WIELDING AND YIELDING:
Power, Subordination and Gender Identity
in the Context of a Mexican Development Project

Magdalena Villarreal
STELLINGEN

1. Power is about how people re-invent the world around them, how they relate to each other and live, love, talk, have fun, create conflicts, identify differences, set boundaries, negotiate meanings and define their history as well as the future before them.

2. 'Social scientists raise the same questions as any other actors and find different practical ways of enforcing their definition of what society is about' (Latour 1986: 273).

3. An unavoidable question with regard to development programmes concerns their impact. Often what we really want to know is what changes these have brought about in terms of power relations.

4. The Dutch climate is very favourable for academic work: other activities are rained out!

5. Although the notion of power is most certainly contained in the concept of empowerment, information about its workings in rural scenarios and the ways in which it is dealt with by 'empowering agents' is meagre. This is not only due to the fact that 'the outsider' tries not to impose his or her views, but also to the lack of theoretical tools for identifying the workings of power in everyday situations (Villarreal, this thesis).

6. Men are always changing the goal posts for women, but then women don't usually play football.

7. Power not only corrupts, but can also make for justice.

8. 'PRA (participatory rural appraisal), far from providing a neutral vehicle for local knowledge, actually creates a context in which the selective presentation of opinion is likely to be exaggerated, and where minority or deviant views are likely to be suppressed' (Mosse 1993: 11).

9. Democracy is more about attitudes and social commitments than simply about casting votes.

10. In understanding social change and continuity, trivia is a serious matter.

11. Power is much more and much less than carrying out a specific will (Villarreal, this thesis).

12. As I finished my thesis, I felt I had just started the real discussion, but then, the challenge of beginning is probably a feeling one ought to have in life.

Magdalena Villarreal
Wageningen, September 1994
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INTRODUCTION

This is a story of a group of women. It tells of their activities as a group and their everyday pleasures, their problems and frustrations. It describes how others perceive their predicaments, how they try to help them, and the interrelations that are forged. It is also a story about state institutions, about development intervention and the conflicts that take place. The account is woven with anecdotes and ordinary happenings which might seem trivial yet give it flesh and body. But, more than a story - which of course is threaded with peculiar interpretations of events, particular attributions of meanings and understandings - it is an exploration into issues of power: How does power work? Can one point to secret mechanisms by which it is triggered and held, resolutely oppressing, permeating the most hidden niches of society, controlling actions, thoughts and desires? How is it constituted, identified and recreated or crushed, transformed and channelled? How do changes in power come about? How can we come to grips with the ways in which power is constructed in everyday situations? How can we understand it in its relation to more macro phenomena?

My challenge is to reach a better understanding of the processes of change taking place in the 'development interface', that is, in the spaces opened up by the interaction between different social groups engaged in development practices where discontinuities in terms of power are recreated and transformed. Grounded upon critical observation and analysis of detailed ethnographic data, I hope to contribute to a sounder theoretical perspective on issues of power and social difference.

Dilemmas concerning power, gender and subordination in the study of development

But let me begin by taking the reader through my own dilemmas and motivations in inquiring into the notions of power, particularly when concerned with gender in the field of development studies. Development studies - where endeavours are oriented to analyzing social transformation, change in situations of oppression, equality, democracy and wellbeing -
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often finds bottlenecks in what is described as power, in the inexplicable twists and turns where social action changes direction, or in the expected but dreaded continuity of domination and exploitation - not only within the spheres of the households and villages, but in the relations that are created with respect to institutions, development workers and government officers themselves.

The scenario of international aid programmes is plagued with complaints about how dependency is created between donor countries and their 'beneficiaries', how patterns of domination are translated from intercontinental power structures to local ones. In some political, economic and social arenas, 'the poor', the 'minorities' and women have managed to acquire voice, rights to decision making and a degree of authority; they have opened up spaces for themselves - intentionally or by accident, as an unintended consequence of other processes - only to find that within such spaces, unequal relations and power act very much to their disadvantage.

Global processes are composed of webs of practices that emanate from international, national, regional and local spheres. At regional levels one finds practitioners who, while searching to comply with personal commitments in responding to particular demands - that is, to deal with power in everyday life situations - come to despair of local patterns of domination. Stories abound about how groups, which have painfully struggled with the establishment of 'democratic' procedures, who have been 'educated' for years with participative methods, finally create new leaderships and new patterns of domination. And projects often end up consolidating the leadership of 'outsiders', 'empowering' the development agents instead of local people. This cannot be explained only through an identification of social structures, of formal maps of power and established hegemonic ideologies. Constraints on action and difficulties of access are crucial, but the issue is much more complex. It involves the unpredictability of emergent situations, it is interwoven with interpretations, with loyalties and emotions, with life histories and particular perceptions of the future.

My personal experience as a 'change agent' in rural Mexico has driven me to take on the task of analyzing these issues in their concrete occurrence. Our trivial, everyday knowledge of the workings of power often clashes with generalized versions of its structure and constitution. During my years as an NGO (non-government organization) member who lived and worked among peasants for thirteen years, my task was to encourage the organization of groups of men and women striving to improve their living conditions and to overcome social inequalities. We were committed to a bottom-up approach, using participative methods of popular education, and sought to pick up the
demands of the people and help them strengthen their organization in the fulfilment of their needs.

As most practitioners working in the 'front-line', I can recall many achievements (although also many blunders and enigmas). People organized themselves to defend their rights, to acquire a piece of land, to make their land produce or to establish small enterprises, which in many cases were considered successful. But our analysis of power relations vis-à-vis large landowners, the state, or local power brokers was, I can admit in retrospect, embarrassingly simplistic. Worse still were our evaluations of the power relations taking place within the groups themselves: how to come to grips with situations where people not only comply with, but also defend the interests of 'power wielders', thereby incorporating and recreating such interests as their own?

One of our 'frustrations' entailed a group of peasants who had struggled for more than thirty years for land and, having obtained it, had finally produced a beautiful crop of sesame. Since the official price for their product was too low, they decided to join efforts in a search for better markets. After more than a month of exerting inquiries and negotiations, a Japanese dealer was willing to buy their sesame at a decent price, but the group did not manage to obtain a government permit for export. Middlemen came to the village, and the temptation to sell was great, as the producers needed cash to pay debts and to survive, but the group stood firm. Another month went by before they finally found an adequate market in the north of the country. The buyer owned a medium-sized industry producing mole and was happy to avoid middlemen and to negotiate directly with the producers. The delegation that had been sent to represent the group in search of markets came back to the village and discovered with dismay that a significant number of producers were not willing to sell collectively. At the time the only explanation for their behaviour was that these peasants were 'backward' and 'ignorant'. In the end, the rest of the group found other people from neighbouring villages that were willing to sell their sesame and managed to keep their deal.

Later my neighbour explained his reasons for not joining the group: his compadre (ritual kinsman), a local entrepreneur, had requested to buy his produce, and although the price he offered was very low, he could not deny him. A few coins gained in the group venture could not compare with the benefits he could obtain through his compadre, such as borrowing money when he needed it, credit in his store, and a stable job in times of scarcity.

1. Paste fabricated for the preparation of mole, a traditional Mexican dish made up of ground chillies, chocolate, spices and crushed seeds, including sesame.
He had also offered him support in the education of his eldest boy, who hoped to continue his studies in the city. Most important of all, his compadre was very generous to him and his wife, inviting them over when they had parties. He offered them his friendship, and my neighbour felt that he must be loyal to him. On the other hand, he was distrustful of the group’s leaders, and argued that, although they had not manifested any dishonest behaviour, one did not know how they would act once they had access to money and control. The rest of the ‘drop-outs’ offered similar explanations.

Often the enterprises we helped organize were taken over by a few people, or conflicts would destroy their coherence. This was particularly the case with groups of women, who not only faced problems within the groups, but were doubly constrained by social expectations and demands in their public and private spheres. I have to confess my agony when working with women’s groups. As a female, I was automatically expected to devote myself to the organization of women by my colleagues as well as by the peasants themselves. Whilst it presented me a challenge, normally the idea was that the women would be involved in chicken raising, sewing, baking or similar activities, while the men tackled the ‘real’ problems related to land tenure, production and political issues. I struggled - and managed - to participate with both men and women, organizing such ‘domestic’ groups when the women demanded it, but also involving myself and the women when it was possible, in the ‘men’s’ issues. However, working with women was a difficult task. Not because they were unwilling to organize, they were always ready and even displayed more energy than men sometimes, pulling me to help them set up their groups and press their demands, but because the ‘bottlenecks’ seemed so utterly insurmountable.

One of our most successful groups, for example, concerned a group of women who decided to cultivate tomatoes in a remote village whose only communication to the outside was by a road that was really a river in the wet season. Their organization was almost perfect. Despite the difficult work conditions - they had to bore holes with an iron bar to penetrate the hard soil, tie strings to avoid the fruit touching the wet earth, and later find ways of getting the tomatoes to the market - they stuck together as a group and produced a beautiful crop. They also participated with other groups of men and women in a regional organization to defend their land rights. It was gossip involving their husbands that tore them apart. The men stopped allowing their wives to participate in the group, and conflicts sparked off between the women themselves. Through the conflictive situations that ensued we learned many things. For one, we came to realize that some women had joined the project out of deference to us - the ‘knowledgeable’
outsiders - and that often their interests and priorities were very different from what we expected them to be.

In another village the women asked for help to obtain drinking water infrastructure. There was no piped water or electricity in the village, and they had to walk two kilometres - part of which was a steep hill - with 20 liter buckets on their heads to carry water from a well to their homes. After a year of struggle and hard work involving lobbying in government offices, asking for donations from private construction companies working in the area, and digging the hard dry earth to get the pipes in (although in this latter task they also involved their husbands and sons), each house finally had running water. Immediately an assembly was called to allocate a pump operator and it seemed only natural to appoint a man. From then on the operation was in the hands of the assembly (which, by the way, consisted of an organized group of peasants - mostly male - with whom we also worked, who had gained access to land and credit through joint endeavours and struggles, and who considered themselves a 'democratic’ group), where only under my urging did women participate occasionally. After a few months, the pump operator got drunk, the motor burned out, and the village remained without water. It was not until five years later when the government installed new pipe lines and an overhead tank that the village finally had the service again. It was not that the results would necessarily have been different had the women controlled it completely, but the fact that they just let go under such crucial circumstances was disturbing. I have to admit that I myself was an accomplice to the outcome, as I sympathized intuitively with many of the reasons behind their behaviour, but still could not bring myself to a clear understanding of the situation and the ways to deal with it.

I discussed these issues with professional women’s support groups in the capital city, and several workshops were organized, where the oppression of women and their rights were discussed in a very participative manner. The local women would pour out their pains and were clear in their condemnation of the unfairness of the situation. No solutions were envisaged except that they should organize themselves, that they make their power felt, that they press their demands. However, pressing their demands might be dangerous and the women were practical. They knew that they had to get up at five in the morning and grind the nixtamal (cooked maize) to make tortillas for their men to eat in the field. Their family had to survive! What would happen to them if they left their husbands? How would they feed their large families? There were examples in the village of women who had been ‘abandoned’ or who had left their spouses and practically the only alternative
was prostitution! As one of my colleagues expressed it: it was like opening Pandora’s box and letting them decide what to do next! It was obvious that we needed to explore the strategies the women themselves devised to survive their situation, and that a more careful analysis should be made of the nitty-gritty of power relations.

I have hence worked with several men and women’s groups in Mexico, and visited others in different parts of Central America. Experiences repeat themselves: different types of power brokers emerge within organized groups, men and women yield control when they seem to be making headway, and a good deal of subordination appears to be taking place. The dilemmas encountered are not remote from the same questions I ask myself. If men and women are oppressed, why do they still reproduce the conditions which lead to their own subordination? Is it possible to ‘empower’ people through development projects? If so, how can we deal with and understand local and extra-local processes involving power? What is the nature of power and authority?

My empirical starting point

In exploring these issues, I will ground my analysis in a study I carried out in 1987-88 concerning a group of women beekeepers, organized as an UAIM (Unidad Agrícola e Industrial de la Mujer Campesina, Agrarian and Industrial Unit of Peasant Women) in Ayuquila, a small rural community in western Mexico. The initiative was backed by the Federal Law of Agrarian Reform, which stipulated that groups of women should be encouraged to participate in economic activities by allotting them plots of agricultural land and supporting them with credit from official institutions to set up small enterprises. It was expected that the organization of women would thus be stimulated and that they would be incorporated into the ‘production process’. In some cases, government rhetoric went on to suggest that this would eventually lead to reducing gender inequalities.

