubtful. In 1986, Rosita was still exploring

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possibilities, but she had hit up against an almost total lack of institutional support, while some coworkers were settling with the ex-manager.

Rosita's grievance brings us to ask why aren't people in Agua Prieta mobilized along the lines of the class relationship between maquiladora worker and factory owner or manager? Since many Aguapretense are directly related to factory workers by sharing pay in households, and others are indirectly but closely related by neighborhood, kinship, small businesses, etc., why are these people not mobilized as a political community--that is, a communality--in relationship to U.S. capital?[8]

There are two possible arenas in which Aguapretense could be mobilized as a community in a political class relationship to U.S. capital: the wage issue in relation to U.S. employers, or purchasing power in relation to U.S. banks. Considering that the real wage has gone down severely, and that the majority of Agua Prieta working people are wage-earners or in a household with wage earners, why is the wage level not a salient issue? In turn, what groups form around cost and standard of living issues, who participates, and does consumer protest become mobilized into politics which challenges Mexico's indebted relation with the banks or the U.S.?

Instead, working class persons and interest groups are drawn into competing political blocs in local and national politics. In order to understand this, we must know that

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the predominant class relationship of factory workers and U.S. capital differs from lines of Agua Prieta stratification, why local elites need domestic political power for these interests, and why they mobilize some working class persons as part of political contests.

It is mandated by the Mexican government that maquiladoras pay operatives the urban minimum wage level for their regions, despite, as Fernandez-Kelly points out, higher legal minimums for their particular skills, such as seamstress. Many people in Agua Prieta took this as a reason to absolve the U.S. management of any responsibility for wage levels, and to blame the Mexican government. However, during 1984-1986 there was such intense competition among Agua Prieta's new or expanding maquiladoras that all sorts of bonuses were being added on top of the minimum wage--store coupons, bonuses for attendance, etc.--yet no factory would raise the base wage, willfully defying supply and demand. Maquiladoras individually and in associations get all sorts of concessions on taxes, foreign ownership, and importations and paperwork from the Mexican government, and yet they are (not so strangely) unwilling to challenge the official wage structure, even in circumstances when it would make sense.

The truth of the matter is that the maquiladora industry as a whole benefits tremendously, and is expanding rapidly, by the very low cost of the minimum wage in dollars (see Chapter 2). Since the 1982 debt crisis, the government

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has deliberately kept the amount of wage increases below the rate of inflation and devaluation, thereby discouraging consumption and encouraging foreign investment in exports (Bortz, 1986: 41-42). This is a perfect case of "hiding" policies, and it has the powerful political effect of shifting the blame for low real wages from U.S. capital to domestic governments.

Moreover, no institutions offer workers alternatives. The maquiladora union will not organize workers to seek higher wages since the government enforces its control over the wage raises through union confederations belonging to the Congreso del Trabajo.[9] As for the opposition parties, there was no effective Left in Agua Prieta, and the pro-U.S., business confederation dominated PAN was unlikely to make wages and working classes an issue. The silence of a wage issue in a city with as large an industrial working class as Agua Prieta's demonstrates that so far a political community has not emerged around the maquiladoras.

## Consumer Issues

The discussion above does not entirely explain why there was not more clamor for wage increases among workers, their kin and neighbors. Families in Agua Prieta, even ones where the majority of the household income came from maquiladora wages, did not see wage increases as worthwhile; the reader will recall that people said that wage increases wouldn't help: they would only be followed with more

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inflation. Minimum wage incomes, though basic, were not a good way to deal with inflation that people could foresee would be rapid; better strategies included investing in goods priced in dollars and reselling (since dollars held their value), or entering, if possible, significantly greater than minimum wage employment in factory supervision or with an Agua Prieta businessman or rancher. The young women who comprised the bulk of minimum earners in maquiladoras had little voice and weak material power in working class groups; men with good connections and some women with businesses had access to the more valued strategies for beating inflation.

This understood, it is less of a surprise that people repeated that wages were not too low--it was prices that were too high, and especially "con el dollar tan caro." I witnessed several consumer protests within the less than two years I was in Agua Prieta, protests which were organized in a predominantly poor, working neighborhood, the Barrio Ferrocarril: in particular, a demonstration to protest higher electric bills at the Federal Electrical Commission. Residents had received an increase of two to three times, accompanying usage measures that seemed arbitrary. The demonstration sought that increases be limited to "merely" the fifty percent officially mandated. Electricity in Mexico is a federal concern, and it is one of the public services in which prices have been rising to raise revenues and reduce deficits according to International Monetary Fund

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austerity strictures; in the context where the government transmits debt payments to the consumer, officially mandated prices and bills become the focal point for consumer discontent. Unfortunately, I left Agua Prieta shortly thereafter, so I do not know the final success or failure of the protest.[10]

Let us look first at the "why?" of protests over electrical rate increases in 1986. When I was collecting information on household budgets in Agua Prieta (shortly preceding the demonstration), several people made an interesting observation about their utility and heat expenses: that when their bills arrived, they had to cut back on their food for the week.[11] During the march to the commission offices, the female participants, mostly housewives, were rhetorically asking how they could feed their families when the bills arrived.

Reviewing the spring 1986 resurvey data showed that, as usual, people had a fine understanding of day to day economics. I figured the number of cases where people would have to cut back on food expenditures in the week they paid the electrical bill[12] by subtracting the "necessary" food bill from available income (as figured in Chapter 6).[13] Was the electrical bill was greater than the remainder? Almost half the households would face such a squeeze: 25 households would, 27 would not, and 10 could not be calculated.[14]

The demonstration was organized by an ad hoc "Comité de Amas de Casa del Barrio Ferrocarril (Housewives Committee of

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the Barrio Ferrocarril). In reality, the four leaders of the demonstration were all participants in the block committees and the neighborhood assembly of the Catholic Christian Base Community in Barrio Ferrocarril. (The protest was organized independently of the church, though the parish priest visited with the group before it left the plaza, and he appeared to be the indirect sponsor). Although the demonstration passed the Colonia Ejidal, and it was at least as hard hit by electric bill increases as Ferrocarril, Ejidal did not participate; the combination of recognized leadership and the idea that issues could and should be addressed collectively enabled this demonstration to occur.

Barrio Ferrocarril had always had a distinctive identity, since it was cut off from the rest of the city by railroad tracks; its identity was reinforced when arriving families settled there in the 1940s and 1950s. In 1974, a priest was assigned to the Holy Family church there (previously a priest had visited from the city center).[15] He started with a door to door census, and initiated a parish assembly to search for ways to address neighborhood concerns which had arisen. Parishioners met weekly in block committees (there were eight active ones in 1986) to discuss pastoral subjects given by the priest, and to share their own topics, often family and residential. Representatives went from the committees to the monthly assembly.

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In these meetings, participants learned to go from the level of commonplace griping to an active sense of shared concerns. The women who participated in the committees had experience as leaders in public arenas.[16] The participants in the church provided a group of followers which could be mobilized for the demonstration. In this sense, the parish's conscientization from within contrasts with the conscientization from above manifested in the populist PAN.

I interviewed two of the leaders, and by coincidence also had a household budget survey for another. They were non-employed housewives in relatively well-off households. Since the demonstration was called at mid-day, it attracted only a few men, and young women who worked in the factories could not attend (the few younger housewives there deferred to the middle-aged leaders) Prices are, of course, a direct concern of housewives. Moreover, the considerable life-history evidence shows that as families came to Agua Prieta in the post-1940 era women became managers of exactly these sorts of public family interests; so that while housewives might seem more enclosed and less likely to deal with public issues than working women, in reality the opposite may be true.

The lines of organization in this instance reflect more general aspects of the organization of the community. The priest and nuns had organized meeting groups of teenagers and young people, including a few female <u>maquiladora</u> operatives, and they were very interested in this "working

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class". Nevertheless, working children have relatively less public "voice" as household spokespeople than do housewives--especially when the church committees gave these women a chance to use their voice--and the concerns of maquiladora workers have less salience than that of consumers (though, of course, these are two sides of one coin). Likewise, the priest had tried to involve the poorer families of the neighborhood--generally transient renters in cheap two-room apartments--but he noted to me that the active participants belonged to long-established, homeowning families (of the generation who had come in the 1940s and 1950s) with extensive grand-families and commitments in the neighborhood.

Yet, though consumer protests responded to the needs and voices of the leaders of working families and neighborhoods, they never surpassed the neighborhood level,[17] nor were committees of defense of the consumer formed, as in larger cities in Mexico (Carr, 1986). Indeed, there were important consumer issues to which there was no response other than endurance and griping: shortages and speculation, unjustified price hikes and overpricing of subsidized or controlled items in stores, and above all, the devaluation of the peso against the dollar, which when it fell suddenly downward might have set off protests.[18]

It was certainly not in the interests of Agua Prieta elites, who owned hardware stores and gas stations and ran banks, to spark such protests, nor to point fingers at the

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maquiladoras for paying low wages; the labor unions were under discipline to keep wages down and not stir up discontent;[19] and there were no effective parties to the left of the PRI in Agua Prieta. The pro-business, pro-U.S. PAN was not going to focus consumer discontent on prices, wages, or debt payments, but their brand of anti-government populism focused discontent with falling standards of living toward the electoral process: as if, without any policies different from the PRI, elections would solve these problems. Let us, then, look at the two parties and how working people in Agua Prieta were mobilized in their electoral contests.

## Agua Prieta Party Politics

Before we enter party politics we must clarify the difference between the class relationships of Agua Prieta working people with predominantly U.S. factory capital, and the relations many of them have in the Agua Prieta stratification system. My contention is that we are justified if we view the 5,000 plus maquiladora workers as the predominant working class of Agua Prieta, or if we see their wage labor as the major determinant of life chances today, or if we view the extraordinarily cheap labor they add to U.S. owned products as the extraction of a surplus. But this class relationship was not a major way in which persons were mobilized into politics in Agua Prieta.

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The local power domain there is based on other interests and relations,[20] and it involves in politics other portions of the Agua Prieta working class than young working women. The discussion of Agua Prieta stratification is designed to show the material interests of local elites; to show why interests require elites to maintain access to local political power; to show how some working persons are clients of elites; and to examine who these people are, their interests, and how they are in positions to mobilize other portions of the working class community. The local stratification system involves quite substantial material interests--it is not just some residual or mystified status system.[21] The analysis of the Agua Prieta stratification system requires the understanding of long-lasting regional "political families" which form a distinct, though not unchanging, stratum, and which repeatedly appear holding key resources and political offices.

The export of cattle to the U.S. and Mexico City is the major commerce of rural, non-coastal Sonora. Agua Prieta is the export gate for cattle from valleys to its south and east, such as Fronteras, Moctezuma, and Bavispe. Cattle ranchers and cattle brokers occupy the top positions in wealth, in the cattlemen's association, and in the two political parties in Agua Prieta. Cattle trade associations have been promoted by the federal and Sonoran state government since the late 1930s (Ramírez, Conde, and León, 1985); cattle associations deal with government export

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quotas and domestic pricing. In addition, during the 1970s there were disputes over ranch expropriations in the municipalities of Agua Prieta and Fronteras. The 1947-1953 meatpacking plant, sponsored by the state government and controlled by cattleman José J. Ortiz, through short-lived, also made a lasting impression in Agua Prieta elite relationships.

Within the urbanized area, too, control of political power, permissions, and spoils has proven necessary to the accumulation of wealth during Agua Prieta's post-1940 growth. Municipal land was acquired to hold for speculation and resale, especially during the 1970s. There is an striking correlation between major political figures in the two parties (especially in the PRI but some in the PAN) and hardware or construction materials stores (and Agua Prieta Industrial, the largest locally owned industry, which makes and sells lumber). Hardware, like used cars and automobile parts, often come cheaper or better from the U.S., but to import them either requires mobilizing official paperwork, or winking at violations. Likewise, we should not forget that border trade by necessity requires dealing with the government, and several PRI families have branches in the customs brokerage business. Another business with which one sees a correlation of local political elites are palmillera broom factories.