By 1985, 6,461 units of organized women (UAIMs) were reported to have been created in the country (Mantilla 1989: 12). Not all have been

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2 The number of UAIMs that have been established in the country is uncertain, as official statistics are contradictory, and many units have been created but not registered officially. Barbieri (1983) speaks of 4,950, Arizpe and Botey (1986) claim that 8,000 organized units of UAIMs had been legalized in 1986 (under a Resolución Presidencial, which is a formal document signed by the President of Mexico), but
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successful according to official expectations: some disappeared soon after their creation, others were taken over by a few women or controlled by male authorities, many were soon dispossessed of their land and/or industry, and most faced severe economic drawbacks. However, the programme has had important consequences in terms of the creation of both physical and symbolic space for rural women in Mexico. For one, it has allowed women access to agricultural land, a resource which had commonly been considered of male entitlement, even though Mexican law includes some stipulations to incorporate women. On the other hand, it encouraged peasant women to acquire credit, generating a range of relations with the state, with technology, with the market and with other men and women.

In 1988 the Ayuquila beekeeping group was considered one of the 'successful' ones. But becoming part of a state-supported project had many implications for the women beekeepers, not the least of which concerned alterations in their views about who they were, what they could do and who they could or could not be. New patterns of organization which affected their life styles were introduced, as were discourses concerning their own identity, and different perceptions entailing the future before them. To say that these were introduced is to put it too strongly, as the women reinterpreted the project and its spirit in diverse ways at different moments, they generated links to other people and processes in and outside the village, disowned roles attributed to them and forged a project of their own. Again I am using strong words, since the project was in many ways shared by other actors: it was shaped by multiple interests. The projects of state officers, of women beekeepers and of other villagers were interlocked, associated or played off against each other, in combinations or in apparent agreement, and one can see the ways in which power was dealt with at different levels, from different perspectives.

The difference between this group and others I had been involved in was that the beekeepers had by and large organized themselves with little intervention from outside, and were apparently successful and my intervention was aimed only to learn from them. Part of my personal challenge was to understand how they forged their project, how their individual aspirations were kneaded in, how they dealt with power - both inside the group and vis-à-vis men, the government officials implementing the programme, etc. - how they orchestrated their lives around the project, and how was it that their organization survived. I present here part of my

only 1,224 were officially registered, and 1,112 had received credit. Aranda (1993) found 2,253 units officially registered in the National Agrarian Register in 1992.
findings, and hasten to say that I did not find all the answers to my questions, but instead encountered more questions.

The discussion of this case typically brings out fundamental problems I cannot hope to solve in a categorical way, especially those concerning the 'relevance' of development efforts, and concrete guidelines for this type of action. I do not aim to encourage or discourage these efforts, or to say - as I might have liked to - that NGO workers like ourselves who were striving towards the elimination of social inequalities did a better job than government extension officers, whose interests seemed to concentrate more on using the women's group to climb the ladder of official positions and ranks themselves. I simply hope to point to issues that any person engaged in 'development' undertakings at local level, and committed to a better understanding of the complex processes triggered by the 'outside', cannot avoid. Thus, I focus on the attempts of local actors to broaden their margins for action, to create or maintain space for their own personal and collective projects, incorporating or adjusting the intervenor’s projects to their own, and vice versa.

Wielding power and yielding to it

Although the UAIM programme is recognized as one of the few government endeavours of consequence towards women in Mexico (and several development organizations have oriented important efforts to encourage the creation and consolidation of UAIMs in different parts of the country), it has been widely criticized, particularly by feminist scholars who argue that it has reinforced gender relations of subordination without touching the origins and effects of social inequality in which women live (see Aranda 1993; Mantilla 1989; Barbieri 1981 and Velázquez 1992).

Relations of subordination constitute the main issue to be explored in the following chapters. These are the elements that give life to power, that make it possible. The wielding of power presupposes the exercise of yielding to it, of recognizing the other as powerful. Furthermore, often power must be yielded in order to wield it. Hence, to open the discussion on power, I take as a starting point, not a blatant description of domination or a striking set of statistics to prove its strength, but the trivial everyday manifestations of power, which lives to the degree to which it is exercised upon others, and hence to the degree that there are countervailing forces which must be controlled. Otherwise it would be useless to conceive of such a notion. It is impossible to envisage power without an image of those affected by it,
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without notions of subservience, inferiority, subjugation and control, but also without some kinds of counter forces, of negotiation, resistance, conflict and opposition.

However, what one might identify as points of resistance, of defiance and challenge, are intertwined with elements that can be described as compliance, conformity and submission. Hence, when speaking of subordination, one implies both an action imposed from 'outside', and a self-inflicted condition. It is this interweaving of processes that I aim to explore, specifically with respect to gender relations.

In this endeavour, I will start, in the first chapter, by introducing the reader to Ayuquila with brief descriptions of three women and the ways in which they deal with subordination in their everyday lives. My purposes are manifold. Whilst presenting three women in their dissimilar environments and their particular approaches to their everyday lives, I hope to provide a preliminary picture of life in the village, of the diversities found within it, as well as of the continuities in terms of gender relations. The discussion on the ordeals of the three women and the issue of subordination will also serve to describe in general terms my approach to the issue of power, the methodological perspective I assume and the contents of each of the ensuing chapters.

There is, however, one important issue to be mentioned at this stage concerning the nature of this study. The reader will observe that I do not start with a prefabricated theoretical framework to be applied to the analysis of my ethnographic data. This is because the aim of my study is to arrive at the construction of theory through the exploration of field data. I explore theoretical and methodological perspectives throughout the chapters in terms of their usefulness for addressing the issues I encounter and the questions I want to deal with. Hence, Chapters 1 to 6 intertwine ethnography with theoretical discussions concerning power and subordination at different levels of interaction. I open with the issue of subordination in the everyday lives of women, then enter into detailed analysis of daily encounters in the next four chapters. Chapter 6 then provides a wider view of the programme, comparing different UAIMs from the point of view of their relation to the state, thus discussing the construction of power in the combination of micro and macro levels, leading to Chapter 7 where I round up my findings and compare them more systematically with other theoretical perspectives on power. I conclude, in the last chapter, with a re-discussion of the dilemmas presented in this introduction, that is, with the relevance of this particular approach to the analysis of the wielding of power and the yielding to it in the study of development.
Chapter 1

SUBORDINATION FOR POWER
AND POWER BY SUBORDINATION

As a brief introduction to Ayuquila and its people, as well as a preamble to the discussion we are about to become involved in throughout the following chapters, let me present the cases of three women of the village who display different ways of dealing with subordination and attribute diverse meanings to its exercise.

As I explain in detail in Chapter 2, Ayuquila is a small town of 161 households located within an important irrigation district along the main road linking the Municipal capital of El Grullo to the State capital of Guadalajara, in Jalisco, western Mexico. Village economic life is built basically upon agriculture and the commercialization of agricultural products. Part of the surrounding land (786 hectares) is owned collectively by the *ejido*¹, most of whose members live in the village. Roughly speaking, the inhabitants of Ayuquila can be divided into two large sectors: the 'natives' and the *avécindados* (neighbours). The former include those possessing *ejido* land and or cattle - many of whom are also involved in commercial activities - and those who hire themselves as workers for the *ejido* itself, and the latter consists of migrants to the region in search of jobs, who mostly work as labourers for the tomato companies in the region. I have chosen three women from different sectors of the population to give the reader a more general picture of life in the village, as well as to explore the issue of subordination. Only one of them is a member of the beekeeping group that is the principal focus of my study.

¹. The *ejido* is a socio-legal entity concerned with the administration of land and other collective properties. *Ejidos* were established under the 1920’s land reform law that followed the Mexican Revolution. The *ejido* of Ayuquila consists of individual household plots divided among *ejidatarios* and a communal grazing area. The term *ejidatario* is used for those who possess land rights to specific plots and who are listed formally as members of the *ejido*. 
Although they live in the same village - and might all appear in censuses and general surveys of the region as 'poor' and 'disadvantaged' - the three women are different in their financial situation, their access to resources, their status, their relationships and alliances as well as in their conceptions of the village's standing in the region, and of the wealth and scarcities found within it. The three women are involved in different kinds of enterprise and dissimilar relations and attitudes towards 'capital' and entrepreneurs, and hence work under distinct perspectives and motivations to access specific networks, to build diverse relations with men, with authorities and with other women. However, subordination and self-subordination is a common theme, whether imposed or assumed, used to soften blows, to create personal space or to consolidate power.

Three women, one village, multiple realities

In informal conversations with female villagers, I obtained the following characterizations of the three women:

Juana?
'She's a pleasant woman. She works hard, she goes to church on Sundays and she's honest. She sells shoes to help her husband out, he's a good man, doesn't drink, doesn't smoke, but her in-laws are fickle.'

Carola?
'She is respected in the village, she has a smile for everyone, her dress is always impeccable and she helps out the poor when she can. It's not that she's rich, her sons own everything.'

Maria?
'Which Maria? No, I don't know her... you say she's a tomato picker... no... oh, you must mean the chivera (one who looks after goats). Why would you want to interview her? Do you need some help around the house? Look, I can recommend you someone else.'

**Juana: subordination to create space for herself**

In 1987 a furious storm hit the region. A neighbour ran to Juana's house to warn her that the river was rising rapidly, and was beginning to sweep away

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2: The names of the individuals are pseudonyms.
with it some of the beehives the women had placed on its banks. Juana is a member of the women’s beekeeping group in the village. Her husband looks after his father’s cattle and owns a few cows himself although he does not possess land. Their income would be considered about average in the village, and she does jobs like selling shoes and sewing to earn some extras which are becoming increasingly important in sustaining her household.

Juana explains that that day she had cooked a nice mole\(^3\). She proudly remarks that she likes to fix different dishes so that her husband and two sons do not get bored with the same food all the time, although it implies more work, especially since she has three men in the house and they do not help out with the household chores. Juana had always yearned for a little girl but gave up after her fourth boy. The two eldest had earned scholarships to study in Chapingo, the Agricultural University located near Mexico City. Juana also ‘looks after’ her brother, who is unmarried and lives on his own in Ayuquila. She washes and irons for him, and she gives him his meals. When it is required, she sends or takes a warm lunch to him in the field. She also cleans up his house once in a while, as she claims men are totally useless for these tasks. Juana likes to think that, more than for the sake of her brother, she looks after him in memory of her deceased mother, who used to do it herself.

Juana organizes her household tasks to leave some time for sewing. She only makes dresses for neighbours and friends, charging very little, since she claims she is still learning. As a complementary activity she runs a small shoe store at home. She owns it in association with her sister-in-law, who provides the capital while Juana gives labour. They buy shoes from a salesman who delivers them to Ayuquila and they also make trips to Guadalajara - the capital city of the state - to buy cheaper products and thus have more variety. Juana dislikes the trips to the big city. She has to board crowded buses and fears she will get lost. Furthermore, she does not like to leave her household because she feels her family needs her. However, she enjoys having a small enterprise, and comments that she now finds herself constantly looking at people’s feet to see what kind of shoes they wear. The customers come to her house, so she manages to be home at the times she knows they are most likely to come. Her best clients are the tomato pickers who live on the hill. They form a whole colony on the outskirts of Ayuquila, and many people in the village do not know them, partly because they work all day in the fields, but basically because they are outsiders and hardly participate in village activities. Although the general attitude of the townspeople towards these newcomers is that of distrust, Juana interacts with

\(^3\) As I mentioned previously, mole is a traditional Mexican dish made up of ground chillies, chocolate, spices and crushed seeds.
them as customers and has made good friends with them. They receive weekly wages, and Juana lets them take the shoes and pay off the debt in small amounts each week.

Beekeeping had really been envisaged as a supplementary activity for Juana. She joined the group on her sister-in-law’s urging and because she thought it would not involve much commitment, but demands were constantly growing. Soon after her joining, Juana became President of the group and had just finished her term a few months ago. She was satisfied because she had managed to complete the construction of a small store (used to keep their implements, extract honey and meet as a group) before handing the post over to Petra, the new President. Although the work was going smoothly now, they had to visit the beehives at least once a week. It was a matter of spending a whole morning, because they had to feed each beehive with sugared water, which implied carrying the 20 liter can on their heads over long distances when they were unable to hitch a ride. Perhaps it was due to undernourishment that the bees had been quite sick lately, and they had been checking them often, sprinkling the appropriate medicine.

On the day of the storm, Juana took warm dishes of mole to her two sons who were sitting in front of the television. She finished serving her husband and her brother at the table and was heating tortillas for the three of them. When they finished she would sit down. It was not that Juana would not have liked to sit with them, neither did she think she shouldn’t because she was a woman; it was just that someone had to heat the tortillas, and she didn’t like to interrupt her meal every time the pile in the middle of the table ran down or her sons called for more. It was easier to dedicate herself to them and then relax. But it was then that she received the notice that the beehives were in danger. She did not wait for her family to finish eating but grabbed a taco (a tortilla with a bit of food in it) for herself, and rushed to other beekeepers’ houses, some of whom had already been warned, and soon a small party was organized. Some of the beehives were already floating in the river, and the task was difficult. The beekeepers narrate proudly how one of them even threw herself into the current to grab them, and how they only lost two.

The next part of the story was 're-enacted' by the beekeepers for our benefit in a small drama. We had organized a workshop with the members of the group, and one of the activities involved play-acting some of their experiences to illustrate their relations with outsiders and with other villagers and to describe some of the difficulties they faced as a group. One of the subgroups chose to portray Juana’s troubles after retrieving of the beehives: she arrived home very late in the evening and very tired after rescuing the boxes from the flooded banks of the river, and was surprised to find that the door of her house
had been locked by her husband. It was an embarrassing situation, and she did not want to alert her neighbours by knocking too loudly. Thus, she retreated to a friend’s house, who helped her coax her husband softly until he opened the door. To avoid a quarrel, she placed the blame on herself, excusing her husband for locking her out with the justification that he doesn’t like anyone arriving after 10 o’clock.

After presenting the small drama, the group discussed Juana’s predicament. Her husband was a good man; he did not drink as did most of the others, he was not a womanizer, and he brought home the money he managed to earn. His attitude that night - they concluded - had not been unreasonable. He had only established a few rules and was entitled to a degree of respect, even though Juana had been doing ‘nothing wrong’. Indeed the tasks she had been engaged in were important for the survival of the group.

Juana had been a ‘fatherless’ child. Although she adored her mother while she lived, she speaks sadly of their situation and is happy to offer her children the chance of living with a father. To achieve this, she has to conform to unwritten norms, tolerating situations which she does not totally agree with.

The price for maintaining her family united is to give her husband his ‘quota of power’, subordinating her activities in some ways to his likes and dislikes. It is not considered appropriate that women stay away from home at night, at least not without explicit permission of her husband and normally accompanied by some trusted friend or relative. Furthermore, there had been men helping the beekeepers retrieve the hives and the circumstance was uncomfortable for Juana’s husband, who stayed at home but was afraid village gossip might eat him alive for letting Juana get away with it. He thus had to ‘wash his honour’ and mark his authority by inflicting a small punishment.

Juana’s social networks (see genealogy in Chapter 4) are quite strong in the village, and they prove crucial to her enterprises. If she accords her man ‘his place’ and respects his authority, she will be seen as a good woman in village social life. In order to maintain legitimation within her networks, she has to comply with such social rules and standards or negotiate her way out of them. She chooses to conform, but in doing so, she also reproduces and legitimates these norms and behaviour.

On the other hand, Juana is forging specific roles for her man, who must be a respected father and husband. She creates space for him according to her interests, since he will now have more possibility of being esteemed in the village because he is obeyed and respected at home. In this way, she is not only passively obeying social norms, but is finding her way through them to convey a specific image of her man as father and husband, and thus to fulfil her own goals.
Carola: subordination for legitimation and control

Carola is a relatively affluent widow whose kin networks in the village are weak. Her deceased husband had been a policeman in Guadalajara, and was not liked because of his despotic and arrogant behaviour towards workers and neighbours. Her father-in-law, who is deeply involved in ejido politics, is hated and feared. Her own parents live in El Grullo, the capital of the municipality, which is only ten kilometres from Ayuquila. However, she is known as a charitable woman and has built good relationships and alliances in the village and with regional and state authorities. One of her strongest economic resources stems from the land and cattle she inherited, and she has manoeuvred to acquire more livestock.

I was looking forward to meeting her, since I had heard a lot about her in the village. She was comadre of many people, who spoke of her with respect and affection. Communication came quite easy, and she immediately told me how happy she had been with her husband, how many good relations he had with important people in the state government, and what a shock it had been for her when her husband was killed in the same village, near a tree that she later had cut down in order to ‘forget’ the dreadful incident. She narrated her difficult life, how she did not receive help from her family and had to migrate to the United States and work as a house maid to a stingy woman who counted the slices of bread she ate. She had left her seven children in Ayuquila with a woman whom she paid to look after them, and was planning to bring them to the United States with her, but heard that her parents-in-law had taken them to their house and would not let them go with their mother. She thus returned to Ayuquila with a small amount of capital, fetched her children and recovered the land which she had rented out to her father-in-law. It was not easy to reorganize her networks: she had hoped that her padrino (godfather) - who held a high post in the state government - was going to support her to start her enterprises, but she was turned down when she tried to approach him through his secretary.

Carola claims that her harsh father-in-law was often in her way in her endeavours, that he tried to take the land away from her. But she managed to soften him by inviting him for meals, not disagreeing with him openly and supporting him when possible in political meetings. She advised her family to be kind to their grandfather, and urged her son to help him with his cattle and associate himself with him in other economic enterprises. She also looked up old friends, offered an attentive ear to their problems and gained support for

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4: García Barragán, a general of whom I speak in Chapter 5, had been padrino at her wedding.
herself. This proved useful in order to counter the gossip which had risen in the village about her having found other men in the United States. Such rumours were particularly harmful, because land could be taken away from her if the ejido members received any indication that she could remarry. For them, a re-marriage almost inevitably implied that the new husband would acquire rights to her land. Land was scarce and such situations were to be avoided.

Carola managed to convince the ejidatarios, as well as her close kin and friends, that she had no plans for finding a new partner. She kept her land and later managed to obtain a permit from the municipality and the ejido to sell part of it for urban purposes, since it was located on the outskirts of the village. Furthermore, upon the death of her brother-in-law, his wife donated his land to Carola, and later she bought (through her son) another piece from her father-in-law, who no longer lived in the village.

She claims that her sons have helped her. One of them is married, but lives in the village and assists with the work, and another sends her small amounts of money regularly from the United States. She quickly explains that all she has belongs to them - the ‘casino’ she has just built was for her son (who is at the moment in the US) - the land is in their names, and the two pick-up trucks and old tractor are also theirs. She attends ejido meetings in her son’s place (although she is still an ejidataria, as she possesses 21 hectares in the hills) because he is in the United States, and comments that he will come soon to manage the casino.

Later, I heard her repeat the story several times, especially to other ‘newcomers’. She often used the image of subordinated widow to gain favour and portrayed her own enterprises as belonging to her sons, although I observed that she made decisions and managed the enterprises herself. This implied visiting regional authorities to obtain permits for parties and the sale of beer, organizing events in the casino and then selling drinks there, buying and selling cattle, contracting workers when it was required, coordinating the use of the tractor and the pick-up trucks, etc. She also confided that she did not yet have

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5. Although the Law of Agrarian Reform formally allows widows who remarry to continue possessing the ejido land they have inherited in their name, in everyday practice men often take control over it (see also Arizpe and Botey 1986, and Brunt 1992).

6. What local people label ‘casino’ is actually a large building in the village where parties, dances, and other events are held. As owner of the place, Carola can organize such events, benefitting sometimes from entrance fees, but especially through the sale of beer and drinks.
everything in her sons' names, as she could not trust them completely. However, her self-presentation as a single woman, who yearned for the support of her deceased husband and whose only interests were to sustain her family and assist those in need, helped her gain prestige and favour. In addition, she often ‘reminded’ others of the fact that she had good relations with important people, and used other contacts with influential people of the region to achieve her aims. She thus managed to establish reasonable contracts for renting out part of the land, to acquire credit for buying more cattle, and to obtain permits from the municipality and local authorities for selling ejido land, which was not an easy task as it entailed a lot of paperwork and lobbying in government offices. Her good nature and willingness to help others won the approval and sympathy of neighbours and friends, also outside the village. Local authorities and important families in the region knew her well, and she would sometimes visit them when collecting funds to assist people in need - as was the case of the families that were left homeless with the flooding - or to procure funds for church or charity.

Political ties left by her husband were not often effective in themselves, but were used to build her image. Participating in ejido meetings was crucial, since important decisions were made there, for example concerning land rights - she had to make sure her sons were not left out - and fiestas, which could now take place in the casino and provide her some profit from the sale of beer and soft drinks. However, she never presented herself as a successful entrepreneur, but used her sons' names instead, and often spoke of herself as ignorant in terms of bureaucratic paperwork and legal issues. By downplaying her capacities in defense of her interests, she enrols others in advocating in her favour.

Maria: venturing to exit subordination

At the beginning it was not easy to obtain information about Maria in Ayuquila. Gabriel, my husband - who was carrying out field research with tomato pickers in the region - spotted her in the tomato fields and tried to engage her in conversation, but she evaded dialogue and slipped away. He did, however, find out that she was from Ayuquila. I asked the beekeepers about her, and at first they said they did not know her. When I asked persistently, I was informed that she was of low moral standards. I was told that she went around with different men, that she had deliberately involved herself with Carola's sick son, for example, who was retarded and could not defend himself. Finally, someone pointed out her house to me on the outskirts of the village.

Horacia Fajardo - who was also doing research concerning the tomato pickers - and I went in search of her. During our visits, Maria appeared uneasy
and did not want to talk much. However, her five year old child, who was always hanging close to her, was curious about us and we established small dialogues, with Maria putting in a word or two. One day a photograph of the beekeepers slipped out of my notebook, and the child immediately wanted to see it. I showed it to them and asked Maria whether she knew the women of the group. She said she did not. Upon further urging, she accepted that she knew one or two, but said they were 'señoronas' (big women, meaning pompous and high class) and she never went around with such people. I realized that much of her resistance to speaking to me was because she identified me with the beekeeping group. Since then Horacia took over. She managed to establish a good relationship with Maria, and even participated with her in a day's work for the tomato companies. Most of the interviews with Maria were carried out by Horacia.

Maria was an unwed mother of three children and lived with her parents and brother in a borrowed adobe shack on the outskirts of the village. Her networks were weak as the family did not originate from the village. They came to live in Ayuquila to look after goats belonging to a man who lived outside the region, and after they had problems with him, her father held several sporadic jobs, including working for Carola as a cattleman - that is, when he was sober, since he was often seen in the streets in an inebriated condition. Maria's mother and brother also worked for the tomato companies, but Maria had become very skilled and she was almost a 'regular'. She did not know how to read or write, as did her parents, since they never sent her to school.

Her mother helped Maria with the children when she was at work, but it was Maria's responsibility to sustain them. Her parents allowed her and her children to sleep on some blankets that she spread on the dirt floor of the small kitchen of the two-roomed house.

Maria was looked down upon and ignored by other villagers, who criticized her relations with men and labelled her as a 'woman of the streets' but, to us, she presented herself as having a partner, whom she claimed was at the time in jail in Guadalajara. She explained that he was not the father of her first child, but that he grew up with her family, and took her up after her first was born. All the same, she was 'classified' in the village as an unwed mother. Although it is quite common in Ayuquila that young girls become pregnant out of wedlock, the appraisal of the situation and the strategies devised are different in the different cases. Most families will try to coax the progenitor to marry their daughter, and if that is not possible, the girl is sent to relatives in the

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7. I write 'was', because, unfortunately, when I returned to the village in the summer of 1991 I discovered she had died of measles.
United States. A few women - generally with strong networks and economic backing to support them - have managed to stay in the village and either live with their families and continue to be ‘respected’ or start a life of their own. This was not precisely the case for Maria, who was censured by village gossip and whose parents grudgingly accepted her in the household, as they did not have the means or the networks to send her abroad.

There are other women in her situation within her circle of friends, most of whom work in the tomato fields as well, and others who have worked in local cantinas (saloons) and are described as having led la vida alegre (the happy life, meaning they had many lovers, mostly to earn a living). Since according to the Agrarian Reform Law mothers in charge of a family have rights to land, some of these women could have requested a plot (providing they had joined the ejido groups when these were being formed⁸). Maria did not even know she had such rights. Her access to legal information was limited because of her isolation from relevant networks in the village.

On the other hand, Maria spoke of her work in the tomato companies with pleasure. She explained that she got bored when there was no work, which was about three months every year. Being one of the most skilled, she never failed to be invited to work for the companies during the work seasons. While other labourers switched companies often, depending on the intensity of labour required and on the different networks they had established, Maria worked steadily for the same company. She did not like to work inside the packing plants, as other female tomato workers in the region favour, or inside the greenhouses, because she claimed it was tedious and she preferred open air. This implied harder work, having to toil all day under the hot sun in uncomfortable positions, squatting to plant the delicate tomato seedlings, securing the larger plants with strings and cutting the fruit when it was ready.

In the fields, Maria was one of the youngest and weakest looking women, but she was extremely fast⁹. However, one metre before finishing her row, she would stand up to rest, to joke with her friends, to challenge the boys to go and ‘play’ behind the tall, neighbouring sugarcane grass. The overseer - in this

⁸. In 1988, two ejido groups had been formed - the one included in the basic census and the ampliación (extension), although they functioned as one group. It was too late to include more members, as there was no land left. In fact, as I explain in the following chapter, the second group had considerably less land, and the beekeepers had trouble obtaining the one plot which they were also legally entitled to.

⁹. Torres (1992) describes a workday with Maria, whom he has named Lola in his article 'Plunging into the Garlic'.
case a middle aged woman - could not move her on to another row, as she had not yet finished the one she was working on. Nor could she hurry her, as the others were far behind. The boys were obviously intimidated by her teasing. The overseer pretended not to see. Maria’s influence was common knowledge among the workers in the tomato fields. She also knew how to deal with the boss when he came around to supervise.