Besides open commerce, one must consider Agua Prieta, as with any other border city, as a base for smuggling: not

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only of drugs to the U.S., but also consumer goods (without duties) and controlled arms into Mexico. Smuggling has two requisites: access to toleration or aid from local, state, or federal agencies and politicians; and gangs of operatives recruited in poor neighborhoods, who can apply violence when necessary to control the trade. Smuggling can supply large amounts of liquid cash for politics and for investments in businesses and land.

These lines of local accumulation and stratification, though they are controlled by the few "political families" of Sonora, as well as the couple of newly wealthy entrants, do permit, even encourage, the recruitment, as clients, of certain members of the working population in Agua Prieta: favored male workers above minimum wage or with in-kind benefits, employed by local property-holders, either directly, as cowboys, in hardware stores, or palmilleras, or indirectly, as cattle truckers, workshop operators, etc..[22]

We must understand how greatly producers and owners of small businesses are tied into the municipal power competition in Agua Prieta. Their life histories show that most of them were helped into business by Agua Prieta elites, and even if they have diversified clients today, none can afford to ignore the big-spenders. Also, they depend on the municipal police to tolerate their presence and state and federal tax agents to by pass them, as well as the question of getting permissions (or at least toleration) of various activities, such as importing used auto parts,

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etc., from the U.S. side.[23] Women who have businesses like buying used clothing in the U.S. and reselling it in Mexico, or other dollarized commerce, likewise have to negotiate relationships with Mexican border and municipal authorities, as well as well-off clienteles.

We recall that these enterprises organized members of the Agua Prieta working community well beyond those who were directly involved in them: the owners were senior men and women, key figures in grand families, and persons who had voice and authority, while sons, daughters, nephews, etc., held the ambition of succeeding them in these businesses; the shops and kitchens were gathering places and scenes of unrestricted communication, and home-bases for clubs, ranging from baseball teams to political party cliques.

Yet not all the working men and women in Agua Prieta with personal and business relations to elites were involved in politics; indeed, these relationships did not seem to become politically activated until after 1979. In order to address the question 'why were followers brought into politics after 1979?', we begin with a narrative of the political history of Agua Prieta leading into the period of bitter PRI-PAN contests.[24]

The modern era of Agua Prieta politics begins with Plutarco Elías Calles, one of the Sonoran coalition that triumphed in the revolution, and who was president in name or in effect from 1928 to 1934. Calles' home base was Agua Prieta, and after he had left for Mexico City, Agua Prieta

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was run by his associates--military veterans, cattlemen, and border trade (including weapons) brokers (some of these men, as well as being associates of Calles, had come from long established regional elite families). The Calles group dominated the municipal presidency, the ejido of Agua Prieta founded in 1916 under Calles,[25] and the local branch of the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (1929). During the late 1930s and early 1940s, the state of Sonora was riven by the political rivalry between the Sonoran governor, General Roman Yocupicio, and President Cardenas. This dispute apparently was quite heated in Agua Prieta, although the factional alignments are now difficult to reconstruct and relate to the Calles group. It may be that a disputed PRI nomination in 1949 was the last gasp in this dispute.

A small rancher and mezcalero, Edgardo Campbell, ran against José J. Ortiz, large cattleman and favorite of the governor. The populace was involved in the contest, there were large meetings at the plaza, and one elderly resident of Barrio Ferrocarril recalled that Ortiz promised him to regularize the legal status of the house lot he rented from the ejido. When Ortiz won in an election that some informants felt to be fraudulent, or at least foreordained, Aguapretense gave up on electoral politics for thirty years afterwards--until 1979. It seems that the political families which dominated the Agua Prieta PRI in these years encouraged apathetic acceptance of preselected candidates and did not actively recruit political clients in the

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working class (except for the most minimal buying of votes on election day; see Hansen, 1977: 142 ff. on the structural context of political apathy).

At this time, Agua Prieta cattle families appear to have been closely associated with the coastal agriculture, cattle, and business bloc of Governors Abelardo Rodríguez and Ignacio Soto. As Agua Prieta was growing rapidly in the post-World War Two era, new elite families arrived on the scene, more involved in hardware and commerce than ranching. Nevertheless, these families seem to have been readily incorporated into the group of political families; indeed, even today, leaders of both parties come from a mixture of families from the Calles era, regional cattle owners, and post-war commercial owners, with several figures who rose to power in the PRI in the 1970s. The quietude of these decades was broken by the election of 1979. However, before we describe that event, we need to review the rise of the PAN in Sonora in the 1970s.

Carlos Moncada, a Sonoran journalist, notes that the PAN launched its political assault in Sonora well before the 1982 economic crisis--thus undercutting the commonly accepted explanation of the PAN as a popular reaction to crisis--and he points instead to a major rift in the nation's elites (Moncada, 1985). The breakdown in the PRI occurred in 1975-1976, over agrarian issues on the highly unequal agro-industrial coast of Sonora, and it did not seem to affect this isolated border city at first.

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To make a complex, and very important, history simple, in 1975 conflicts over land and water boiled over between huge private landholders and radical unions of agricultural workers (with aspirations to obtain land); when President Echeverria intervened in classical fashion, combining murder and imprisonment with some land expropriations granted to coopted peasant organizations, to shut off the radical alternative, certain groups of coastal landholders refused to accept the need to make even these reduced concessions, split with the national government, with the PRI, and thus found common cause in the right-wing PAN with other dissatisfied blocs of elites.[26]

For reasons I was never given to understand fully, serious divisions arose among the PRI elites in Agua Prieta during the 1970s.[27] These came to a head in 1979, when the state PRI chose a candidate not well-regarded in Agua Prieta political circles, a choice so disliked that local leaders sent a delegation to the state capital to plead against it. The state refused to budge, and back in Agua Prieta, members of certain political families in a family dinner decided to nominate another candidate, a son-in-law, Luis Córdova Corrales, and search for a vehicle for him to run in: the till then nugatory PAN.

This choice was announced publicly a few days later, in a mass rally in the Azueta plaza. The Córdova campaign was designed, unlike previous campaigns, to pull in public support, to draw crowds in the city neighborhoods and

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ejidos, and to bring in to the PAN selected persons as popular leaders. That is, for the first time since 1949, the elite leaders of two parties sought active followers in Agua Prieta.

First the PAN and then the PRI saw in Agua Prieta value far exceeding its size as a political arena because it is on the border, and near U.S. media. Since 1979, and especially in the state elections of 1985, Agua Prieta has been the key to PAN's strategy for Sonora. The strategy has been to pose a series of electoral challenges in states and localities, each trumpeted as a fundamental test of the people's will against the government, proclaiming loudly, and justifiably, the anticipation of fraud, and in this manner impugning the legitimacy of the government while in reality making the local emotions subject to the strategy.

The PRI, operating its machinery of local and state bosses, in turn cannot afford to give up any locality, though fraud be necessary, for only through retaining each municipality can the organization of rewards be maintained. Since 1979, as the PRI has tried to reconsolidate and recapture Agua Prieta, the PRI and PAN factions among the elite families have bitterly polarized: key old-line PRI families and individuals have returned to the party while others have remained or joined the PAN, and families have broken or realigned in all manner of complex alliances with each election, each time exacerbating the hatreds between the two sides.

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After Córdova's election in 1979, the PAN actively sought neighborhood representatives for its local and state committees, as well as seeking credit in Agua Prieta for long-delayed public improvements and urban services. The PRI began to patch up some of its more public divisions for the 1982 municipal election, but they nonetheless lost to the PAN again.

However, during the administration of Leonardo Yañez (1982-1985), the government made it apparent that it was going all out to defeat the PAN in 1985, by depriving the municipality of funds, obstructing public works or launching parallel projects as alternatives to municipal patronage, mobilizing PRI members in every possible labor or bureaucratic organization to split with PAN sympathizers, and so forth. In the popular imagination everything was polarized into PAN and PRI, disputes arose over any possible public activity, and rumors swirled about the city with amazing rapidity.

By the 1985 election, it was apparent that the PAN's national and state leadership had chosen to make Nuevo Leon and Sonora (the centers of their business alliances) into electoral gauntlets for the government, and in Sonora Agua Prieta was to be the point of the challenge. The PRI was equally determined to make Agua Prieta into an exemplary show of power against the ambitions of the PAN. Thus it came that the municipal hall in Agua Prieta was burned down at the end of the Fiestas Patrias celebration, on the

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morning of September 17, 1985. Because this event and its aftermath was a matter of such innuendo and accusation I will only give a sketch of what I feel are the basic facts.[28]

The conduct of the election itself (July 5, 1985) was disputed--the PAN accused the PRI of dropping its voters from the registries--and the PAN organized two blockades of the border-crossing, one before the election, and one after election day (when the PAN had withdrawn in mid-day). The blockades were partially facilitated by the U.S. border port, which tolerated the blockaders on the U.S. side of the crossing bridge and in effect gave them potential sanctuary.[29] The PRI declared an official victory, but in reality both sides girded for a test of power upon the assumption of power of the new municipal president in September.

In the evening of September 16 and the morning of September 17, 1985, surrounded by a large crowd recruited by a female, upper class PAN leader, the city hall in Agua Prieta was burned down, as well as the municipal police cars. Of course, responsibility for these acts are disputed between the two sides. During that night, and in the following day, twenty four persons were officially arrested, including the past PAN municipal president and the candidate, and the leaders of the party. The crowd was dispersed with clubs and tear gas. Although the number is

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unascertainable, many persons from the crowd, including youth, were detained unofficially and beaten.

PANistas who had relatives in the U.S., especially from elite families, escaped to Douglas, given effective sanctuary by U.S. immigration authorities, and rallies were held in a smelterworkers' union hall and a Catholic church. Several weeks of exquisite tension passed before the twenty four were released; this was negotiated through the bishop of Hermosillo (a barely disguised PAN leader). The city collectively calmed down after that, at least until national and municipal elections in 1988. In summary, though one may disagree over the blame for particular events, there is no question but that each party was using Agua Prieta to demonstrate its capacity for power in a "test" crisis.

Electoral politics in Agua Prieta are part of a power contest between pro- and anti-government elites, and it is worthless to try to interpret them in terms of popular opinion or numbers of voters. However, in the power contest it is important to mobilize followers (to turn out a crowd, in the PAN's case; to factionalize and disrupt PAN's populist support in municipalities, in the PRI's case). Until 1979, Agua Prieta's one-party elites favored popular apathy; but after 1979, the two parties began to actively recruit subordinate leaders with followings in working class neighborhoods. Therefore the important question about working class involvement in party politics is not electoral sentiment, but was who was recruited and how.

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I interviewed two PRI neighborhood committee or union members, and three PAN neighborhood committee leaders (two loyal and one disenchanted), four of them from the Barrio Ferrocarril or Colonia Ejidal neighborhoods (large poor neighborhoods). I withhold details about these people for the sake of my commitment to privacy to them, but I can describe my findings in general. There were a number of bases of their political activity which I had hypothesized might occur. These included previous activity in church or neighborhood committees dedicated to getting urban services; occupation and relations of production (e.g., were they employed or independent producers); business or work relations with elites of different parties at that time; and even membership in grand-families with particular political affiliations. Each one of these applied in certain cases, but not all cases. (Though many grand-families had a political tendency based on the affiliation of key spokespeople in them, some were divided and kin blocs as such did not act together, or predictably, in politics; kinship in politics only served as a basis for personal recruitment. Kin blocs in the urban, wage economy, unlike land-controlling settings, have only small amounts of resources as common interests, and many other interests, such as employment and patronage, diversify the group.)