In this context, she mocked the image of the discreet, submissive woman who must give men and authorities ‘their place’. It was not a total rejection of such notions in all the domains of her everyday life, but, within specific circumstances, she withdrew from a particular ‘subordination discourse’ in the field, paying for her exit with the social price of stigmatization and gossip.

However, rather than empathizing with other tomato pickers - whom one might conceptualize, because of their similar backgrounds and common relationship to the means of production, as of the same social stratum - Maria identified herself as effectively manoeuvring within a more vertical network which, in her eyes, put her in a more strategic and beneficial position. Towards authority, she identified and created her space for manoeuvre. This was partly made possible by the fact that there was no over-abundance of labour, and because the company needed people like her who were capable and fast. The fact that the overseer, as well as the head of the farm, were afraid of being made fools of in front of the others, and that Maria knew their ‘soft sides’ also served her purposes. Not only would she not give the company more physical work than she absolutely needed to, but she moulded the authority within the limits of her possibilities. In this way, she enroled (Latour 1986: 264-280) them in her own ‘circumstantial projects’ (Torres 1990), though obviously within the space negotiated, since these people also enroled Maria in their own projects.

Practices of subordination and room for manoeuvre

Juana, Carola and Maria, as I have mentioned, can be classified within different social groupings and economic positions in the village. Inequalities are clearly evident if one compares the space for manoeuvre that each woman has with respect to economic resources, to the making of decisions concerning financial interests, access to politically-strong networks, and to their possibilities of influencing local and regional authorities. Carola has managed to earn some money working in the United States, whilst Maria could not even consider

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making such a costly trip. Her weekly wages were never enough to meet daily subsistence needs, which she could only cover because she lived with her family, because her brother and mother also worked as labourers. On the other hand, although they had to subordinate themselves in some ways, Carola and Juana had the possibility of working their networks, of resorting to friends and kin in order to start enterprises, which was out of the question for Maria. It was not only that her few relatives were living in similar conditions in other villages, but that the boundaries she placed on her everyday endeavours and her conceptions of her own future were different. This has to do with her precarious condition, her life history, her low moral status in the village and the limited repertoire of opportunities open to her.

In this sense, access to resources affects the degree to which practices of subordination will touch certain crucial aspects of the women’s livelihoods and the degree to which through subordination practices they can procure some sort of space for manoeuvre. The significance of these practices, the values attributed to them and their impact on everyday life will vary within different contexts. These contexts, social arenas or domains of interaction, involve specific links to broader economic and political processes which shape in many ways the social relations taking place. Local and regional economic processes, political conditions enlisted by local and national institutions, such as the state, the catholic church and the ejido, are recreated within these diverse domains of interaction in the village.

It is to such domains that I point to in Chapter 2, where I depict the world of Ayuquila and its links to the 'outside world' in more detail. I highlight crucial economic and social aspects of village life, reporting briefly on the ways in which Ayuquila’s people organize themselves vis-à-vis resources and institutions, and the spaces women occupy in the village. The UAIM - the main focus of this study - is described as a specific domain of interaction, which illustrates how diverse village networks cross and colour the interaction taking place within the beekeeping group. Particular codes for interaction within the group are 'borrowed' or imposed from diverse village domains.

Here specific relations involving power are generated, validated or defied. To come to grips with how the group of beekeepers, as well as the three women we have just described, yield to power, how they are enroled in actions that lead to subordination, requires looking into social processes and identifying the kinds of structures forged in the relations between the women and their environment, between themselves and in their interaction with others. Thus Bourque and Warren, in their study of women in two Peruvian towns, argue that:
'subordination is not simply a status or a social state, rather it is the product of social processes and structural relations between men and women' (1981: 48).

Too often, however, studies focusing on gender, subordination and social structure remain primarily interested in identifying patriarchal relationships and hegemonical forms of association. Hence subordination of women is explained as a consequence of their structural situation. Subordination is conveniently used - as Latour (1986: 265) describes for the case of power - to 'summarize the consequence of a collective action' as well as to 'explain what holds the collective action in place'. Thus, it is argued that the system whereby women are subordinated is the cause of the subordination of women.

But how is it that those 'others' get themselves enroled? Through which processes do they perform actions that might lead to deprivation, subordination and forms of exploitation?

Female subordination has been commonly referred to as a coerced state. One cannot deny that this is very often the case, but it is not enough to describe the male violence, the lack of resources and routinized practices that edge women into conditions of submission and negation of their own selves, of their own projects. We also need to face the manner in which women themselves reconstitute such constraints and options in creating room for the fulfilment of their own goals. Subordination is constructed socially and women are not subordinated by definition, but are placed and place themselves in situations whereby domination and lack of control constitute major drawbacks. The cases of Juana, Carola and Maria provide clear examples of how women manipulate and rework their constraints in their struggle for space and room for manoeuvre, how they choose to exit within the limits of their possibilities or to comply, or to voice their demands through particular discourses. The reconstruction of their social worlds entails the interlocking of aims and practices whereby power is wielded and yielded. Whilst subordination practices sustain the wielding of power (power by subordination), the wielder him or herself often needs to yield, to subordinate him or herself if he or she is to exercise power (subordination for power).
Reduced to their condition as women?

Let us direct our attention once again to Carola, Juana and Maria, exploring a bit more what we have labelled their practices of subordination. Maria pays a high price for her moments of insubordination in the fields. In a way, her attitude is one of defeat, and the identity she portrays is that of a dispossessed person, with few options of escaping such a circumstance, hence acting with no apparent fear of future consequences on other spheres of her everyday life. This encourages her being stigmatized in the village, but at the same time is fostered by it. In terms of access to resources such as land, her moral rights in the village are so low that she cannot even access legal rights. However, to newcomers like ourselves, she defends her situation, presenting herself as having a partner who is at the moment in Guadalajara.

Carola manages to operate within the accepted social norms for village women; as a woman she must portray decorous images of herself, including that of a decent widow who yearns for the support of her husband. In theory, she could draw upon her legal right to land, since according to the law it cannot be taken away from her in case of remarriage, but, on the one hand, she does not have enough information concerning these issues, and on the other, experience has taught her that law can be stretched to fit different interpretations, and men can find ways of excluding her anyway, resorting to arguments such as her having rented the land, having lived in the United States, etc. Hence she chooses to project a non-threatening image of herself. Her actions follow established paths so as not to jeopardize her links with kin and friends. She does not oppose ideas concerning women’s roles in agriculture and other enterprises, but deals with them as best she can.

Similarly, Juana is not only acting vis-à-vis her husband, but is considering her situation in the village. She carries out tasks expected of her - such as looking after her brother and giving priority to her men at the table. She agrees to follow certain principles concerning, for example, the time at which she must be at home in the evening. The small, but cherished, benefits she enjoys are not to be jeopardized. As Foucault asserts:

'What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn’t only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse' (Foucault 1980a: 119).

Juana strives to be recognized as a dutiful, responsible and subordinated wife, and she draws up space for her husband in accordance with those terms. She
takes pride in being needed by her family. Carola also seems to prefer to describe herself as disadvantaged, and in some ways inferior to men, downplaying her own capacities, whilst Maria portrays herself as 'tied' to a man. Could we then speak of some kind of false consciousness whereby the women's actions, strategies and self-perceptions are dictated by more global processes? Are they victims of an externally-imposed system which determines their livelihoods and decrees gender inequalities?

These issues are examined in Chapter 3, where I provide a brief history of the project as it was described by the different actors involved. This enables me to discuss the ways in which the women saw themselves, the ways in which they were labelled and how this shaped the project and its perspectives. The identities adopted by the women at different stages of the project were very much coloured by social expectations, by images of hierarchies and by the identification of boundaries for action. I analyze the ways in which discursive practices reproduce and change, exploring the intertwining of actions, strategies, understandings and self-perceptions where knowledge and power are created, negotiated and transformed.

The space women create for themselves is constrained in many ways by their social circumstances, by the boundaries of the project and by gender relations, but to make a simple dichotomy between men and women overlooks the complex processes whereby gender is socially constructed. As Mohanty points out:

'The problem with this analytical strategy is that it assumes men and women are already constituted as sexual-political subjects prior to their entry into the arena of social relations. Only if we subscribe to this assumption is it possible to undertake analysis which looks at the 'effects' of kinship structures, colonialism, organization of labour, etc., on women, who are defined in advance as a group. The crucial point that is forgotten is that women are produced through these very relations as well as being implicated in forming these relations' (1988: 68).

Discourse, voice and boundaries

The brief descriptions of Carola, Juana and Maria show the diverse ways in which women deal with and rewrite gender discourses in different arenas. All three accept male dominance discursively, conforming to particular representations of their nature as females and to the norms to which they are expected to comply. They adjust their performances to 'scripts' which are
largely taken for granted, but which constitute clear reference points for setting boundaries on their projects and identities.

Maria, for example, disowns her image in the village as ‘a woman of the streets’, defining her identity as a ‘normal’ woman. Juana accords priority to the wellbeing of her sons, husband and brother. Even though her own enterprises contribute significantly to their financial situation, these are given secondary importance as compared to those of the male members of her family. Carola - who could be described as a strong, enterprising woman - is careful to ‘mask’ her ‘transgressions’ from the commonly-held notion of women as the ‘weaker’ sex, presenting herself as depending on her sons and on the help of other men. Juana and Carola are particularly careful to live up to the image of the ‘good’ woman, with an appropriate place in society, and thus consolidate their networks.

The importance of such networks is highlighted in Chapter 4. Kin ties, economic linkages and emotional bonds contribute to the formation of webs of interaction which commit women to certain social groups, to clusters where information is jointly processed and behaviour is sanctioned. In this chapter I map out the patterns of networks that cross-cut the beekeeping group, and show how the women’s space is limited by the establishment of boundaries and by the interlocking of projects. Specific scripts, often reproduced within these particular social groupings, contain regulations, social codes, ways of talking about gender relations and the legitimation of discursive practices. The interests and projects of individuals and social groups are ensnared within them, thus constituting ‘voices’ through which to express, defend and challenge practices and discourses.

However, boundaries are created and reworked. They are reproduced but also defied, hence constituting constrains on action as well as generating action. This is evident when exploring how the women experience the project and the means by which they deal with constraints in their everyday lives. In Chapter 4 I also provide profiles of three of the beekeepers, describing their backgrounds, delving into their lifeworlds in order to reach an understanding of the ways in which they perceive their participation in the project and the problems they encounter.

The lifeworlds of particular women are not just passively shaped by cultural norms and established discourses, but are resourcefully acted upon by agents. One cannot speak of coherent units of speech, behaviour or norms which determine the activities of these social actors. Meanings and interpretations are attributed and disowned, infractions are defined and negotiated, standards are reconciled. Thus, scripts cross-cut each other and are constantly re-transcribed, containing what one might identify as incongruities and discrepancies within
particular social interfaces at specific points in time. Discourses are constituted through social interaction, through processes involving the interlocking and segregation of voices, and in this way are shaped by the actors themselves. Maria, as a day labourer, gives voice to expressions of the company’s interests; Carola legitimizes ejido practices and Juana recreates family institutions, but they can only do so in terms of their own understandings, social experiences and relationships. Hence the voices expressed are not simply those of isolated individuals, but are emergent properties of social interaction and experience. Particular scripts constrain to a degree the expression of these specific women, but their own voices are constituents of the scripts. They not only tolerate but also reproduce the ideology and practices that we perceive as tying them to particular social locations. In this case, the women’s voices provide, as Foucault expresses it, ‘the wills that sustain discourses’, the ‘strategic intentions that support them’ (Foucault 1980b: 8). This signals the theoretical centrality of agency, which I discuss below.

**Practices of authority and subordination**

As agents, women re-transcribe different discourses, consolidate scripts and enlist interpretations in accordance with their practices, or adjust practices to comply to standards, and their strategies differ in the degree to which each is willing to yield personal space or able to defend it.

The women of Ayuquila maximize space for themselves, but also reproduce constraints in their struggle for survival. Juana bestows power on her husband, subordinating some of her needs in order to accommodate to socially constructed interests, to the role of the ‘good mother, wife and sister’ which she perceives as relevant. This restricts her space but allows a degree of legitimation whereby she maintains authority to influence her husband’s and brother’s behaviour, to determine home expenditures, to decide on her sons’ careers and to contribute to a definition of how other men’s and women’s behaviour in the village is to be judged.

Maria, on the other hand, while accepting her responsibilities towards her children with resignation and working hard to make ends meet, mocks the image of the ‘decent’, ‘submissive’ woman in the field. She challenges her ‘superiors’ and peers, establishes her own rhythm of work and taunts men. Her fleeting ‘exit’ from a discourse of subordination might be considered costly and of little benefit, but she takes the attitude that she has nothing to lose. However, her ‘resistance’ to comply with social norms provides boundaries for others’ conduct and constitutes a demarcation point for a discourse of subordination.
But power relations are not fixed. Although constructed on the basis of previous power relations, they are recreated in the process of interaction. Using her resources, Carola builds her alliances and works her networks to establish authority within decision-making arenas in the village. She enrols others in her own projects, building upon her self-identity as a widow. The image of the subordinated woman she portrays accommodates to social expectations, and thus is 'non-threatening' for men and for the authorities within the region, but, at the same time, allows her interests to be defended. Therefore, one cannot speak of a generalized lack of authority, but of particular uses of authority in order to achieve space and to restrict the space of others.