The one constant was that each had been recruited to act by an Agua Prieta political elite with whom they had already had an on-going relationship, which included

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previous employment, patronage of a small business, and sports teams (but not all persons who had such economic relations were recruited). Each one of them cited the specific person and the time it happened, and these facts correlated with the chronology of the elite political contest (either 1979 or 1982 municipal elections). Only one, in the PRI, appears to have been politically involved before 1979.

The persons who were recruited were all in their forties or fifties (except one younger PRI labor leader), and had all started employment in Agua Prieta in the late-1940s/1950s in enterprises operated by local wealthy families.[30] For instance, one first met his political patron-to-be working as his supervisor in the meat-packing plant shortly after arriving in Agua Prieta, and later worked for him and another of the PAN leaders at Agua Prieta Industrial where they were managers. He and his companion party representative played on baseball clubs with these men in the 1950s. The patron-client recruitment of party supporters was based on the 1940-1970 era of the working class experience of Agua Prieta, when working men in the absence of an industrial hierarchy sought personalized relationships with elites.

In each case, the activist had graduated to working as independent producers or self-employed craftsmen (again the younger man's career differed in sequence but not occupation). As independent producers, at least two were

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direct economic clients of political elites (that is, the elites were customers and in one case had bought equipment for the person). In this role, two party activists had important followings they could bring to their political role: one had a sports club with a large presence in a poor neighborhood, another headed a union; the other two had less public followings before they went into politics but they lived in a large, contested neighborhood.

This describes the structure of party politics in the working class neighborhoods, but it does not answer the question of what is in it for the participants. So far as the PRI is concerned, the answer is relatively easy because of the government's capacity to reward and punish. Because I committed myself to confidentiality, I will not reveal the specifics, but they are not different from those described extensively in other studies (Ugalde, 1970; Cornelius, 1975; and Vélez-Ibañez, 1983). In the particular circumstances of Agua Prieta's political contest, the purpose of recruiting clients for the party was less to defuse dissent, as described elsewhere, and more to harass the municipal government, punish the interests of wealthy PANistas, and create factionalism in neighborhoods where the PAN had been strong.

For its part, the PAN in Agua Prieta specifically needed massive outpourings of morally outraged people during and after the election in order to threaten the government's public image, especially near the U.S. Thus, the PAN

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recruitment had to have a ideal as well as material appeal when it recruited activists. When the PAN ran the municipal government, it could distribute work and contracts, but municipal budgets in Mexico are small, and even more so when the PRI squeezed the 1982-1985 Agua Prieta budget to hurt the PAN. PAN elites employed or patronized followers who were small producers (again, guarding confidentiality). Nevertheless, this does not exhaust the appeal of the PAN in Agua Prieta. The PAN has performed a neat trick of turning standard of living discontent into electoral discontent without ever promising to raise wages or lower prices. We need to examine the ideological appeal of right-wing populism.

In Agua Prieta, the PAN organizes through neighborhood meetings held at houses of volunteers. The PAN organized by district of the city, which took advantage of the social mixture of middle and working strata characteristic of most of the city except the poorer west fringe, rather than by labor or other interest group. The speakers are sent from the municipal committee, and are generally better educated than the audience--the message arrives from above rather than from within the groups. They exhort support mainly by criticizing the government of Mexico, and calling for elections as the only solution[31] (while at the same time anticipating that elections would be stolen and thus preparing the ground for outraged protests, the strongest weapon of the party). The basic equation is the following:

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the government (equals PRI) is corrupt, in contrast to the people (pueblo) which is honest. The PAN is the only contrast to the PRI (government), therefore the PAN equals the pueblo. Let us examine first the causes and then the results of the reception of this message.

The PAN is widely explained as a protest vote against the government. As Moncada has pointed out, this does not explain why the protest is right-wing protest rather than left-wing protest (as one might assume). The ethnographic study of Agua Prieta enables us to specify just who protests and what for.

Agua Prieta had grown enormously with the arrival of families from northeastern Sonora during the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. The needs of this arriving population was simple at first, and easily fulfilled by PRI municipal administrations by selling house lots (which also enriched officials with purchase payments and served to reward voters at election time). By the early 1970s, however, families were completing houses, seeking municipal services like sewers and water, and, as well, proliferating into multiple household grand-families seeking yet more municipal land. At the same time a series of egregiously corrupt municipal administrations failed to use allocated funds for these needs, and they sold large areas of land from the municipal airport, not as lots but as blocks to land-speculators connected with the party. Corruption had existed in administrations before the 1970s, but in that decade less

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was being delivered in municipal land and services via political clientelism at a period when more was asked, and the consumption funded by corruption was, perhaps, more conspicuous.[32]

Inflation began in Mexico in the mid-1970s, and by the late 1970s it has steadily reduced effective purchasing power. On the border, access to goods purchased and resold in dollars can hedge somewhat against inflation. Tension built up from competition for access to dollars and dollar producing transactions upon the devaluation of the peso beginning in 1976. Such corruption threatens very intimate and powerful aspirations for houses, and for consumer goods which are, directly or indirectly, obtained in dollars. An understanding of consumer interests, especially homeowner interests, which is rooted in the specific history of the Agua Prieta standard of living since 1940, is superior to neat explanations of the PAN as a middle class, consumer-protest party affected by border proximity to the U.S.

People in Agua Prieta did not express to me resentment of conspicuous consumption in general--satellite dishes, new American pick-up trucks, enormously ugly houses. If anything, they admired these things from a distance. What they did point out was what they had felt to have been taken from them. People rarely spoke publicly or openly about this, but the popular memory of corruption was surprisingly strong: a hardware store owned by a former municipal president was damaged during the 1985 city hall protest, the

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only such business attacked despite the lawlessness of the moment and the poverty of many Aguapretense.[33]

An example of how the PAN-created crises tap the popular sentiments of resentment and cynicism came in a conversation I had with an otherwise apathetic male maquiladora worker. After the city hall was burnt, he said admiringly that the PANistas were "tan bronco": literally wild or rough but much used in Sonora to describe a tough, defiant attitude.

Protests about corruption and calls for national discipline can appeal to individuals across class lines, whereas labor issues, such as raising wages, would crystallize class opposition. The young women who form the wage earning part of the working class in Agua Prieta have little public voice for their interests. The people who do have voice are some men, and some older women, who deal with inflation through small accumulations and sales of goods, or through working relationships with local elite enterprises. The fear of losing ground to inflation is a fear which does not in itself form opposed groups: it can divide rich from poor, but it can also be mobilized by the right as a collective label for individual grievances.

By making the PAN the equivalent of the people as a whole, the PAN leaves unstated its unmistakably upper-class leaders and big-property policies.[34] "The people" is an appeal to a cross-class coalition by elites opposed to the government. The linkages between elite and mass in this

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party are phrased in the guise of a new, clean reformism, (Moncada does an outstanding job of describing this for the Sonoran campaigns of Adalberto Rosas Lopez). I strongly disagree with the widespread interpretation of the PAN as a middle-class party in the most prosperous areas of Mexico (such as the border). The Sonoran case convincingly shows that the PAN is an elite-organized party with a mass following, including blue collar workers, educated and white collar occupations, and petty businessmen.

## The U.S.-Mexico Border Power Domain

Thus far the issues and domains were at least in their immediate form located within Mexico. However, the U.S.-Mexico border offers an unusual, and fascinating case: the extension of power domains from the one nation into the lives of people in the other, especially, in view of the unequal power of the two nations, the power domain of the U.S. nation-state (and subordinate localities) in Agua Prieta.

Let me summarize from the preceding chapters some of the aspects of the U.S. power domain. The maquiladora system, whose prerequisite is low wages in dollars, exercises the power to hire or lay-off workers, imparting a context of insecurity of employment to Aguapretense. Mexico's debt to U.S. banks, and the quasi-official arrangements to guarantee foreign exchange to pay interest on the debt, have brought about devaluations of the peso

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against the dollar, mandated domestic price increases, and worsening real wages.

Border people know about the U.S. financial and employment power in their daily lives, even if they do not have an academically trained manner of analyzing and speaking of it. After all, they shop in the U.S., trading thousands of pesos in store counters for measly dollars; they know that most factories are managed from Douglas, or cities yet further within the U.S.; they know that it is an officer of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service who permits or denies the chance for a legal visit or job, and they discussed the immigration control act facing Congress much more than most U.S. citizens. So we cannot assume they are mystified about these relationships.

Yet Aguapretense had not formed a strong Mexican labor response to Northamerican management and capital in the factories; and their very active responses to devaluations did not refer to Mexico's relationship to the U.S. banks or to the IMF. People could only act where it was possible to bring pressure to bear: in domestic politics, whether party politics, union reform, or price protests. Beyond these limited actions, the devaluation, the debt-driven price hikes, the abuses of factory closings without adequate compensation seem to people in Agua Prieta as individual problems, not as collective issues (Mills, 1959); sufferings to bemoan and complain, but about which little or nothing is to be done. The texture of daily conversation in Agua

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Prieta, in which people constantly discuss the problems of dollars and pesos with little or no regard for their causes, except cynical remarks on the national government, seems incomprehensibly passive until we realize this setting. The international border cuts Mexican citizens off from action in the United States power domain which structures their lives.

Since anti-U.S. nationalism was one of the heritages of the formative working class from nineteenth century Sonora, and since it flourished in the setting of discriminations in foreign mine company towns, it is worth asking why was nationalism absent as an ideological and organizational response to the debt and devaluation crisis in the 1980s. In the border conflicts of the 1850s and the mines of the turn of the century there was a direct U.S. presence in Sonoran territory and direct involvement in political conflicts. In the current context there is no way to directly challenge U.S. power since debt and wage policies are carried out through the Mexican government. What this shows is that even when it is available in the popular historical tradition, the so-called "culture of resistance" has to be relevant to the specific power setting, or it will not be taken up.[35]

In order to see a fragmented response to the exercise of power from the U.S., we can look at U.S. immigration and border enforcement, a major element of the power domain over the border. This is a schematic outline, because to provide

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all of the detail would require lengthy recounting of case materials from my fieldwork, and in addition more fresh research on the bureaucratic and political organization on the U.S. side. Let us begin with the governmental apparatus of power at the border. Although all the U.S. border agencies are coordinated at the point of entry, there are in reality three different elements: within the Immigration and Naturalization Service of the Department of Justice, the police-like Border Patrol and the bureaucratic offices of legal immigration, and the Customs officers in the Department of Treasury.

To understand the Department of Justice's considerable independence of power over the border and immigrants, one must keep in mind that it combines police enforcement, legal applications for entry, and its own immigration trial courts (with fewer constitutional rights and appeals); in particular, the enforcement bias pervades the judicial and immigration activities when border residents deal with them. Besides the public agencies of the state, to adequately understand border power, we would need to learn about powerful and pervasive but informal arrangements in the Southwest with the public agencies, and persons with whom Mexican immigrants may seek to broker their dealings with the INS.

Let us now turn to the question of action or inaction by Mexican citizens with respect to the U.S. border power domain. This includes, to be brief, obtaining permanent

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residence, obtaining and renewing "green cards" for commuting to work in the U.S., obtaining local shopping visas, obtaining tourist visas for trips to visit kin, recovering wages lost or stolen by employers after INS apprehension of undocumented workers, crossing without documents and evading the Border Patrol, or smuggling and evading customs.

Much effort in Agua Prieta went into learning the U.S. laws and regulations and devising individual strategies to maximize success. People almost always deal with these as individual applicants, or at most, family groups mandated by immigration law. The U.S. border agencies are virtually unaccountable to the applicant; that is, they can accept or deny documents in applications more or less as they judge and appeal is discouraged (for instance, apprehended undocumented aliens are encouraged, if not pressured, to give up the right to a trial and voluntarily depart rather than stay imprisoned).

In this context, it makes sense that the person should try to deal with the border power domain, individually, case by case, as an attempt either to manipulate the rules (legally) or avoid the rules (extra-legally), depending on the odds of getting to the U.S. either way. The exception is smuggling of goods and much less, persons (most cross individually; organized smuggling of persons comes mostly from the interior or other countries, not border natives),

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in which access to capital and the need to organize to avoid detection mandates groups.

Thus far the emphasis has been on the manner in which the border line separates the relevant population from the sources of power in their lives, and reduces or fragments action as groups or constituencies in these power domains. However, the border is unusual because it is "double-sided": that is, people may challenge the legitimacy of actions on the other side. Let us examine three cases presented in outline form. The first case has to do with an incident in 1976 immediately west of Douglas when an Anglo American rancher and two sons captured, tortured, and released back to Agua Prieta to the accompaniment of shotgun blasts, three undocumented crossers (the "Hanigan case" described in Miller, 1981: Chapter 12; I also am indebted to Hector Salinas of Douglas for discussing this with me). After they had been treated in Agua Prieta, the Mexican authorities protested to the U.S., and the ranchers were arrested. They were acquitted at the criminal trial in Cochise County, Arizona, in 1977.

However, the incident was not allowed to rest there. Mexican American law students, initiated by a student from Douglas, formed the core of a national coalition to pressure the Department of Justice for a new trial at the Federal level. The Mexican American community of Douglas was equally mobilized (by leaders from the same generation of the 1960s-1970s as the law students): they demonstrated at

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the border port, utilizing that choke point to apply pressure. The Hanigan brothers (the father had died), were tried in Federal court in 1979 under the strange guise of interfering with the free movement of persons involved in interstate commerce (undocumented aliens seeking farm work). There was a mistrial and a second trial resulted in one conviction. What is distinctive about the Hanigan case is that it began with an national protest by Mexico about mistreatment of its citizens in the U.S., but that, in the social-racial context of U.S. border towns, there is a constituency among Mexican Americans for immigrants arriving from the interior of Mexico (at least in this sort of case).

In something of a reversal of roles, a protest (the Sierra Rocha case) arose in late 1984, shortly after I arrived in the field, over the death of a teenager in the Agua Prieta municipal jail after questioning by police.[36] The boy came from a characteristic border family situation: he was a binational resident, since his divorced parents lived on opposite sides. His family, who felt he had been tortured and killed, spoke to a three-man organization in Douglas, the Committee for Justice, Inc., which had been formed a year earlier to seek an investigation of a murder in Agua Prieta of a Mexican American teenager by a gang. The cause of death was officially reported as a suicide; doubting this, one member of the Committee, with the help of the family in Agua Prieta, smuggled the body in the trunk of a car to the U.S. They privately hired a county coroner,

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who found evidence of torture and not suicide; this was denied by the Mexican government in turn. This process finally resulted in several exhumations, three autopsies, and four reports on the unhappy corpse, and no real resolution of responsibility. Nevertheless, it is my strong impression that at least informally some pressure about police behavior reached authorities in Sonora.

The Sierra Rocha case shows how kinship and personal networks can cross the boundary to provide information. Action can be mobilized in one nation to bring protests about the other, a base of operations which might be effectively repressed within the other country.[37] On the other hand, the frustrating lack of action shows how hard it is to hold governments accountable on opposite sides of the border.

The final case shows an occasional ability to build coalitions across the border to bring effective pressure to bear on governments on one side. The town of Douglas was planning a new garbage dump on a site abutting the border fence, a site in open desert on the U.S. side but adjacent to a densely inhabited neighborhood in Agua Prieta (the Barrio Ferrocarril). Hector Salinas, a Douglas city councilman, who was opposed to the site, obtained the plan map, and it was brought to the parish priest of Sagrada Familia church in Barrio Ferrocarril (this was the same church described above).

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Salinas had requested a public hearing on health and environmental effects of the dump site, and notified the Sagrada Familia parish of the hearing date, as well as a sympathetic journalist from the Tucson newspaper. The church "community" had an assembly to discuss the possible dump, and organized a delegation of several dozen persons, including a well-prepared spokeswoman, to attend the hearings in the U.S..[38] I gave a class that night, and was not able to attend, but the impact of the Agua Prieta church delegation was so great to bring a critical editorial in the newspaper followed an immediate withdrawal of the garbage dump plans by the town of Douglas.

Each of these cases has involved some of the same people in Douglas who were willing to challenge powers on both sides, as well as a varying coalition on either side, both of private groups and even national officials. However, there were also coalitions, such as the Douglas supporters of the PAN, which involved different actors. The border makes it difficult to bring pressure to bear on powers of the opposite side, and yet harder to hold them accountable in a different country. However, ever-present networks across the border line facilitate the passage of information, and critics of actions on one side can organize in the open political space on the opposite side to protest actions which might have been effectively covered up in a single-side context.

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The border crossing itself, which is important to the local and regional economy, and to people for shopping, commuting to work, and visiting kin, is vulnerable to blockades, which provide an unusual opportunity for protesters to bring pressure on the two nations. Sometimes, when direct pressure would be difficult, constituencies can be mobilized on opposite sides of the border to bring about pressure on powerholders, or in the case of Mexican Americans taking up the cause of Mexican undocumented immigrants in the U.S., to act in a power domain in which citizens of the other country are cut off from. This does not mean that such cross-border coalitions are common: they are exceptions to the isolation of people from power on opposite sides of the border, and more work needs to be done on how and when they occur.

## Conclusion

During the years 1984-1986, the maquiladora working class was still relatively new; it was in the process of forming itself, and had not emerged as a political class either in labor domains or local and national politics. Most working people in Agua Prieta who were acting on power domains at all, were acting at behest of rival elite leaderships in a bitterly contested electoral fight. This involvement drew on important relationships in Agua Prieta other than the working class-capital relationship of the factories. This disparity demonstrates that one cannot

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directly derive patterns of action and inaction from the analytical construct of a "working class", and reminds us to be open to ethnographic complexity which that category might bypass. However, because this study refers to a particular time, and because the working population in Agua Prieta is still developing, one should not take the analysis in this chapter as if it were presented as inherent.

This study emphasized the added complication of border power because of the extension of U.S. power domains into Mexican border lives. This demonstrates the value of having an open unit of investigation, the "power domain", which does not limit in advance the phenomena of power and politics to one sort or another. The fragmentation and individualization as a response to U.S. border policies which are imposed from a place in which Mexicans have no possible influence, shows that it is possible to explain patterns of inaction, cynicism, or structured apathy, just as it is possible to analyze factors about the border which permit cross-border action and coalitions to form.

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1. I restrict myself to a sketch for several reasons. Although I have much information about powerholders and persons they relate to, in several domains my knowledge remains incomplete in key respects. I worked hard to obtain this sort of information, but I have come to the conclusion that important pieces of information were not released to me, an outsider.

2. Maquiladoras, though they numerically predominate in Agua Prieta, are not only form of organized labor that needs to be taken into account. Besides the maquiladora local, there is a local of the CTM confederation in Agua Prieta, and before his death in 1986, its leader was quite powerful in Agua Prieta PRI politics, but I was unable to get much information about him. Most of the components of the CTM are really guilds of workers or independent businessmen, such as truckdrivers, who through the union can get governmental closure against competitive entry, as well as loans to cooperative enterprises, etc. (see the discussion of this type of unions in a border city in Ugalde, 1970). I found that these guildlike groups were completely riven between PRI and PAN factions while I was in Agua Prieta. Part of the explanation must lie in existing rivalries within the occupations/businesses which were later aligned with the two parties during the period when the two parties actively recruited and mobilized working class supporters--I have some cases to document this but they would better remain anonymous. The PRI factions, of course had access to governmental favors from the state and federal levels, while the PANista groups had much less patronage.

The palmilleras and smaller agro-industrial enterprises employ over a thousand men, mostly at the minimum wage but with considerable added piecerates. These are owned by some of Agua Prieta's most important elites (such as Luis Córdova, former PANista municipal president, and Carlos Munguía, 1985 PAN candidate for that office). Some anecdotal evidence--and I must admit I spent less time exploring this group of workers--shows that these employers relate to their men paternalistically: lending small sums of money, paying doctors bills, and so forth.

3. In the research I chose to concentrate on the family histories of working people and so I did not interview managers.

4. Not the CTM, as reported in Carillo and Hernández, 1985: 156, but otherwise their statement that the union was "convertido en agentes al servicio de las maquiladoras" is reliable.

I was not able to secure an interview with any of the current leaders of the local, but I did speak to some persons who had before been dissidents, and more importantly, by details and circumstances that appeared in

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my interviews, I was able to learn much about how the union operated in their jobs, though not internally (cliques, etc.). Much of the politics of the maquiladora union concerned relations with labor leaders of confederations at the state level, about which I do not understand sufficiently.

5. In addition, one purpose of gaining maquiladora union power comes from the union serving as one jumping off point for PRI nomination to political office. For example, in 1979 the then head of the Agua Prieta maquiladora local was run as the candidate for the deputy representative to the national assembly for the northeastern Sonoran district. Perhaps this intimate connection of the union with a very unpopular slate of candidates in 1979 contributed to working class sympathy for the reactionary PAN in Agua Prieta.

6. The union also provided workers to factories on temporary, 28 day, but renewable contracts which did not convey job tenure and thus permitted job reductions without paying legal indemnities. I heard substantial anecdotal evidence of this practice but I was not able to determine how many workers were involved.

7. This manner of exercising union power, as well as its connection with local political bosses, has brought maquiladora workers in other cities to strike, not against management, but against their own union (see Pena, 1980; in the case he reports, workers struck against a union that was negotiating away their indemnities!)

8. One can speculate that, in the future, maquiladora workers may consolidate as a political class which confronts U.S. managements if the relatively privileged workers and the line workers consolidate interests around grievances, most likely coming from the continual creation, in the maquiladora system, of abuses of layoffs and insecurity. If such a situation were to occur, I would expect that appeals to collectivity would be made on the basis of close kin and age-generation links between the more and less privileged workers. Linda Frankel (1984) describes how privileges, once manipulated to divide workers in Southern textile towns, became bases of family solidarity and leadership in increasing labor militancy. More generally, I would like to stress that the Agua Prieta maquiladora working class is still in the first decades of its formation, and that patterns different from my analysis (of 1984-1986) may emerge as it crystallizes over time.

9. At most, the maquiladora union negotiates extras for workers like paid holidays and bonuses, the amounts of which--described in Chapter 4--are appreciated by workers but marginal to the overall level of the wage.

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10. Earlier this neighborhood had also produced a demonstration demanding the removal of the butane plant and distribution center from the midst of this populated area. This was shortly after the tragic San Juanico explosion in Mexico City, and underlying this action was a generalized resentment against the terrible service rendered by that plant, for each cold day of winter there were huge lines formed to get butane for heating (there may also have been a historical grudge since the land for the plant had been taken from the neighborhood, where it had served as a baseball field, during the 1950s by a municipal president who then owned the plant). I know less about the leadership of that demonstration, but I know that it did have an effect of forcing the removal of the plant outside city limits, albeit after two years, because it became an political issue: a promise by the PAN municipal president, and likewise competitively by the PRI activists of the Barrio.

11. The electrical bill was usually much larger than other bills (water, butane, wood, or fuel oil, and ejido charges or taxes), but winter purchases of truckloads of wood could also undercut the budget balance, and butane for heating and cooking, which had been relatively inexpensive, was subject to major increases in 1986.

12. When asked about electrical costs, people usually cited their most recent bills, often rounding off to the nearest thousand pesos. At the time, March and April of 1986, that I interviewed people, rates were rising, and some households had received newly higher charges while others had not, so there was some inconsistency.

13. One could just as well figure what was left over from the household's reported food expenditures, and do the same calculation--the result does not differ in totals, though it does for individual cases--25 report such a potential deficit.

14. 3 had no electricity, 3 reported no information on bills, and 4 had it paid by children living outside the household.