I explore these matters further in Chapter 5, entitled Power Brokers and Authorities. Through the analysis of a social situation - a meeting in which the women as a group interact face-to-face with a 'dominant' group in the village, typically considered a male organization - I delve into the intricacies and subtleties of authority and command in the everyday wielding of power. These processes also entail maps of knowledge, negotiation of interests, loyalties and formal identification of powers, as well as particular skills and techniques of control. Although not physically present in the event, the state wields power through the interpretations of the different actors, who surrender to what they consider are its designs.

In coming to grips with power

James Scott’s critical inquiry into concepts of hegemony in his study of a Malaysian village is pathbreaking in many ways. He points to the ways in which 'subordinate classes' are able, on the basis of their daily material experience, to penetrate and demystify to some extent the 'prevailing ideology'. He contends that forms of resistance require little or no coordination or planning and make use of implicit understandings and informal networks, but, that

'just as millions of anthozoan polyps create, willy-nilly, a coral reef, so do thousands upon thousands of individual acts of insubordination and evasion create a political or economic barrier reef of their own... there is rarely any dramatic confrontation, any moment that is particularly newsworthy... their safety lies in their anonymity' (Scott 1985: XVII).

He further explains that there is a 'front-stage' normally dominated by elites, but in the 'back-stage' this control often falls away.
The outcomes of such studies provide interesting insights, but power becomes an invisible entity which is indissolubly linked to structural components of society. But then how can we understand the fluctuations and transformations in power relations? What about the array of ups and downs where people - within diverse social situations - may have a grip on certain aspects but are completely lost in relation to others, or where one moment they have power and the next they don’t? How can we deal with the ways in which power presents itself in everyday situations?

Scott’s analysis remains flat in that it portrays the rich and the poor in clear-cut categories which act according to pre-established sets of interests. It presents an evolutionist picture whereby the poor gradually develop power in an effort to destroy the system that oppresses them. Yet, as we can see in everyday life, the 'coral reef' that is created 'willy nilly' often also contains within itself the basis for sustaining those 'in power’. I would say that, more than a solid coral reef, one should speak of flexible webs that configure power relations. These engender new forms of interaction and therefore have multiple faces.

As I have suggested above, power is fluid and difficult to measure - almost unnecessary to measure - but imperative to describe more precisely. It is not only the amount of power that makes a difference, but the possibility of gaining edge or advantage and pressing it home. The scope of power, commonly defined\(^\text{11}\) as the capacity of an individual to impose his/her own will upon others, must be unpacked to allow for an understanding that includes the probability of achieving only part of one’s own project, of accepting compromises, but then pressing home one’s moderate gains in an attempt to dominate as big a part of a situation as possible so that one can consider one’s aspirations consummated.

It is my challenge in this thesis to explore the apparently trivial aspects of power, to look into the more subtle and ordinary but also more generalized forms. Straightforward coercion and repression often mark the beginning of the end for the phenomenon labelled power, though, at the same time, the routinized, gentle, rewarding aspects keep it very much alive.

In Chapter 6 I discuss power at what one might term broader levels in society, at more abstract levels of representation - i.e. the relations with the state. The state is typically a 'power wielder’, that is, it is commonly recognized as a powerful actor. Throughout various chapters I describe how such a 'macro actor' presents itself, how it is transformed or reaffirmed at

\(^{11}\) Weber defines power as ‘the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests’ (Weber 1957: 152).
everyday levels of interaction, but here I focus specifically on how this 'macro power' is constructed, and identify the mechanisms by which it is recognized as such in the case of the UAIM projects in Mexico. I discuss Callon and Latour's (1981, 1986) approach to the analysis of power, which has made great strides in its conceptualization and study. However, as our case shows, their analyses leave out critical aspects which, I believe, can be tackled more adequately through an actor-oriented approach.

**Actors and agents: about the method**

In analyzing the cases of these three women, it is clear that a dichotomous notion of an overarching dominance, of absolute, hierarchically established control, and total, one-sided defeat is misplaced. This also makes us refrain from assuming predefinitions such as 'subordinate status' and fixed sex roles. Such descriptions petrify the circumstances and obscure the guts of power, its workings in everyday life, the efforts to negotiate consensus and to enrol others in particular projects, the differential use of similar resources and the meanings attributed to subordination. One needs to start with the notion that actors are agents who deal with and manipulate to a degree the circumstances they face in an effort to create room for manoeuvre (Long 1984). An important premise, as I have mentioned, is that power is not a pre-determined attribute which is possessed or not, but a fluid resource which is negotiated and used at all levels.

I will work with this notion of power throughout the following chapters, arriving at more precise definitions in its concrete manifestations as we go along, within specific contexts or domains of interaction. This implies an examination of the relationship between power and knowledge and between power, authority, and control. The grounds for analysis are provided by detailed field material. During my fieldwork, I followed closely the life histories of each of the women involved in the project, as well as of other men and women in the village. This affords elements for comparison, a method central to social anthropology. However, since my focus is the analysis of changing power relations, I do not take cases as a whole and compare them. Rather, I point to differences and similarities between the processes which take place within the social groups in the village and between these and other groups in Mexico. This was made possible through the use of secondary sources, including articles concerning UAIMs, newspaper clippings, policy documents, as well as interviews with UAIM members in the region, with state representatives and NGO workers who support UAIMs in other parts of the country. In this way, crucial aspects are highlighted and contrasted.
I rely heavily on an actor-oriented approach for the present study, the implications of which I will spell out at different stages. Suffice it here to mention that from this perspective, propelling agents are not outside forces but actors and their interpretations. Actions are not predefined in terms of their functional significance to self-regulating systems, but are constantly redefined and given meaning in dynamic interrelations between people and the natural and social environment.

It thus becomes significant to analyze the moments of construction and sanctioning of values, interests, and hierarchical relations. One needs to delve into the forging in time and space of commitments and cleavages, of associations and disassociations which involve power and knowledge. This entails exploring interface situations. Social interfaces have been defined by Long as:

'critical points of intersection between different social systems, fields or levels of social order where structural discontinuities, based upon differences of normative value and social interest, are most likely to be found... Such discontinuities are characterized by discrepancies in values, interests, knowledge and power. Interfaces typically occur at points where different, and often conflicting, lifeworlds or social fields intersect' (1989: 1-2).

Hence, it is important to probe into the struggles that take place, into the lifeworlds of the different actors involved, into the everyday situations where one can see how different 'projects' interconnect, where interests clash or merge, where power might imply the possibility of control, of prerogative, of some degree of authority and capacity for action, be it front- or backstage, for flickering moments or for long periods.

In order to get a grip on these processes, I have carried out not only formal and informal interviews and a survey of the village, but I have participated in village daily events, especially those concerning the beekeepers. I was invited to parties, school events, political meetings, etc. I spent many days of leisure with them, accompanied them at their homes and shared some of their daily chores, sometimes working with them in the fields and often with the beehives. I also attended the ejido and beekeepers’ association meetings and was present in their lobbying at government offices. With state officers my interaction was less intense, although I did visit them in their offices and occasionally at home, and attended meetings where they interacted with ejidatarios and with the beekeepers. I also organized two workshops, one with the group of beekeepers and another involving the group and other women in the village. Here we
managed to discuss important issues concerning their interpretations of the events taking place, their aspirations as women and the roles attributed to them by others. All this I registered carefully in my field diary, and some of the events were also tape recorded. One of the workshops is videotaped.

But delving into the apparently trivial aspects of everyday life complicates our story. It might be simpler to describe abstract, single-stranded processes which everyone knows do not take place as such, but which might be identified as underlying many social processes. However, this leaves out crucial variations that make a difference. As Abrams (1982: 250) points out, by highlighting 'the extent to which the individual can only be what is possible within some specifically constructed historical world', one is 'playing down the extent to which individuals, thus constrained, construct and reconstruct such historical worlds by exploiting the distinctive ambiguities of interaction'.

Involved in these 'micro' social relationships are issues of a more general nature, the workings of power in processes described as global. The inhabitants of Ayuquila cannot escape certain politico-economic conditions which mould their possibilities for action, restrain their access to resources and configure particular perspectives for their future. Without disregarding the ways in which these processes are intertwined, I want to stand back from an interpretation that reduces these problems to issues of cultural accommodation, hegemonic ideologies or the results of class struggle. Village life is not embedded within structural conditions, but rather is recreated in particular ways, given form, and modified.

Thus, social life as analyzed throughout the thesis includes the meanings that different actors ascribe to it and the practices in which they engage in interrelations with others. To aid me in reaching an understanding of the different processes that are involved, I have used different methodological devises such as a survey of the village, discourse analysis, the exploration of life histories, the study of kin and other social networks, and situational analysis. I have also explored the main domains of interaction which cross-cut the beekeeping project. This allows me to observe social processes in their different dimensions and permits a triangulation of data.

In each of the chapters, then, I focus on a specific domain, and draw upon one main methodological device (although often in combination with others), as well as discussing a particular set of theoretical issues pertaining to it, as I have explained in earlier sections of this chapter. The structure of the thesis is depicted in Figure 1:
Thus, in Chapter 1 I have presented vignettes of the personal domains of three women with a view to exploring different modes of subordination. Chapter 2 then moves to provide a view of pertinent village domains for which I draw upon a survey of the village, although this is permeated and coloured by the insights gained from the different actors’ perceptions of their situations. Here I elucidate the notion of domains, a central concept in the following discussions.

In Chapter 3 the main focus is the domain of the project. I use discourse analysis to study the way in which the project is forged and tackle the issues of identity and discourse in their interrelations with power.

The domain of the family is described Chapter 4, where I map out the kin networks and social webs that shape the interactions taking place and present the lifeworlds of three women members of the project. Network and lifeworld analysis are employed to examine how social relations are redefined.

Chapter 5 is situated in the *ejido* domain. Here I use situational analysis to understand the processes by which control and authority is achieved. The notions of 'power brokers' and 'authorities' and their relation to agency are the main conceptual issues discussed.
The scope of analysis is broadened in Chapter 6. Here the domain of the national UAIM programme is the focus and I use elements from the 'sociology of translation'\textsuperscript{12)} to discuss the construction of power through specific techniques such as enrolment and \textit{interessement} in actor-networks.

Chapter 7 draws the threads together and compares my findings with current theories on power, and in the final chapter I discuss issues of power and empowerment in the field of development studies. Here I suggest that there is an acute 'poverty of practice' in this regard and that our concepts of power need thorough reformulation. This implies taking a second look at power by subordination and maintaining an open mind concerning subordination for power.

\textsuperscript{12} As introduced by Callon and Latour (1981, 1986) and Law (1986).
Chapter 2

VILLAGE DOMAINS AND SPACE FOR WOMEN

In the sixties it was officially recognized that Mexican rural areas had been severely decapitalized. The country was importing basic food crops, such as maize and beans, traditionally sown by large sectors of the rural population. Rural women were frequently compelled to search for more immediate and reliable sources of income, in many cases resorting to migration.

State measures to reverse the spiral of crisis that was overcoming the country included efforts to increase agricultural yields through a process of intensification and modernization. One of the strategies adopted entailed the encouragement of small units of production which, with the aid of technical innovations, would employ local labour in a more efficient and intensive way. Although such measures were generally oriented towards (predominantly male) ejidatarios and comuneros, the UAIM programme corresponds to such an approach. Policy documents depict the UAIM programme as an effort to support the economy of rural families through the participation of women in the process of production (see Mantilla 1989: 10, and Velázquez 1992: 93). They were conceived of as part of an agenda oriented to thwart migration of rural women to the cities and as an instrument of social welfare (Aranda 1993: 205).

As Lucía Mantilla (1989: 10-11) suggests, the programme does not escape the guidelines of politico-administrative centralization; it was conceived at the top by central organisms of a national nature, and lacked an analysis of the situations in which it was to be implemented, as well as proper adjustment to the economic and social conditions of the diverse regions of the country. I agree with Mantilla, although, rather than assuming beforehand the centrality of institutions and 'external forces', my starting point is how human actors construct, recreate and transform institutional programmes within specific contexts of interaction.

1. Peasants organized under the legal status of indigenous communities, in arrangements similar to those of ejidos.
I will introduce the reader to the world of Ayuquila as it was presented to me in 1988, to the street corners where patterns of interaction are recreated, to the webs of relations which include bonds to different environments. I will describe organizational forms embedded in the villagers’ use of land and their work procedures, their economic strategies, household patterns and solidarity networks, highlighting how social asymmetries are reproduced in the process. This allows us to visualize women’s access to social, economic, geographical and symbolic space in Ayuquila, and provides a vista of the arenas through which the project is woven into village life.