15. There remain despite my inquiries many questions about the Catholic church as a power domain. These include the relationship of the Ferrocarril church to the hierarchy, and the relationship of all the parishes in Agua Prieta to the PAN (the Bishop of Hermosillo was a barely concealed figure in the Sonoran PAN). There are also questions about relations between Protestant and Catholic churches and both to politics, as well as the U.S. Protestant churches and missionaries.

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16. The value of developing this sense of leadership from within the neighborhood was illustrated in the demonstration leaders' ability to withstand an attempt to coopt the group by a male PRI neighborhood leader who had come along. At the offices of the Electrical Commission he pushed his way to the front, and started to speak for the group to the manager, negotiating for the manager a chance to postpone (thus avoid) a settlement. The female demonstration leaders, supported by several men who had accompanied them, demanded that he surrender the floor, and reasserted their authority to negotiate.

17. Kenneth Sharpe (1977) notes the limits of the Catholic church's communities in confronting higher levels of power.

18. For example there were business strikes in border cities in August, 1982, demanding cheaper "controlled" dollars during the brusque devaluation that year. They appear not to have occurred in Agua Prieta, though I suspect that in their center, Ciudad Juárez, they were connected with the PAN.

19. I was told that in 1982, the leader of the CTM in Agua Prieta organized a demonstration about electric bills--but I cannot be sure that this is accurate.

20. I wish to qualify my statement of the separation between the maquiladora class relationship and the lines of local stratification. There are important relations between these two sectors: a major source of income for Agua Prieta landholders is rental of private factory sites, as well as shares in the little occupied "industrial park"; and factories have constant dealings with federal customs at Agua Prieta and with the state government in Hermosillo. However, as I have explained above, the American factory managements seek invisibility of their power in Agua Prieta, and there was little talk of these ties; as for local managers, some were subtly involved for the PRI or the PAN during the 1985 elections, but open politics in the factory--except by the PRI maquiladora union local--is discouraged by the threat posed by the power of customs to close factory traffic.

21. I did not carry out a detailed study of the whole system of stratification in Agua Prieta--however one chooses to measure it--but I believe that I have a sufficient understanding to describe schematically the resources and persons involved.

22. There is also the local, state, and federal employees, who I will not analyze here except to mention that much of the heat in PRI-PAN politics before the 1985 election was generated by bitter disputes within the secondary school system.

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23. In one case, a convinced PANista auto seller I interviewed turned out to have bitterly held a grudge against the PRI municipal administrations and police of the 1970s (the years preceding the great PAN split) for fining him, taking bribes, and shutting his business down.

24. In order to truly understand Agua Prieta party politics, especially the events since 1979, one would have to know the relationships among the persons in the "political families" of Agua Prieta, and far northeastern Sonora. Though I know the basic outlines of political history from the outside, I do not have information on the internal relationships at play.

25. From its beginning, the ejido of Agua Prieta has been a major sub-domain in the PRI-municipal power domain. For this reason I was very frustrated to find my inquiries and requests for interviews about the ejido nearly completely blocked. In the late 1970s and through the 1980s, the ejido is one of the most important institutions in the city because it controls land that is extra-legally rented for house lots in several large neighborhoods, and as of 1986, the ejido was central to the emerging issue of the regularization of tenure.

26. See Sanderson, 1981 concerning coastal land struggles, and Moncada, 1985 and Guadarrama, 1987 on the PAN in Sonora.

27. Concerning the divisions among elites, the evidence I was allowed to find out is too partial to analyze the fundamentals of politics--the factions, alliances, and roles among Agua Prieta political families--but I can say that in 1979, newly rich political bosses, involved in sales of municipal land, who had arisen in the 1970s and their clients who were candidates that year from the maquiladora union and other PRI dominated organizations, split with the older "cattle" leadership of the PRI (including the CTM union), and this group in turn split into those old PRI leaders who stayed with the party in that election, though markedly without enthusiasm, and others from political families which altogether bolted the PRI for the PAN.

28. I was only partly an eyewitness. My wife and I were in Agua Prieta before September 17, and I was there during the morning the hall was burnt, but for caution I did not go there, and when the riot police arrived on the 17th, we stayed in the U.S. three days before returning to see the aftermath. I did have a wide network of informants on both sides, though.

29. This seems to be an appropriate point to mention the U.S. governmental role in the PAN and its conflicts with the PRI (see Gonzalez, 1987)--a case of a hidden extension of the U.S. government's power into the lives of Aguapretense.

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30. I want to clarify that though the cases I interviewed were typical, the maquiladora era also brings recruits to politics: the union winners, recognized by the PRI union bosses, into that party, and the losers in intra-union struggles into opposition.

31. Certainly the Mexican's knowledge of the U.S. electoral system, at least as it is presented idealistically, adds to this appeal; and there may be some ideological diffusion across the border. But, as with all questions of diffusion, one has to ask why it was received at one time and not another (after all, what diffused into Mexico from the U.S. before the Revolution was not electoralism, but radical creeds such as those of the Wobblies). If anything, it is the PAN propaganda machine which pushes the U.S. model as a solution, rather than coming spontaneously from people's life on the border.

32. This heightening of conspicuous consumption by officeholders in the 1970s and 1980s, in turn, may have been caused by the greater cash flow because of the high value of smuggling in this period, and possibly by the rise in the PRI of some new figures not belonging to traditional elite families. These are hypotheses and could not be proved with the evidence available to me.

33. This store was known by the nickname "hardware store of the people", because it was the people's money that paid for it.

34. It never ceased to amaze me that I would have conversations in which otherwise perceptive PANista activists would tell me that since the PRI protected the big landowners against the peasants and because it denied wage increases to workers, the PAN was the party of the peasants and workers: but they would be unable to tell me any thing that the PAN would do about the minimum wage, inflation, or the debt which was any different from the government's current policies.

35. I do not believe that this reflects any loss of identity or patriotic sentiment by Mexicans at the border. Exaggerated praise of the U.S. was a rhetorical ploy to criticize the Mexican government rather than a loss of identity.

36. I initially read about the case in the Tucson newspapers; people discussed it in both Agua Prieta and Douglas. Later, I had the chance to speak with the Committee for Justice and to see files they had on the case.

37. In 1984 and 1985, the only way an effective constituency could be mobilized in Agua Prieta over a case like this would have been if it were a bone of contention

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between the PRI and the PAN. People I spoke with in Agua Prieta were interested in the case and very concerned about police abuses.

38. The attenders included the same group of women who had organized the electrical bill demonstration before.

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# CHAPTER 8

# CONCLUSION

One of the dilemmas confronting field researchers is how much the specifics of one field situation represent general phenomena. In the study of working classes, the particular risk comes in assuming that the details of a single industrial period (such as male, unionized, company-town dwelling miners) are features of working people in general. One strategy for addressing this dilemma is to look for general elements in the dynamics which link people in one period into the subsequent ones. The idea is that fundamental determinants of working people's lives--sale of time for wages, commodity consumption, lack of power over resources and decisions relative to those who they sell labor to--will structure the long-term life histories.

The summary of the family history findings highlights the connections across periods rather than the organization of work and residence in the mines or the border cities. Evidence of similar phenomena from other areas of the U.S.-Mexico border, which suggests that the Sonoran case may characterize working class development on the U.S.-Mexico border as a whole, and hypotheses explaining this are considered. Turning from the regional to the cross-cultural, hypotheses about general patterns of working class

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lives are put forward for future ethnographic studies of working people.

A working population was created at the intersection of two processes: how they left the frontier countryside of their ancestors, and how they arrived at the point where they would regularly sell their efforts for cash. The northeastern Sonoran working population was probably in the majority recruited from nearby rural zones, subject to severe property pressure by very aggressive Northamerican and Mexican land and resource speculators around the turn of the century.

The term "property pressure" is a way of understanding how encroachments on land, water, etc. left less land to be divided up in partible inheritance for sons and cattle or houses for daughters, especially if, as seems likely, population was increasing. This process is visible by its results when, in family histories, one encounters one sibling in the rural location, and a raft of the siblings congregating in a mine town. In turn, the mine companies appear to have favored, or at least accepted, the hiring of close kin; let alone the contract system whereby senior contractors themselves assembled crew members. Complete landlessness may have occurred in many cases but property pressure operated more generally to uproot people.

Working class formation transformed the dynamics of individual lives in relationships between older and younger generation, and between siblings. Sons who had brought

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money home from temporary labor in the long run expected to inherit land from their father or have land bought for them when they married. In partible inheritance, siblings and siblings-in-law were bitter rivals. As wage labor expanded and land became scarcer, sons had more reason to work longer seasons for themselves and less reason to invest in their fathers; while siblings were no longer rivals since neither one controlled the labor market, and indeed, siblings were allies in settling into mine jobs. Young men acquired new skills--mechanic, driller, driver--which sold best in non-rural locations. In this manner their life course chased the shifting locations and markets for labor.

In border areas of Mexico, the availability of large amounts of paid labor gave a specific character to the formation of the working population. The open border to U.S. demand for laborers meant that workers could not be readily captured or retained through cash advances or coercive contracts, which were used at similar times in Africa and Peru. The mine towns and camps scattered through Sonora and Arizona before 1929 were a essentially unified labor market for workers of Mexican extraction.

How was a working population retained? Consumer goods--cars and trucks, tools, sewing machines, beds and furniture, stoves, and fabric--came from the U.S. and were most readily available in the U.S. or in Northamerican mine company stores. In the latter, workers were sold goods in installments deducted from the paycheck, so they had to work

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at least long enough to make the payments. In these locations one was continuously exposed to new things to earn money for.

Northamerican material culture altered virtually every aspect of Sonoran lives, and while some items simply provided new ways of doing old things, several offered alternative productive technologies to the industrial working class. These activities among widows and their sons and daughters were important in occupational and residential changes in family histories, and in this manner exposed the role of industrial knowledge in restructuring life-courses toward cash and urban locations.

Widowhood was a characteristic result of hazardous and insecure mine work. I suspect that women were quite aware of the insecurities they faced, and that they consciously invested--or insisted that men purchase--appliances which they could use to earn a living, such as cast-iron stoves or sewing machines. In order to earn a living, women had to be in urban, cash-earning areas, and preferably near the border. They taught their daughters new forms of clothing and cooking techniques, bringing into being a gender-linked set of skills. Sons of widows would go off for long periods of time to earn money, often in the U.S., thereby reinforcing the wage and skill seeking patterns found among young men generally. The occupations, locations, and skills of widows also anticipated the activities of women and

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families upon the massive disemployment of males in the 1930s and 1940s.

In the periods of uprooting and searching for new locations and work, such as the period from the 1930s to the early 1970s, otherwise hidden dynamics of wage lives are exposed. When families of Mexican origin were repatriated in the 1930s to Sonora, and when, in the same years, mines were closed and mine towns were emptied, people initially went to rural towns where they had kin. It was the chosen policy in the (Northamerican owned) Sonoran mines and in the U.S. to pay and pressure families to leave for the countryside. However, family histories show internal tensions which led families to leave the countryside by the early 1940s when the border zone was ready to absorb them.

Why didn't the rural retreat from waged life last? The rural economy was not capable of sustaining the added population: land was short, though some towns had improved access to land through the redistributions of the Cardenas era; and local markets for labor, services, and products were small and weak. When people arrived from working class locations--the U.S. and the mines--they came with skills and tools, such as truck-driving, which did not find enough demand in near-subsistence 1930s rural Sonoran towns. This problem was manifested in generational conflicts in which sons argued with fathers, insisting on leaving the countryside. Wage-seeking and industrial knowledge tend to

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pull the individual out of family obligations toward sources of earnings.

After World War Two and before the maquiladoras became significant employers, Agua Prieta and other border cities grew enormously. Kin branched after the mines closed but they found dispersed and highly complicated routes which finished in a parallel endpoints: the border cities. In this era, the southwestern U.S. economy drew men seeking work with Bracero contracting, commuting jobs, the possibilities of slipping across to work extra-legally, and secondary commercial growth in the Mexican border city.