Ayuquila

The subtle aura of ‘aristocracy’ of Ayuquila - which its inhabitants are keen to accentuate - is soon perceptible to observant visitors when interacting with locals. This small town of 161 households is located within an important irrigation district along the main road linking the Municipal capital of El Grullo to the State capital of Guadalajara, in Jalisco, western Mexico (see Map 1).

It is one of the oldest settlements in the area, built as it is upon the remains of the most prosperous hacienda\(^2\) of the Autlán-El Grullo region, which distinguishes the village from neighbouring ones. Citizens allege that this pueblo (town) has always been privileged by government aid. While the neighbouring ‘ranchos’\(^3\) have been quite neglected, Ayuquila has received a lot of infrastructural help from the government, in the form of cobblestone streets, electricity, schools (they have a technical secondary school, which not many villages of Ayuquila’s size possess), drainage etc. They explain that this is due to the fact that its citizens - although they can be difficult people - have the will to cooperate with the authorities, providing labour when required for local public works, but also supporting the ruling party (PRI: Institutional Revolutionary Party) by participating in large numbers in political meetings, welcoming regional and state authorities with meals and music, and attending

\(^2\) This colonial hacienda enterprise combined different forms of labour: tied peasant labour with rights to cultivate small plots, sharecroppers and wage labourers. The hacienda survived into the 1930’s when the land reform was implemented in the region (see chapter 5 for details).

\(^3\) The difference between the pueblo - which they claim to constitute - and the ranchos is constantly stressed, arguing that the ranchos are just conglomerations of households lacking proper authorities and many facilities.
Map 1: Autlán - El Grullo valley where Ayuquila is located

promptly to their demands.

Ayuquila's people are proud to describe how the village has also progressed due to the fact that many of its citizens have gone out to study, claiming that 50 of its inhabitants\(^4\) have some academic title or other, not counting those who are still studying and some school teachers who have to live in other places. The latter, we are told, do not always promote progress directly but influence their parents and convince them of the need to make changes. They share their experiences, explaining what life is like in other regions.

The centre of town is not in front of the church, as is traditional in many Mexican villages, but the street alongside the barn where movie pictures are shown every weekend. This is the street where people who want to sell edibles in the evenings set up their small tables or carts, and where villagers from the 'old part' of the town tend to gather. The inhabitants living in the new colony - formed by avecindados who mostly work in the tomato companies - generally congregate in the neighbouring village of El Cacalote for entertainment, rather than meeting in Ayuquila; that is, except for the football season, when men, women and children from all the village meet enthusiastically almost every weekend to watch or play football. However, it is especially here that groups can be differentiated. Most of the women from the 'old part' of town sit in the north side, close to their friends' homes, from which they usually borrow chairs, and use umbrellas to protect themselves from the sun. Men crowd around the small shelter located on the south where beers and refreshments are sold. Male and female avecindados also group according to gender, although they generally keep a little distance from the others.

In 1988, the geographical boundaries of the urban area included the shabby new colony (see Map 2). Many of the villagers from the 'old part', however, overlooked the colony in their descriptions of Ayuquila, and emphasized Carola's plot\(^5\) - which I saw as an empty stretch of land - as the place where the future centre of the village would be located. They described each of the plots that comprised it, almost picturing the houses that would soon be constructed by the neighbours who had acquired pieces of land there.

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\(^4\) In 1988 I found a population of 711.

\(^5\) As I mentioned in Chapter 1, Carola inherited a plot of agricultural land and was selling it for urban purposes.
Map 2: Village of Ayuquila

Original drawing by Ana Magdalena Torres Villarreal
Locales and institutions

Like every other part of the world, in this small village local sites and organizational scenarios are constantly 'reinvented' through practical activities, events and social relations which embroider patterns on the environment and constitute it in meaningful ways. Hence, agricultural land, urban settings, buildings and streets acquire relevance for specific activities; they become associated with certain authorities, institutions and norms, and people behave in particular ways within them.

Giddens (1984: 118) argues that the 'settings of interaction are essential to specifying its contextuality'. He uses the concept of locales when referring to the 'use of space to provide the settings of interaction':

'Locales provide for a good deal of the 'fixity' underlying institutions, although there is no clear sense in which they 'determine' such 'fixity'. It is usually possible to designate locales in terms of their physical properties, either as features of the material world or, more commonly, as combinations of those features and human artifacts. But it is an error to suppose that locales can be described in those terms alone - the same form of error made by behaviourism with regard to the description of human action. A 'house' is grasped as such only if the observer recognizes that it is a 'dwelling' with a range of other properties specified by the modes of its utilization in human activity.'

The Catholic church, built at the time of the hacienda, constitutes a specific locale. Most of Ayuquila's population is Catholic, and, although participation of everyone has been generally welcome in church events, men and women's expected behaviour and commitments are clearly differentiated. A priest visits Ayuquila almost every week to celebrate mass, at which many women and a few men attend. In 1988, two groups of women operated in relation to the Catholic church. One was a bible study group, which held meetings to read and discuss sacred texts. This group was directed by two young, unmarried women in Ayuquila, who received special instruction from priests in El Grullo. Another group, mainly formed by married - and generally older - women, met at least once a week to pray. They also organized events to raise money for the church - such as small fairs, dances, raffles and selling food - , they cleaned the church and kept its garden, and attended the priest when he visited the village.

Only four of Ayuquila's people espouse another religion, that of the Jehovah's Witnesses. One is a preacher and lived - at the time this study took place - with his family in the United States, another two are avecindados and
mostly interact with people of El Cacalote, the neighbouring village, and the fourth is a member of the beekeeping group (see Chapter 4), who dares not speak of religion within her Ayuquila network. In this respect, she interacts with her kin in El Cacalote, and attends meetings in Autlán when she can get away from her husband, who considers himself Catholic and detests her religious activities.

One of the most prominent institutions in the village is the ejido of Ayuquila, although only about 12% of the economically active population of the village are actually considered members. Important decisions are made in the casa ejidal (the building where they hold their meetings) concerning land, credit, services such as electricity, water for irrigation and home consumption, etc. If people gather in the casa ejidal, it is often assumed that important personages have visited or that a relevant issue has emerged that needs to be discussed. On the other hand, with alterations in social relations come changes in the significance of the places. Hence, when there is a weak comisariado who faces opposition, many decisions are inclined to be taken in the homes of the more influential people, where ejidatarios gather to discuss strategies or to hear more 'reliable' versions of new information before the formal assembly. Over time, the ejidatarios have established styles of organization and leadership, ways of dealing with the physical, social and political environment. Within the ejido, history plays a large role. Those who have not suffered the struggles and pains over acquiring land cannot easily claim the same status, and hence the same privileges, as the initiators of the group, even though they might be entitled to these legally. Lines of authority are defined in terms of their history, as well as in terms of the 'powers' they might represent. Agricultural land, then, also comprised specific locales. Each plot of land had a history to it and constituted a space to which not everyone had access in the same way.

**Land and work**

In Ayuquila, as in most of rural Mexico, the uses of land, the organization created in efforts to possess it and make it produce, have shaped social relations in many ways.

About one-third (122 hectares) of the arable land of the ejido of Ayuquila is irrigated, most of which is planted with sugar cane, while the rest (214 hectares) is sown with maize during the rainy season and vegetables in the dry one. The land is divided into many small plots that range from one to ten hectares under the management of 47 officially registered ejidatarios (seven of whom were migrating at the time this study took place, but whose rights were
Village domains

represented in the ejido by a close relative). The majority are cattle owners and grow maize and/or sugar cane, or a few vegetables. The ejido also owns 450 hectares on the hillsides. This is managed collectively (although each ejidatario has 'rights' to approximately 8 hectares of it) and mostly used for coamiles where vecindados or other villagers borrow plots to grow maize. Five members of neighbouring ejidos also live in Ayuquila (because their plots of land are closer to this village, or because they have married into Ayuquila families) as well as three pequeños propietarios (private owners) who have acquired small pieces of land.

However, not only heads of households are involved in agriculture. Often wives, sons and daughters are engaged in making the land produce. On the other hand, the social and economic life of the entire family is influenced in many ways by their possibilities of access to land; this affects their activities, their status in the village, the networks to which they link or delink themselves, and other economic options which open up or close down for them. Figure 2 portrays Ayuquila’s economically active population and their access to land. There is a small overlap because two or three ejidatarios also rent land from others and a few sometimes borrow a coamil plot.

As can be observed, half of Ayuquila’s economically active population has, in one way or another, access to land. But differences between them can be great, since it is not the same to rent a coamil - which can only be used for maize and produces very low yields - than to rent irrigated plots. Furthermore, about 22% of the ejidatarios - all belonging to the founding group of the ejido (and registered in the censo básico, the original census) - have ten or more hectares of land (and some own or rent several plots), whilst 63% possess plots that range from one to 9 hectares, and 15% - all belonging to the ampliación (the extension, a second group for whom there was not much land left) - have less than one hectare or no arable land apart from their share on the hillside. Also the quality of the soil is different, and the rich, irrigated plots are mostly concentrated among the first generation of ejidatarios.

Some ejidatarios have already divided their plots between their sons. For practical reasons, I have included these sons as ejidatarios in the charts, although not all might be formal members of the ejido of Ayuquila - and hence are not allowed to attend meetings and take part in decision making.

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6. A coamil is a plot of land on the hillside, generally consisting of poor soil, where maize is sown using 'slash and burn’ techniques. In Ayuquila, the coamiles are located in the part of the ejido that is owned collectively and used for cattle grazing. Coamileros borrow the land from the ejido and as a way of payment leave the maize stalks for the ejidatarios’ cattle. Sometimes they also pay a small amount in maize.
Although most producers have, at one point or another, oriented their enterprises to maize, beans, and horticulture, saving part of their crops for subsistence and selling the rest in the market, such strategies have been very difficult to sustain, and internal patterns of agriculture have become quite differentiated. The profits from commercialized crops were largely spent paying off debts to local moneylenders or to the rural bank during the production cycle, and very often families were compelled to sell their reserves little by little in order to cover these debts, buy medicines, and meet their other daily needs.

However, a few producers managed to accumulate some resources. Informal contacts and market networks were crucial in this process, although the different qualities of land and access to irrigation were also important. Previous to the creation of the dam which was to benefit the whole district, Ayuquila possessed an irrigation system built during the hacienda period. Some of the producers privileged with irrigation obtained reasonable profits with which they bought...
cattle, vehicles and farm implements. These conditions opened up economic possibilities for them, since they were not as tied as the rest to external sources of funding.

Roughly speaking, producers' efforts to gain profit from their agricultural activities followed three directions. One was oriented to the international market through companies which acted as intermediaries in the export of melons and tomatoes; another was to establish their own ventures geared to regional and local markets for the sale of sugar cane, green tomatoes, cucumbers, onions and corn-on-the cob; and the third was to work with the government rural bank (BANRURAL) in the production of maize, sorghum and beans.

A small group - acting individually and without a predesigned strategy - established partnerships with melon companies that arrived in the region. They did not rent their land directly, but at different points in time either sold their produce to the company or sharecropped it with them. This introduced a more intensive use of technology such as fertilizers and modern implements, as well as consolidating a double season pattern, in which they sowed two or at times three crops in a year on the same land. Although these 'modern' ways were not novel to the producers - some had initiated changes in land use on their own plots and a few had worked in the United States, in the coast or in the north of Mexico with such techniques - these practices acquired greater acceptance when they obtained positive results. Successful producers were able to capitalize, buying new implements and acquiring vehicles.

Problems such as frauds committed by the companies drove some of these farmers, and others who built upon the formers' experience, to search for further alternatives, either contacting other companies or venturing out on their own. Through trial and error they learned to distinguish the best times for sowing certain products in order to acquire better prices in the market when demand was high, and managed to make connections with intermediaries in Guadalajara. Interaction within political networks in the region proved useful. Many ejidatarios had worked for an influential political figure - General García Barragán (see Chapter 5) - whom they had had close contact with in struggles for land. Working at his ranch they gained access to local markets, and opened up possibilities for making contracts with the sugar mill, for example, which the General had helped to introduce. Sugar cane was not very popular because it was a longer term investment and profits were not high, but on the other hand, it was a more familiar crop since many small producers had previously worked as labourers in modest sugar mills in the region (van der Zaag 1992). It was a secure source of income and it involved little work, allowing them to concentrate on other economic activities. The heaviest job, cutting the cane, is mostly undertaken by work parties organized through the sugar mill.
Fields dedicated to sugar cane expanded, especially when horticulturalists faced problems of pests and markets. Cattle owners found it fruitful to use the tips of stalks which they could acquire free of charge. They only needed to cut them and find the means of transporting them to their cattle. The health insurance that the industry also provides is judged very convenient in case of accidents and sickness, and producers manoeuvre to register friends and relatives as workers when the latter face health problems. In addition, they receive a few sacks of sugar each year and are entitled to a small pension. At times, land with problems of crop disease or poorer soils is left for sugar cane, since the insurance will pay for most of the losses, and producers argue that at least they do not have to ‘invest good money in bad enterprises’. Some sugarcane producers pay a peon (worker) to look after their crop. These workers receive their daily pay plus a percentage of the final outcome.