The "Border" itself was the industry that congregated numbers and shaped lives in the absence of industries like the Sonoran mines; but unlike those industries, immigrant workers to the U.S. from the border city (except for small but constant legal immigration) did not reside where they worked, had no political citizenship rights, and switched employers constantly. The visa-restricted (and later quota restricted) immigration system sharply differentiated kin branches by residency status, though by no means cutting off personal contacts.

Resident male workers in Agua Prieta were hired by diverse local wealthy men in small groups or individually. Women combined remittances from husbands with the small cash flow of their own skills. The balance between husband and wife was the key relationship in these households. Women organized the building of houses, investments in children's

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education, the structure of long-run family goals and accumulations in their new border life.

Each of these changes--the mine layoffs, the strictly controlled border, and the systematic use of a non-resident migrant contract system in the U.S.--forcibly stripped away from the working people of Agua Prieta features we assume automatically accompany working classes: industrial workplaces, resident work forces, clearly defined capitalist employers, an arena for labor or political activity, etc. What the people of the border could use were those elements they had more access to on their own: men's and women's industrial knowledge, applied in petty commodity production; cash consumption (the Mexican border resident, who was not welcomed as a resident worker, was the eagerly awaited friend of the U.S. merchants); patterns of organizing work, commerce, and politics in Mexico through personal relationships, friendships and clientelism, while the impersonal labor market was retained on the U.S. side. In these years, the pattern of border city life was formed; even today border factory workers constantly enter relationships patterned in this earlier phase.

The maquiladora period of industrial workers in Agua Prieta is barely twenty years old, and still in the process of formation. What relationships are forming which might determine future patterns? I concentrated on the years from 1982 to 1986, when the numbers of maquiladora jobs grew in inverse relation to the decline of the value of the peso

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relative to the dollar (and concomitantly, the fall in the real wage). In this situation--where cash incomes from each earner were falling while more jobs were offered--households are intensifying their reliance on female "working children" while overall employment has changed little. The heated expansion of export production is impelled by the powerful demand of the international financial debtors on Mexico to raise trade balances by cutting wage prices. In this particular economic situation the Agua Prieta evidence shows that the working class is growing in numbers and concentrating, or intensifying, within the particular social relationships which brings young women into the factories.

Though the maquiladora working class is gaining in numbers, it has not yet emerged as a political class. The class of maquiladora workers, the majority of them young women working for household cash in subordinate relationships to men and older women, are emerging out of a web of existing relationships in the older forms of the border working population. The older relationships and interests are, if anything, reinforced by the devaluation crisis of the border.

The Northamerican maquiladoras rely on hidden policies mediated through local personnel managers and labor unions which control access to common jobs. A few workers have privileges including pay above the minimum wage, longer and ascending career paths, factory-floor autonomy, and the split between operative and privileged workers tends to fall

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along female-male lines. At the same time, there are substantial though untapped community ties--siblinghood, kinship, neighborhood and common schools, churches, etc.--which unite these divided types of workers. The factories have a history of layoffs involving the denial of legally-mandated benefits. I speculate that this may tend over the long run to establish a sense of interests and grievances in common among these differentiated maquiladora workers. The maquiladora working class is still in the early steps of forming itself.

Evidence from two other regions of the U.S.-Mexico border corroborates the northeastern Sonoran material, and gives us some confidence that these histories are not the results of some peculiar regional circumstances and events. Robert Alvarez, Jr. (1987) describes the movement of a group of interrelated families through the following steps: isolated frontier Mestizo farming communities in the interior of Baja California; foreign industrial mines of the Porfiriato; the closing of those mines and resettlement, via small mines and temporary immigrant work, in the U.S. side of the California border after 1900; and the pulling of new groups of kin across the border subsequently. I had researched and formulated the Sonoran histories before I read Alvarez' work, and the parallel results are striking, especially with regard to the formation of kin branches in mine towns which persist in the path to the border after mines closed.

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Less definitive, but intriguing, material comes from Fernández-Kelly's findings on the origins of her sample of Ciudad Juarez maquiladora workers. She found that 42 percent (of the immigrants to Ciudad Juarez from the interior of Chihuahua) had come, mostly as young children with their families, from the small area around Hidalgo del Parral, Chihuahua, including Santa Barbara and San Francisco del Oro (1983: 58-59).[1] This area has a dense concentration of industrial mines dating from the turn of the century, and before that, the colonial era, and it seems likely that, like Sonora, working people had left the stagnating mine district for the booming urban border in the decades preceding the maquiladora era.[2]

It is no accident that working class formation repeatedly occurs in U.S.-Mexico border regions. I propose that since border zone is divided into a series of slices oriented south-north, parallel histories of working class formation occurred in each slice. There are five reasons why working classes repeatedly formed in border zones.

From the earliest years of western U.S. development, the Mexican border regions has been shot through with cash--indeed, with dollars--and with that cash, a mobile, consuming population which sought paid work. When the mines, mills, smelters, and railroads of the region itself were built, they were directly connected to the productive infrastructure of the U.S. (witness the linkage of Nacozari's mine with Douglas' smelter and commerce). The

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border areas were dependent enclaves of the U.S. not only in abstract relations but quite literally, and their connections with the Mexican interior were weak. Because communications and the way of life was oriented toward the U.S. side from very early, when the mine areas emptied out, people tended to move toward the border towns.

Furthermore, the border zone itself played the role of a shelter for the families uprooted from the U.S., at times in quite massive numbers. Many did not immediately settle on the border but the family history evidence indicates that after 1940 a substantial proportion ended up resettling in border cities. In turn, the uprooted persons and their children, disconnected from productive resources and already experienced workers and consumers, were prime population for future proletarianization. To this we add the post-1929 phenomenon that many workers could find employment, legally or extra-legally, in the U.S., but were restricted from settling in the U.S. side, and therefore tended to pile up at the border.

Lastly, U.S. manufacturers and employers of alien labor have found that they can easily hide across the boundary from the political (labor and community) consequences of their policies and wages. This was less possible in the large, unmovable installations and company towns of the mines, and those locations were more noted for nationalism. But the maquiladoras are characterized by managers commuting from the U.S. side, and by policies of hidden influence,

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leaving Mexican local and national politics to take the brunt of the consequences of low wages and devalued pesos.

The Sonoran material suggests hypotheses about working classes which should be explored not only regionally but also cross-culturally.[3] The value of ethnographic fieldwork is that it brings to our attention phenomena which are bypassed by our conventional generalizations about social categories or relationships. The terms "wage labor", "industrial", and "working class" bring with them usages and assumptions which tend to stress those aspects of people's lives which are directly involved in paid, factory labor. Those aspects are important, but the ethnography from Sonora also indicates new ideas about working class life: how wage labor reorganizes the individual work career; the acquisition and gender organization of newly available skills in industrial technologies; and how people continuously renew their involvement in the wage economy in their moves after major crises have removed them from industrial complexes.

Life histories show that each generation of young men commits itself to wage work, not to earn cash and realize an inheritance of productive resources from their fathers (or purchase similarly), but to establish a work career--skills, locations, knowledge of the markets--for themselves. Young men begin with wage work, though later some may be able to use the skills and tools to establish independent production. Yet sons, even of independent workers, go

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through the same process. The process has not developed in the same way among women, although since the advent of the maquiladoras this may change.

The emergence of an individual work career may form part of the general phenomenon of proletarianization which Mintz calls "individualization", and defines as "the objectification of labor and the alienation of the laborer enable individuals to objectify themselves, particularly as regards the traditional social forms, which, until the advent of modern factory-style capitalism, interfered with precisely this kind of self-objectification" (1979: 186). The older forms in the Sonoran case may have been patterns of sons working for fathers, although this remains difficult to reconstruct. The sense of individual responsibility for work-seeking is consistent with Mintz's discussion of the emergence of individual responsibility in the life-history of a sugar cane worker (1960: Chapter 8).

Secondly, productive skills and knowledge increasingly come only out of the industrial, or wage sector more generally, and fewer and fewer can be obtained without job experience. The chronological relationship within the life histories between industrial wage work and other forms of production has shown how industrial skills were learned and then applied. Added to these were the skills which came with material culture made available, through purchase from the industrial economy, by wages earned at work.

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I concentrated on particular group of consumer goods: those which enable production on the part of the consumer, the innumerable sewing machines, stoves, and trucks described in the life histories. Working people have few or no productive properties. This is true on the whole for the Sonorans who became full-time wage workers; they had lost access to land. However, in particular situations--when they had been suddenly uprooted from steady employment--they were able to take consumer goods and turn them into minor productive resources. These goods, and the bodies of knowledge which went along with them, were among the few things which working people had of their own, unlike wage employment. The ethnographic information on the transmission of appliances and skills (organized within families on gender lines) demonstrates this level of control.

It is useful to ask of the ethnography under what circumstances, and who has access to these productive goods and bodies of knowledge--that is, their availability or non-availability.[4] Women had access to productive resources through appliances used in housework, and usually purchased with male (husband's or son's) wages, and that this began with the earliest years of the working class; whereas the current cohort of young women working in the maquiladoras did not gain any usable tools or skills in their employment outside the household, and, indeed, may have been too busy

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to keep up with the home-production techniques of their mothers (that is, buying more "ready-made").

In contrast, men gained access in many jobs and situations--mine work, lumbermills, and jobs in the U.S. which provided money to make purchases of tools and trucks. Unlike their sisters in the factories, men in Agua Prieta had considerable skill and unrestricted access to technology in the maquiladoras--an element which set the two groups apart. This readily returns to the phenomenon of male work career patterning.

The final phenomenon which shows how wage labor structured lives was found in the conflicts and choices over locations after abrupt disjunctures in work or deaths in families. The evidence showed that people move the home location to the place of employment, rather than return from a place of temporary employment to a home location. The major exception was temporary contract labor where mandated by U.S. immigration laws. In order to follow the individual work career or to utilize industrial skills, people subject their residence to determination by labor markets or product/service markets. These moves have lasting effects on future work lives: when the older generation moves, for example to the border, this brings the younger generation into place for a new wage career.

These hypotheses, drawn from the lives of Sonorans, may or may not find support in other ethnographies of working people. They will repay further study. In this way,

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anthropology offers a new and valuable understanding of working people which complements more aggregate and structural studies of working classes pursued in other disciplines.

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1. And this percentage does not include whatever portion had come from other mine zones in Chihuahua, such as Batopilas, or in Durango and Coahuila, states also found in Fernández-Kelly's sample.

However, in contradiction to my argument, the case which Fernández-Kelly cites originating in the Parral region was a dispossessed small landholder not a miner (1983: 177 ff.).

2. It may be that children of miners, growing up in large towns and influenced by the educational hierarchy of the enterprise, are more likely to have the school years required by maquiladoras for employment.

3. There are also valuable cross-cultural typologies to be made about working classes such as primary producers or assembly plant workers based on particular industrial complexes.

4. These questions are suggested in several sources. Mintz (1985) points out that people's choices are structured by what is made available in a system of power (he is particularly concerned with power over meanings). Chaney and Schmink (1980) analyze losses and gains in access to tools by women in the economic development process.

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# APPENDIX

## FIELDWORK

I conducted ethnographic field research for 21 months (September, 1984 to May, 1986) in Agua Prieta, Sonora, and Douglas, Arizona. During this period my wife, Merlyn, and I resided in Agua Prieta. This description of the research is for the purpose of putting the information gained into context, and to understand the fieldwork process as a manner of gaining scientifically useful insights.

I became acquainted with Douglas and Agua Prieta during the summer of 1982 working as an assistant to James Greenberg in his project "Household Economy and Social Networks". This was my first acquaintance with the border, and I learned much from Dr. Greenberg's insights into the interrelationships between the two sides. The impending devaluation and high inflation in the summer of 1982 impressed me with the seriousness of consumer and wage issues in Mexico. While I performed interviews for Greenberg which included sections on residential and work history, I was struck by the complicated movements of people to and across the border, and I found that people were eager to recount the stories of these changes. I began to think about the history of industrial complexes and the flows of working people. The people of Agua Prieta and Douglas, who were so enthusiastic about comparing their past and present, in a sense also selected my topic to study.

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My formulation of a research proposal emphasized the change and contrast between two masses of industrial labor: the copper miners and the border factory operatives. That is, my thinking was dominated by the idea of working classes as more or less homogeneous bodies of labor organized around well-defined industrial stages. There is no doubt that this is a widespread assumption about the "working class". My theoretical presumptions were challenged by the fieldwork, and in particular by my conversations with elderly and middle-aged women. These women were undeniably part of the working class, yet their activities followed different patterns: they had worked, not in the industrial workplace, but at home; their work as housewives or small-producers, was not traditional but clearly included items of industrial technology. They had often played key roles in the period between industries, when families shifted to the border cities--a transformation I was very interested in. I therefore was forced to broaden my notion of relevant phenomena, and look for processes of working class life which did not depend on my description of one industrial period or another.

My choice of Agua Prieta as a field site was fortuitous, I will admit, but it did turn out to have some virtues. First, Agua Prieta today has a very large maquiladora workforce relative to its size. Agua Prieta has the densest concentration of maquiladora workers of the seven border cities sampled by Seligson and Williams in 1978

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(4,000 workers in their estimated 40,000 population,[1] that is, one in ten of all people), although larger cities like Ciudad Juarez and Tijuana have much greater maquiladora employment (1981: 14). Second, Agua Prieta sits at the historic railroad communication nexus of northeastern Sonora, and hence it is a good site for exploring the century-long industrial history of this region. Northeastern Sonora, in turn, is fairly isolated on all sides but the U.S. border at Agua Prieta, and thus it has been easy to define a regional geography and history (see Chapter 2). I will discuss below some of the consequences of the "view from Agua Prieta".

## Relationships in Fieldwork

When my wife and I returned to Agua Prieta in September, 1984, we looked up two couples I had been acquainted with before, Fernando and Bertha de la Vega and Lic. Ramón and Juanita Venegas, who generously began to introduce me to potential informants, or people who would be able to help me find them. I have charted the networks by which I met people in Agua Prieta and Douglas, and while it would be tedious to go through all the connections shown there, there are some general features which are worth considering as evidence about the social structure of these border towns.

Virtually every connection began with the de la Vegas and the Venegas. Neither couple was from Agua Prieta or the

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area, and their social level can be characterized as small entrepreneurial or professional. They introduced me persons, in their thirties and forties, who were from Agua Prieta families, and who included both educated professionals and manual workers. These persons in turn introduced me to their elderly parents, who in their complicated histories had mostly been workers, as well as their working siblings. In terms of kinship and association, there was no distinct line between the educated and manual laboring portions[2] of these Agua Prieta families, though there were substantial differences in incomes, interests, and expressed points of view.

In this opportunistic manner I arrived at my main informants. In meeting people, I requested and exercised a selection--people who worked in factories or had worked in the mines, people who were from Sonora, and who could help me with histories (this was interpreted to mean older people). Second, my informants likewise selected themselves. In addition to the obvious point that I was turned down by some persons, there is another feature--the type of family to which I was directed. The sort of family which chose to help me was what I now characterize as the relatively prosperous, well regarded, and very extensive Agua Prieta grand-family, which valued their past.[3] This comes from the tendency of my networks to select well-known grand-families, from the tendency to start with educated children, and from the desire of the oldest generation to

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speak to me about their history, supported by the interest of the younger generations. These families tended to view the process of uprooting and resettlement on the border in optimistic terms.[4]

However, the network links never led me to the elite Agua Prieta families. Partly this reflected my interests, but even more importantly it demonstrated a basic fact of social closure in Agua Prieta: though persons I knew had many instrumental relations with elites--in employment, in businesses, in politics--they lived in separate worlds of association and effective kinship.

After I had been in Agua Prieta for several weeks, Lic. Venegas introduced me to a schoolteacher, who upon learning of my interests in miners, suggested that I visit his father and mother-in-law. I went to their house with the usual nervousness. They greeted me with warm hospitality, and happily agreed to be interviewed. At first, the wife and her daughter were more conversational (and I learned much from them), while the husband was friendly but reticent. Nevertheless, he agreed to a taped interview, and when I appeared with the tape recorder, he opened up into a well formed, detailed, and unusually perceptive account of his life and work, from mining in Sonora to decades of <u>bracero</u> labor in the U.S. Later, as my wife and I visited the house (sometimes with kind invitations to small family parties for the granddaughter's birthday), I got the chance to talk to

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the sons-in-law, the grandchildren, and nephews, and to get a better feel for the situation of this family today.

This story illustrates how the structures of my visiting with families can demonstrate relationships that organize the grand-family. When I was introduced to a family, I would be taken for interviews to the older men and women first. They had time for me, and their history was thought to be important. In this manner, sitting at family gatherings on Sunday afternoons, or hanging around in backyard workshops, I noticed patterns in who did the speaking and whose opinions were accorded public assent: persons who I called "spokespeople". Reflecting on my fieldwork, I began to think about who had public "voice", how this came out in relations of age and gender, how it played out in settings of communication (such as the differing potential in factories versus independent workplaces for discussion and "voice"), and how voice was part of the material power in relations between kin.

Older men and older women both had considerable authority--for example, they constantly set the perspective on discussions of current inflation by emphasizing low prices in the past ("meat was only 2.50 a kilo!") while not mentioning past wages (2.50 a day). While older men tended to emphasize their work experiences and public politics, older women turned out to be very active informants with me on kinship (as is often observed), conditions of life, and family strategies. One of the ways I induced the role of

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women in organizing family strategies during key transformations was by observing their knowledge of details and obvious interest in these subjects. Older people tended to make formulated statements and actively guide me in interviews while younger people tended more to briefly respond, indeed, to be embarrassed for words. Younger men showed voice, in part, through power in work (workshop owners, etc.) and politics (baseball league officers, party activists), whereas younger women had little voice even over topics they had direct experience with. Men who worked in the maquiladoras as foremen or mechanics constantly interjected opinions about factory work while I spoke with women who had been line operatives.

This does not mean that young women had nothing to say. I sought to interview older and younger, men and women, in the families I worked with. Indeed, I interviewed the youngest working generation in every major family, though some interviews with young people were informal conversations, while older people preferred set up interviews. I had no problems interviewing and conversing with women. I was well-known to the families, and people knew I was married; interviews were always in living rooms or kitchens, or similar public spaces. Of course, there are no doubt topics that women did not confide in me, and my more confidential friends were men. Still, I hope I have been able to hear women's voices.

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This study suffers from the well-known frustration of urban ethnographers: that research was done by visiting, set in public rooms, and formal interviewing, listening to public speech. If there is any guard against this, it was repeated visiting, and in going to family parties (baptisms, reunions, etc.) In these settings one does not see all the complexities, and conflicts are often papered over, and most of all, the ethnographer does not always hear or get the gist of daily conversation--with its subtle references and understood contexts. To this was added the role of honored guests (in front of whom one does not wash their dirty laundry). There are things that I adduced indirectly which people did not tell me, and undoubtedly there are many facts and relationships I never learned about. I suspect that what was most carefully guarded was power and conflicts in the family, and sensitive questions of legal residence status in the U.S.

On the other hand, there were certain ways in which my wife and I were taught by our friends a great deal of local knowledge about life on the border. This teaching was informal, in the way of advice, connections, information on how to get this or that, but constant. We had to learn to deal with customs and immigration officials of two nations; we had to learn how to change dollars for pesos and how to price items in each. We had to learn border consumer skills: the second hand store; where to buy milk (in the U.S.) or cheese (in Mexico); how to get our butane gas

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cylinder refilled, and so on. We passed on rumors and speculation about impending devaluations and price jumps, the stuff of daily conversation on the border. We, like other border residents, kept our ears to the ground to learn about the national and local political conflicts which affected border crossing.

I will never forget standing in front of our apartment, which was a few blocks from the Agua Prieta border port, and discussing with a stalled driver whether the cause of the ten block traffic jam was a sudden devaluation (unbeknownst to us, it was the U.S. government slowdown tied the 1985 Camarena incident).[5] This sort of information was invaluable for my understanding of the nature of nation-state borders. Likewise, the constant conversations about the crisis of the peso and the dollar was invaluable data for the description of the structure of border consumption in Chapter 6. (Of course, I realize that our position was not comparable to that of Mexican consumers--we had bank accounts in the U.S., dollars, and above all, U.S. citizenship.) These disruptions also instructed me on the great role of speculation and rumor on the border: the two sides of the boundary open up an unusually wide space both for ignorance of the other side, and the flow of information.

My wife, Merlyn, accompanied me on some interviews, and helped greatly with questions and observations. She was working on the U.S. side, however, much of the time, and I

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would like to acknowledge the observations she contributed from her jobs: in a employment and retraining service in Douglas directed to farmworkers; teaching English to community college students (mostly from factory managements in Agua Prieta); and teaching at a parochial school in Douglas that predominantly served the children of Agua Prieta's elite families. Merlyn is a careful and perceptive observer.

One issue about the fieldwork was that we are Anglo-Americans--as they say, "Anglos". Being on the border is highly charged for Mexicans, Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans: so many issues revolve around the power of the passports of the two countries. Let me begin with the basics. I used Spanish in the majority of the interviews (some people on the U.S. side chose to speak to me in English), and I did the interviews myself.[6] I was fluent in Spanish--improving as time went along--but I should note that my Spanish had its limits: I was weak at expressive Spanish, particularly at punning and verbal games, and I often found that I did not know the omnipresent nicknames of people referred to in conversation. Lack of skill in expressive use of language was, I believe, a particular limitation for understanding the complicated interpersonal politics conversed about in this manner.

As for the larger questions of how people managed their relationships with me as a Northamerican (following the discussion in Rosaldo, 1985, particularly where he cites

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Paredes), I can certainly think of obvious instances when people tested me--fellow baseball players ragging me for being an illegal alien in Mexico--or people tried to impress me by praising the U.S. in an exaggerated manner. Undoubtedly, the power inequality at the international boundary limited intimacy and increased the formality in interviews--at least at first. I can only venture that over the two years I was Agua Prieta, I hope I learned to be respectful and listen well, openly express my opinion when it was appropriate, and construct more balanced relationships.

This is a reasonable point to bring up the phenomena of smuggling and of undocumented immigration to the U.S., for which the border is so famous (an image which tends to overwhelm all the other aspects of border life, many of which proved equally important to me as an ethnographer). In the case of smuggling, whether drugs to the U.S. or illegal arms to Mexico, I avoided the people involved. As for undocumented immigration, much of my research concerned this topic, in combination with legal immigration (a border phenomenon which is frequently forgotten about). I did not do any participant-observation on people crossing extra-legally, and I doubt they would have appreciated my presence. I am sure that undocumented immigration, as well as smuggling, was one of those topics of conversation that people withheld in my presence (as a Northamerican), especially among persons I had not long known. However, I

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did have extensive conversations and interviews with former undocumented workers. These people were members of the families that I knew well, and with whom I had good confidence, and so I expect that I was told more or less the whole truth.

On the other hand people sometimes spoke more freely with me about Agua Prieta party politics than they did with each other, since I was uninvolved, and both sides wanted to impress me with the justness of their position. Locals of bitterly opposing parties who wanted to preserve their relationship (among those less militant), would avoid the topic with one another for fear of giving offense. This does not mean I got accurate or complete information, but it certainly was copious.

## Data Collection

Let me turn now to the formal data collection. I collected four main bodies of data, three from the same set of grand-families. I began by collecting year by year work and residential histories for the adult members of the core houses of six grand-families: the elderly couple at the head, and their resident children and/or grandchildren. The work history included position, skills and relation to supervision, and pay; the residential history was location in Mexico or the U.S.