It was soon discovered that selling maize as corn-on-the-cob was profitable. This practice spread quickly, as producers could sell the corn in the open market and the fresh pasture to cattle owners. However, growing corn-on-the-cob had the disadvantage that they could not acquire credit from the bank for this purpose, which drove them to search for other sources of financial aid. Also, some of them preferred to continue harvesting dried maize, as this could be used for home (and cattle) consumption. The leaves of the dried maize could also be sold to a small industry that was rapidly growing: hojeros commercialized such leaves to be used in the making of tamales, a traditional Mexican dish. The economic organization of households in Ayuquila relies heavily on maize for daily consumption, plus the raising of chickens and pigs, and sometimes the keeping of a horse or a mule for labouring in the fields. Hence many farmers devote at least part of their land to maize production.

Most producers have been slow in changing their established patterns of agriculture. Cattle owners (there are 22 in the village, plus eleven who own from one to five cows), for example, were used to grazing their herds in the hills in the rainy season. In the dry season, when there was no grass on the hills and water was difficult to find, they would bring them down to feed on the stalks left in the fields after harvesting maize. This was convenient because the cattle were closer to water sources (irrigation canals and the river) in the dry season. Furthermore, cattle would manure the fields whilst eating up the maize stalks, and the land was ready to be used again without much fertilizing. New crop cycles entailed a more intensive use of land, whereby two or three crops a year could be produced on the same plot. This meant cutting the maize stalks to leave the land for the next crop, and it also implied more difficulties in providing feed and water for the cattle during the dry season. Hence the resistance of such farmers to new crop cycles.
The growing of a second irrigated crop jeopardized their livestock enterprises, but more than this, their practices had been fixed to a certain way of relating to land. Their plots, as I have mentioned, constituted specific locales where patterns had in some way become established. Cattle owners were influential in the village. Possessing cattle was a matter of status as well as a successful economic enterprise. Hence one important source of status and feelings of security was threatened.

Some ejidatarios opted for renting out their land to other producers in order to dedicate themselves fully to other income-generating activities. Although this was often viewed as irresponsible behaviour - interpreted as showing little attachment to land - they were exonerated when the family faced real financial troubles on the grounds that agriculture was becoming less and less profitable. A few established sharecropping arrangements with neighbours or kin, and others hired workers to carry out the necessary labour whilst they migrated to the United States or engaged in other activities. In 1988, nineteen ejidatarios - amongst them four women - were renting out their land to local producers. Renting out of land was actually illegal for ejidatarios, although the practice was quite common. Often ejidatarios protected each other, hiding information concerning the renting of land from state officials. But the latter also frequently overlooked such cases - especially when widows were involved - except when it was in their interest to denounce them (when they could acquire a small fee for keeping silent, when they were interested in allotting their land to someone else, etc.). Two or three ejidatarios rent land from other ejidatarios, as do a few in-migrants (avecindados) who also work as day labourers for the tomato companies and sometimes for local farmers.

Adult children of ejidatarios and their families who have no land rights often help with the family enterprise, looking after the cattle or sowing part of the parent's land. A common arrangement is that the son - or son-in-law - receives part of the offspring from the cattle and can milk the cows for the benefit of his nuclear family, and in the case of land, the harvest is divided, taking into account a small payment for their work and other inputs. Kin relations are reinforced through association with agricultural land, as will be seen in Chapter 4 when describing webs of interaction within the beekeeping group. Ejidatarios have the right to name heirs for their land, and they almost always name close relatives. Often would-be heirs start helping out with agricultural tasks, or inherit part of the land during the lifetime of the ejidatario him or herself. In some cases the parent's land is divided between two sons (or daughters, when there are no sons).

As in most Mexican rural areas, there is a large demand for labour in some periods and a shortage in others. Jobs such as cutting corn (harvested fresh
before it dries into maize) imply tough work, but is carried out in a few hours and is well paid according to village standards. However, the season is short, and it often coincides with the harvest time of other crops.

**Links to government institutions**

Links to (and separations from) wider institutions frequently take place within specific domains of interaction in local arenas. This, of course, implies the interplay of power relations, mutual redefinitions of authorities, roles and commitments. It is in this way that more global patterns of organization are 'localized': institutional frameworks intersect and are organized in distinctive ways, providing and reshaping links to the broader context.

Organization within the *ejido*, for example, followed pre-established patterns largely dictated by state institutions. The Law of Agrarian Reform stipulated that the assembly of *ejidatarios* was the maximum authority, that it should elect a *comisariado ejidal* as its representative, accompanied by a secretary, a treasurer and a *comité de vigilancia*. Such elections must be made in the presence of state representatives. Assemblies should take place every month, where decisions concerning the *ejido* were supposedly taken. However, although the *ejidatarios* generally complied to such patterns of organization, local structures of authority were respected and the law was stretched or sometimes ignored to fit their personal commitments.

Relations with BANRURAL, on the other hand, were not so straightforward as they might appear. *Ejido* authorities and local leaders forged specific ties with certain officials, often constructed indirectly during drinking sessions. This was encouraged by the practice - common in Mexican rural areas - of inviting state officials for meals and drinks in an effort to win their favour and solve bureaucratic problems, especially concerning land tenure, but also when they needed credit or other government services. The cost of such entertainment was shouldered by all the members of the *ejido* group, either through individual quotas or with money obtained from the sale of community pastures. Personal and group alliances were established and loyalties secured in this way.

With the introduction of government credit programmes via BANRURAL, producers had, in theory, access to subsidies and to a more intensive use of some technological innovations, such as fertilizers and more modern implements. The general complaint, however, was that whilst the costs of consumer goods and agricultural inputs escalated rapidly, the price of their products remained the same. Markets were difficult and tricky. In harvest times, prices of maize, beans and vegetables were low, only to increase when the
peasants needed to buy them. Bitter criticisms were directed against BANRURAL, which was accused of corruption and inefficiency. Ejidatarios argued that specific quantities and brands of fertilizer and seeds were imposed on them, and not only that, they often arrived too late to be used in the productive cycle. Anyhow, many ejidatarios were abandoning the rural bank. Some turned to kin or local moneylenders, but the interest rates were high. In 1960, a regional savings cooperative - Santa María de Guadalupe - was created under the advocacy of a priest and a Catholic organization - La Acción Católica Mexicana - in El Grullo, the Municipal capital. In 1974 it was introduced to Ayuquila. The cooperative provided money with very low interest rates, and without many prerequisites. It became a much resorted to blessing and in 1988 only three ejidatarios accepted credit from BANRURAL to till their land.

Producers did, however, often receive credit from BANRURAL to obtain cattle. State programmes oriented to the acquisition of livestock and tractors by officially organized groups were well received, but quickly transformed into more manageable, family-based enterprises. The cattle were immediately divided up among the members, and thus families who previously did not have access to such resources could now add a few cows to their meager capital, although many complain that the market-value of livestock has gone down and that they are left with large debts. A group that obtained a tractor was reduced from 16 to three people, who in the end managed to pay for it with difficulty, only to sell it immediately. Interpersonal problems amongst between them had become unbearable, which added to the fact that the tractor proved to be unprofitable. They claim, nevertheless, that it gave some benefits, since tractors were difficult to obtain in peak periods. Now they at least had one available for the village. The members of the group could plough and cultivate whenever they needed to. Yet they maintained that agriculture as a principal occupation had become an unsustainable activity. Two of the members of the group experienced complete loss of their crops with flooding, as did many other ejidatarios, and were compelled to diversify their activities.

As Bartra (1992: 131) argues, the small amounts of subsidy injected through government programmes have not managed to recapitalize peasant agriculture; firstly, because significant sums are siphoned off by a corrupt bureaucracy, and secondly, because a good part of the subsidies that reach producers are channelled off to cover family emergencies and daily consumption needs rather than invested in production.

Lack of options for productive investment and undeferrable urgencies cannot, of course, be solely analyzed within the context of local domains, since they are inextricably linked to wider financial and market factors, to price levels and to
power relations in national and international arenas. However, the experiences and resources acquired through encounters with BANRURAL, its officials and its programmes, with the savings cooperative and other institutions, shaped the emergence of specific forms of organizational response to such problems. This consolidated particular groups and established networks, alliances and loyalties, which also turned out to be of relevance for the criteria with which the UAIM initiative was locally evaluated and for the willingness of local people to comply with programme stipulations which affected them.

Other economic activities and social asymmetries

50.2% per cent of Ayuquila’s total population is economically active. As we saw in Figure 2, approximately half of this population has access to land and in one way or another engages in agriculture. But, as Figure 3 illustrates, most households also undertake other income-generating activities.

Figure 3: *Other income-generating activities carried out by the economically active population of Ayuquila*

- 14% overlap between activities
- 50% of activities are directly related to agriculture
  (e.g. trade and transport servicing agriculture, agricultural field labour, livestock raising)
The pie chart in Figure 3 gives a breakdown of these other sources of income. These include agricultural day labouring (161 persons, 38.6%), trade (55 persons, 13.2%), services (87 persons, 20.9%) labour migration (73 persons, 17.5%), and cattle raising (33 persons, 7.9%), leaving 8 persons (1.9%) dependent solely on agriculture. There is 14% overlap between activities as described in the figure, because some people combine two or more activities.

Figures 4 and 5 give a detailed breakdown by gender and sources of income of farming and non-farming Ayuquila households. Of the 359 people engaged, in one way or another, in income-generating activities, 248 (69.1%) are men, of whom 125 (34.8%) are heads of households, while 111 (30.9%) are women.

As we can observe from the figures, most cattle owners are concentrated among the male farming population. Correlated with this is the fact that many vecindados are relative newcomers to Ayuquila and therefore are concentrated among those without land. No woman from non-farming households has cattle, whilst three women from farming households own relatively large herds (often widows who have inherited) and the remaining 5 only a few head.

Commercial activities are also predominant among the group with access to land. Although many of the women from this group regularly assist their husbands with agricultural tasks, they also carry out small-scale economic activities such as peddling clothes, shoes, perfumes and cosmetics. Other small-scale commercial activities entail the selling of tacos and snacks, milk, sweets, etc, also mostly undertaken by women, and the peddling of sliced fruit which is more a male activity. The retailing of larger products, including used clothes (acquired in packs from the US), new dresses and shoes is accomplished by both sexes, although men tend to engage in such activities on a regular basis, whilst women use their 'spare time' for these undertakings. Some women combine household work with other family-based economic activities, such as the running of small shops, retailing milk, or making and selling of tortillas (a Mexican staple). These I have labelled 'medium traders' in Figures 4 and 5. Medium trade includes modest grocery stores, a tortillería, a butchery and a repair shop. Most of the women involved in these establishments belong to the farming households, some of whom share the responsibilities with their husbands. Large trade entails major commercial activities, other than selling their own crops or cattle. Except for one case of money-lending, and the case of Carola who was selling off part of her land for urban plots, these enterprises are carried out by men who buy and sell used cars, fruit from orchards (they pick and commercialize all the fruit yielded within a season) or plots with corn-on-the-cob ready for harvesting, for which they hire labour and then transport the produce for sale to large urban markets.
Figure 4: Gender and sources of income of members of farming households

- Cattle owners (small)
- Cattle owners (large)
- Small traders
- Large/medium traders
- Prof./techn. employees
- Domestic workers
- Dressmakers
- Musicians
- Bricklayers
- Transporters
- Other
- Tomato labourers
- Other agr. labourers
- Labour migrants (H)
- Labour migrants (Y)

WOMEN MEN

Represents 179 people, belonging to Ayuqulla households, of whom some combine two or more of these activities, so there is 14% overlap. (H)=Head of Household; (Y)=Young.

Figure 5: Gender and sources of income of members of non-farming households

- Cattle owners (small)
- Cattle owners (large)
- Small traders
- Large/medium traders
- Prof./techn. employees
- Domestic workers
- Dressmakers
- Musicians
- Bricklayers
- Transporters
- Other
- Tomato labourers
- Other agr. labourers
- Migrants (H)
- Migrants (Y)

WOMEN MEN

Represents 180 people, belonging to Ayuqulla households, of whom some combine two or more of these activities, so there is 11.6% overlap. (H)=Head of Household; (Y)=Young.
Although people in Ayuquila quickly mark differences between *ejidatarios* and *avecindados*, those possessing land are not automatically considered of higher status. However, being an *ejidatario* carries with it access to credit, to markets and to diverse government networks and other political domains as well as being able to capitalize on profits acquired through the commercialization of agricultural products.