I then collected briefer information on residence and occupation among bilateral spread kin of the core elderly

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couple. I started with both members with the elderly couple (thus, I collected husband's and wife's kin, or twelve sets of kin), I asked them about their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, parents and grandparents (when they remembered), parent's siblings, parent's siblings' children (first cousins), sometimes (when they knew) first cousin's children, their own siblings, their siblings' children (nephews and nieces), and any children of them if they knew them. I also asked about the spouses of each one of these people (that is, for instance, so that I did not miss the occupations of women's husbands or men's wives).

What I asked was their place of residence (and if they had moved, where to, which people readily volunteered), and their occupation, in general. If they farmed, I asked if they had their own land, or rented or sharecropped,[7] and if they had their own cattle, and was the land large or small. Admittedly, these are qualitative distinctions; but Sonorans themselves readily recognized these distinctions, differentiating, for example, cattle ranches from small farm lands for planting plus some cattle to pasture. Likewise in terms of urban occupations, people readily differentiated between supervisors and supervised, white collar and blue collar, and owners (such as small workshops) versus employees. As I have mentioned I asked about occupations of women as much as men.

In addition, in the immediate grand-family, where such information would be known, I ascertained dates of birth,

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marriage, and death; and though people rarely knew this for more distant kin, I found they could usually estimate their relative age. The dating became quite erratic and unreliable in the ascending generations.

Of course, this is what my informants knew, or thought they knew, about these relatives (and one should not underestimate the capacity of the apical elderly women, who were my primary informants, to accumulate and pass on news and gossip about their kin and husband's kin). Of course, people had lost track of some relatives, and forgotten or been mistaken about others. At least they were open about not knowing. I did not check the information in records.[8] I was able, and did check up, on relatives in Agua Prieta and Douglas. My checks consistently confirmed my informants, even as far as children of first cousins.

The one systematic error that I encountered in confirming the information was that women would be described as housewives, not mentioning household businesses or former occupations. Even women describing themselves would do this, and only afterwards, in the course of discussing their life or work, would they elaborate.

While I was collecting the genealogies, people would apologize for not knowing some or another group of cousins or nephews, because these persons were "familia", but they had lost touch. I found that they felt they should know all their bilateral kin--as an ideal, or sentimental, model--but that the lines of effective kin were shown by who they had

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kept track of, and who they had not. Thus I found that even the faults, the patterns of gaps and strengths, were information about the historical branching of kin in regional economy.

When I later did extended life history interviews, I took the worked-up kin charts with me, and in this manner I could follow the persons mentioned in life histories (so and so got me a job when I first came to Agua Prieta, etc.) Thus I tried to bridge the "genealogical" and "social" models of kinship (Hunt, 1969).

Still among the six grand-families, I did a series of open-ended life history interviews, structured by the skeleton work and residential histories I had for each informant; the topics covered follow from the questions I have discussed in the introduction, and I refer the reader there. I taped most interviews (the occasions for some interviews were providential, and these I recorded by hand), and later had the tapes transcribed in Spanish for reference.

The selection of persons to interview was important. I interviewed both the husband and wife in the oldest generation. I interviewed both men and women in the next two generations, according to who was willing to spend the time with me. I interviewed available members of youngest adult working generation in every grand-family (this was sometimes the children and sometimes the grandchildren). I also did a number of life histories and truncated

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genealogies with persons not in these families who had valuable historical material.

From the same grand-families, I made a selection of six households at different stages in the developmental cycle, and collected material culture histories. I asked about histories of selected appliances (sewing machines, cars, tool sets, refrigerators, stoves, furniture and beds), and the houses people had lived in. I inquired the details on the dates and costs of acquisition, as well as the nature of the financing. I did this for the ones they currently had, and the first ones they had had, if different. I also inquired how, from whom, and when people first learned to use items like driving cars and sewing machines. People often linked the histories of the material objects to the chronologies of key points in their lives (marriages, moves), and to kin and personal relationships. I found it particularly useful to link the house histories to the family histories.

Lastly, I did a follow-up survey in April and May of 1986 of a random sample survey of households done by James Greenberg in 1981-1982 in two Agua Prieta neighborhoods, Barrio Ferrocarril and Colonia Ejidal. I was able to relocate 63 of the 93 households he surveyed. The systematic bias in the resurvey was that most of the households I could not relocate were renters, not house owners (or borrowers from kin). Renters may be younger, and less likely to come from Agua Prieta (or even northern

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Sonora). In the resurvey, I followed up a limited set of topics: the household membership, employment and all income sources, and a household budget.

Besides these formal collections of data, I did the usual sorts of hanging out and talking that is the anthropologist's licence and pleasure. I played baseball (poorly, compared to my skillful friends) on an amateur team which went on to win a citywide title. I did quite a number of interviews, formal and conversational, on municipal party politics, and labor unions, in the maquiladoras and other occupations. I spent a considerable amount of time hanging about a particular type of workplaces: the taller (workshop) which was organized autonomously--kitchen manufactures of tamales to sell; welding and truck repairs in backyards--and I carefully observed the organization of these places. On the other hand I did not directly observe work in the maquiladoras (though I spent time hanging out with workers between shifts at the factory across the street from my house). My interviews with maquiladora workers fit very well with the participant-observations of Fernandez-Kelly (1983). I did not do any documentary research.[9]

## Use of Oral History

Here I turn from the fieldwork itself, to the process of rereading and interpreting the data. Following Winn (1979), I take oral histories as "primary sources", which means they must be critically interpreted and integrated

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just like other partial historical sources. Since I had multiple accounts of the same interlocked families, from male and female, older and younger perspectives, I was better able to combine and contrast versions. There clearly were major differences in perspectives of men and women, a social fact which informed my discussion of household relationships.

I found that oral histories are excellent for the details of daily life and work (such as material culture and skills) but poor in recalling dates and uncertain about the details of specific events. I have tried to work to the strength of the former and not tried to answer questions about the history of the Sonoran working people which might better be addressed from documentary research. The veracity of people about their lives is a serious question; it has caused me problems in retrospect, but I have to work with the evidence available to me. I had access to family documents in several cases (Hernandez, Aguirre), and in one very important instance (Guadalupe Hernandez' political involvements) I had corroborating evidence in a book by a woman who knew him in Nacozari (Horton, 1969).

The oral histories have gone through two levels in which the material has been filtered and ordered: that by the informants themselves, and that by myself. Narrative form gave me very valuable clues to the structuring of the life histories by the informants themselves. In particular, I found that my informants, especially older ones, started

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the interview with a long, more or less uninterrupted, summary of their history. I called this a "capsule history", and I found that it was very selective, and usually portrayed the life as moving toward some resolution and going through certain key turning points. In this way I could understand in what ways people were ordering the histories they reported to me.

I then ordered the interlocked life histories into summaries of the six grand-families (plus some extra, less extensive cases). I combed the genealogies, work and residential histories, material culture histories, and the multiple oral histories, noted gaps and inconsistencies, and worked out the most consistent historical interpretation. Therefore, what I present in this dissertation is my version of these histories; it is not the informant's own words. There are a number of points where, however, I present people's own articulated ideas about their histories. I try to state as explicitly as possible in the text what is my interpretation and what people told me.

The histories I present in this dissertation use pseudonyms. Even so, the families are readily recognizable to people in Agua Prieta and Douglas. For this reason, I have also dropped any material I thought would be embarrassing or disturb people's privacy, though it might have added to the historical interpretation. Undoubtedly people also edited what they told me and I do not know the whole truth. I had sought permission and told my informants

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that what they told me about their lives would be used in my research and might be published.

## The View from Agua Prieta: Issues of Representativeness

Let me finish with some comments on the coverage and representativeness of the evidence in this dissertation. Border life cannot be divided into two isolated sides. There is too much movement and interaction for that. Nevertheless, I have chosen to restrict myself to the working population which resides on the Mexican side of the border. In turn, I do cover the involvement of this population in the U.S. side of the border--their work there, their kin branches which have moved there, the U.S. border institutions like the immigration system, and U.S. corporations with operations in Mexico. It is very important for this dissertation to study the phenomena of the border in people's lives: not just any working class, but a border working class.

The reason for limiting myself to Sonoran based families is that the resident Mexican American working population, though closely related personally to Mexico, enters a distinctive set of relationships in U.S. society, and this poses different issues. For instance, in my fieldwork, I accumulated considerable material on the Mexican American community of Douglas, and it was apparent that the fundamental issues there concerned social-racial

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discrimination and the struggles against it, particularly with reference to the labor history of the Douglas smelter (Heyman, 1986).

However, I want to clarify that before 1929, movement between Arizona and Sonora was much more open and that issues like racially segregated and unequally paid Anglo and Mexican work forces occurred in as much in Mexico as in the U.S., so this delimitation of Sonoran and Mexican American only dates after the 1930s repatriation and related restrictions. That is, this choice of a population is historically specific and not inherent in a boundary line drawn on a map.

The families I interviewed were all located in Agua Prieta (and some relatives in Douglas), though most had kin all over northwestern Mexico and the U.S. southwest. It is inevitable in ethnography that the study be set somewhere, and it is better to be cognizant of this fact and realize its implications for knowledge. As I explained above, Agua Prieta was a good base for working outward to family histories spread throughout the region, but I there exist alternative perspectives.

If I had taken the view from Cananea, the one major mine surviving from the turn of the century, I would undoubtedly emphasized the rich cultural and political tradition of the miners, rather than dispersal and transformation (I should note that evidence I cite in Chapter 2 indicates that even Cananea expelled population

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during the decades of transformation). If I had taken the view of outmigrants to the gigantic low desert cities, especially the coast of Sonora (Hermosillo, Ciudad Obregon), I would equally emphasized transformation, but in turn would have been concerned with the development of agro-industry and concomitant urbanization rather than border phenomena. Lastly, if I had worked in a rural highland Sonoran farm town, the mine and U.S. work experiences would have been seen from the view of men who had left for spells, but then returned--that is, as a cash addition to the farm economy (this location, rather than my perspective of industrial town and border city origins, is the perspective found in virtually every ethnographic study of Mexican migrant labor in the U.S.).

Likewise, there is the question of how representative the family histories are. As I recounted, the families were selected opportunistically--in an informed and guided manner, designed to maximize my ability to get at persons who had been through particular changes. Therefore I have tried as little as possible to use the life histories and kinship as representative samples of historical generalizations, and tried as much as possible to analyze them as specific historical chronologies in themselves (informed by historical generalizations I have derived from other sources). This allows room for discovering the patterned variation among historical paths rather than trying to fit them in one mold. Ultimately, though, the

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defense of the ethnographer must always be that the depth and wealth of information justifies the years of effort put into a narrow sample.

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1. I believe that this overestimates Agua Prieta's population, though one cannot be sure.

2. That is, within these families--there were also educated professionals from other social origins, such as elite families, about which I do not refer here.

3. The bias toward large and prosperous grand-families in this evidence was mitigated by my 1986 resurvey of Greenberg's 1982 random sample of households in two poor neighborhoods.

4. This is not simply a subjective opinion of a select group; there is considerable material basis in the movement of the real wages before the 1980s--see Chapter 2.

5. A Drug Enforcement Agent was killed in Guadalajara and the U.S. government put pressure on Mexico by informally but effectively stopping border traffic by inspecting by the rules.

6. For most of the field research I had no local assistant; late in the process I hired a young man from Agua Prieta to do tape transcriptions, and he also did a few items of interviewing for me, mostly in his family.

7. I should note that people who told me that their families owned their own land, may still have had only very small amounts and sharecropped additional land (Owen, 1959).

8. Agua Prieta's archives were burned in 1985, though copies exist in Hermosillo.

9. My secretary compiled notes on a run of an Agua Prieta newspaper, 1953-1979.

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