In addition, education is an important asset for any family in Ayuquila. Families who do not have cattle, a tractor or vehicles to their names, but who manage to produce educated sons or daughters are generally considered of a 'higher class' or status. Family background is also crucial. The founders of the *ejido* had the possibility of acquiring the most fertile land - plots alongside the river or close to irrigation canals - and those who initiated the struggle for land acquired legitimation and the right to play a major role in decision making (see Chapter 5). Competition and conflict between families have been important in establishing *ejido* or village authorities, and in the allocation of funds from government aid programmes. On the other hand, the core families have generally adopted a strategy of closing off spaces for newcomers.

Twenty-eight people (thirteen men and fifteen women) in Ayuquila function as state or private enterprise employees, teachers, secretaries, etc. These jobs are relatively well paid and require special skills. Only those who have had access to education are eligible, and, as can be seen in Figure 4, the more numerous group consists of women with access to land, generally daughters of 'old' *ejidatarios* who had accumulated some resources and were able to provide education for their offspring. Educated males, on the other hand, have more opportunities for migrating to Guadalajara or other larger cities, or find ways of setting up their own enterprises.

Domestic services include working as maids in Ayuquila, but mostly in Autlán or El Grullo, as well as washing and ironing for other women in the village. This activity involves only women, most of whom do not have access to land, and is attributed low status. (Again, social ranks are associated with patterns of relations within specific locales.) However, some wives and daughters of *ejidatarios* also engage in domestic work outside their households. Dressmaking is also a female activity and generally implies having taken courses and owning a sewing machine. The less affluent cannot afford to engage in this.

A few people have started small enterprises from their savings while working across the US-Mexican border. Such is the case of 'Punto Rojo', a popular musical band which has been very successful in the region. It is now one of the most prominent enterprises in the village, and the people of Ayuquila are very proud of 'their' band. Although none of the members of the group are
ejidatarios, two of them often invest earnings in agricultural enterprise. There is also, as in most Mexican villages, a small billiard room which serves as a bar. Unlike most villages, Ayuquila also possesses what they label a casino, where dance parties and other events are held (see Carola, Chapter 1).

Another important activity is the transportation of agricultural products. Those who have managed to acquire a vehicle transport vegetables, maize, cattle feed, fertilizer and sugarcane tips for local producers. Only men engage in such work, which involves frequent trips to Guadalajara or Autlán. There are also seven bricklayers, often working on a discontinuous basis. Hence, they, like most of the economically active adults in the village, have to combine economic activities.

Day labouring constitutes by far the most resorted to income-generating activity. Listening to village conversations, one discovers that labourers are commonly categorized as falling into two groups: those who work al jornal (labourers who work for a daily wage), and those who work en lo que hay ('in what they can find'). Actually al jornal generally implies working for the tomato companies, whilst en lo que hay or as peones (day labourers) entails working for other ejidatarios or local producers. Peones often receive better rates of pay than those who work al jornal, and they work less hours. This means that they have more time for leisure or to engage in other economic activities, and are not tied to what they label as the 'slavery' of everyday work for the companies.

This explains why those with access to land prefer to hire themselves as peones, rather than to work in the tomato fields. Peones usually combine work on their own plots, commercial activities and bricklaying with labour for other producers. These labourers are the sons or relatives of ejidatarios, or are generally linked to the main core of village networks, and very few of them are women. Peones acomodados (steady workers), on the other hand, are labourers who are continuously at the service of a producer; and if there is no work in the fields, they will carry out other tasks. There are only a few peones acomodados in Ayuquila; they work for a large landowner who does not reside in the village. Ejidatarios cannot afford to keep such workers. Jobs offered to peones are often considered tough and not suitable for women. Only when ejidatarios grow tomatoes or other labour-intensive crops do they hire women.

Many women from non-farming households resort to working in the tomato fields. This leaves them little space for venturing into other kinds of activity, plus the fact that they can earn more money as labourers and receive a steady income. Often whole families engage in tomato work. Working for the tomato companies is considered of low status, especially for women. The company fields where tomatoes are cultivated are perceived as places where 'things can
happen to women*. Women are said to be too free in their interactions with men in company work. An ejidatario’s tomato field represents a different type of locale. The ejidatario is there to supervise his labourers and parents can feel more secure about their girls working for a neighbour or relative.

Even lower status is accorded those who cut sugarcane. Only one or two people from the colony of Ayuquila have ever hired themselves as sugarcane cutters. Workers for these tasks are brought in from other parts of the country. They live in special camps that are set up by the sugar industry and only stay in the region during the cutting season. In Ayuquila such workers are labelled cütaros in a contemptuous manner because of their unsightly charcoaled appearance – acquired from cutting burned cane – and because they generally speak only Indian languages.

Patterns of household organization

As depicted in Figure 6, most of Ayuquila’s households include two to six members living in the village. One family consists of seventeen members, whilst 24 are made up of five members and 20 have four.

The majority of the households (87.3%, representing 131 units) comprise nuclear families and single-person units, and 19 (15.4%) consist of more extended forms (see Figure 7). These latter comprise:

1) Young couples (with or without children) living in his or her parents’ household (3 cases). This arrangement is most common when the couple has just married or eloped, although it may take a few years before they move into a house of their own. This pattern is also customary when the couple has recently arrived from the United States, and also when a son’s economic activities are closely linked to his parents’ enterprise.

2) Nuclear households (often based on an elderly couple or widow) where grandchildren also live (7 cases), either to help the grandparents or because the parents have migrated. When the parents are working elsewhere, they generally send some allowance for the upkeeping of the child, although older children often work themselves and – especially in the case of widows – play an important role in sustaining their grandparent(s).
Figure 6: Number of members per household

Figure 7: Household patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOUSEHOLD TYPES</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Simple nuclear</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>87.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Nuclear plus married son or daughter</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Nuclear (often elderly couple) with grandchildren</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Nuclear plus unmarried daughter and child/children</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Two nuclear families linked by sibling bond</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3) Nuclear households including one or more unmarried daughters with a child or children (6 cases). As I mentioned for the case of Maria in Chapter 1, unmarried mothers are considered fracasadas (having failed). The father of the woman is usually expected to feel dishonoured. He might avoid communication with his daughter for a while to make his anger and disappointment known and then try to clear his reputation by speaking to the progenitor and his parents in order to arrange a wedding. Her mother is, in most cases, considered to be the understanding one and is expected to coax her husband to forgive their daughter. If the parents have not managed to settle a marriage, they will accept the mother and child into their household, although it remains the unmarried mother’s responsibility to provide for her offspring. There are cases of women who have more than one child out of wedlock. These cases are sooner or later accepted and the children welcomed.

4) Two nuclear households interconnected through a sibling tie, usually linking two brothers (3 cases). This arrangement is not very common, but has emerged in cases of migrating couples who return and have not yet found a house of their own. In addition, it is common to find elderly people living on their own. Of the seventeen households with only one member, 12 consist of elderly people whose spouses have died and offspring married out. Neighbours, friends, and close relatives usually keep an eye on them, provide food and help out when necessary.

Twenty one families are headed by women (some with children still at home) who either have no husband, are separated or are widows. All of these women are, in one way or another, involved in economic activities in order to maintain their families. Some of these women can be considered real entrepreneurs, since they administer their own land (see Carola, in Chapter 1), often sharecropping with sons or other close relatives or hiring labourers. Others are helped out by sons, daughters or grandchildren. Twelve women heads of households are ejidatarias (from the ejido of Ayuquila or other ejidos), four of whom rent out their land completely, and two part of it.

Most households involve all of their members in diverse economic activities: youngsters help out after school by keeping cattle out of the fields, cutting grass to feed pigs and chickens at home, and assisting their elders. Girls often help in the fields as well, but also wash clothes in the canals and help their mothers at home, or work as house maids, washing and ironing for others, in their parent’s store, or as teachers or secretaries. However, young boys who work are considered a special asset in Ayuquila, especially for families who possess land or have a small enterprise. Although those who work as peones or who migrate keep at least part of their pay, they generally provide the family with extra income. It is not uncommon to find children allowed to miss school in
order to work in the tomato fields. Parents argue that older children who do not want to study can learn to work and earn money.

As we mentioned above, half of Ayuquila’s population is economically active, of which 30.9% are women. However, economic activity is differentially evaluated: women’s contribution to the household income is hardly ever valued in economic terms. Their work is mostly labelled as 'supplementary', even by the women themselves and their income is hardly ever measured. Women tend to spend the money immediately on household needs such as settling debts in the small shops or with peddlers, or buying sugar or tortillas. Such income flows are often quite invisible. In comparison to most male heads of households - who use part of their earnings in drinking sessions - the profits earned by women are almost invariably used entirely for household needs. Such is also the destiny of money earned by mothers who peddle clothes, shoes and other articles, or by those who sell milk, tacos, fruit or prepared dishes, or those who provide services such as washing for others, working as housemaids or labouring in the fields.

The case of Soledad, one of the beekeepers, is a good example: being a professional dressmaker, the income she generated was at times larger than that of her husband, who worked in the United States with her son. She paid for all the household expenses and used the money her husband sent her to build a solid house and buy furniture. Nevertheless, as soon as he came home, she would stop or at least decrease her sewing commitments, alleging that 'these extras' were no longer necessary, and that her husband needed her to keep house. This was also the case of Juana (see Chapter 1), who, although she contributed significantly to her household economy, always gave priority to her husband’s work and income.

Important exceptions to this are the mothers working in the tomato fields, especially if the husband is engaged in a similar activity, since by the end of the week both spouses have similar amounts of cash in hand (see the case of Rosa in Chapter 4). Female tomato workers are more likely to indulge in a few luxuries, such as buying relatively expensive clothes for themselves and spending on good food. In the domain of tomato work in the region, such practices are not uncommon. Torres (1994) describes how labourers identify themselves as belonging to a special 'culture' (la cultura cherry, for example, after the boom of the cherry tomato). They organize large parties, enjoy modern music and consider their groups and networks as 'liberated', as 'knowing how to enjoy the pleasures of life'.
Migration

Ayuquila's population increased significantly over the 1970's. The 1970 census reported 378 inhabitants, which increased to 682 by 1990. This can partly be explained by the immigration of peasants from other parts of the country who came to work for the tomato companies and have stayed living in the region, because conditions are considered better than in their home communities. As I mentioned above, they hardly mix with the main core of villagers, although the latter have granted a strip of land on the outskirts for them to form a colony. In 1988, despite the evidently high out-migration, I found a slightly increased population of 715.\(^7\)

In the main core of the village - that is, excluding the colony - 26 houses were uninhabited during the period this study took place. The tenants of 21 of these houses were living at that time in the United States, in Guadalajara, or in neighbouring towns. Of these, only one family had access to land. It appears, then, that the economic crisis has edged many out to reside in the United States, whilst others live in the nearby towns of El Grullo and Autlán.

Many households include at least one member living and working elsewhere. Moreover, 14 of the 21 migrating nuclear families, as well as 95% of the single migrants (69 of the 73) were destined to the United States. The rest remain within the same region (Autlán, El Grullo, Guadalajara, etc).

Excluding those migrating as complete nuclear families, a total of 73 people of Ayuquila (see Figures 4 and 5) were living and working outside the village in 1988, most of them young people. About thirty per cent of the young unmarried adults had migrated. Whilst 63.6% of these young migrants corresponded to families who had no access to land, most of the adult migrant population belonged to families with land, and adult women without land do not migrate at all. Venturing to migrate entails having the basic resources and proper connections.

An analysis of the specific families involved in migration pointed to the importance of kinship networks in these ventures. Six surnames appear over and over again (among them Gomez and Romero, discussed in Chapter 4). Other surnames found regularly in Ayuquila are missing. These generally correspond to the poorer sectors of the population, to those working as labourers, who do not possess land and whose kin networks do not stretch to the United States or to important Mexican urban centres. Often these families are immigrants from

\(^7\) I calculated the population on the basis of household members. The 11 units for which I had no reliable information are considered as having 4.5 members per household, which is the average in the village.
other parts of the country. At the other end, the more established families - those who possess large numbers of cattle, whose members have studied, etc. - also tend to migrate less. Migration therefore seems to be more predominant among the middle sectors of the population\(^8\).

Communities of migrants have been established in some cities of the United States (especially Anaheim, Oakland, and Pomona in California), where inhabitants of Ayuquila have relatives. Some people have long migration histories and stay for extended periods, but temporary migration - lasting only a few months - is often resorted to, especially among women. It is common for sons or daughters to invite their mothers to the United States to cook or keep house for them, take care of their children or work as house maids, in factories or in the fields when they face financial difficulties at home. Adolescent women who become pregnant out of wedlock or who desire a new experience often go to ‘visit’ their relatives in the United States, staying for long periods if they find jobs. Female migrants (most of whom belong to the group with access to land) constitute 26% of the total migrant population.

**Domains of interaction and women’s space**

Geographically Ayuquila is located, as I have mentioned, within an irrigation district. The state capital is some four hours away by bus, but several important towns are located close by (see Map 1, p. 36). However, many of the inhabitants have closer contacts with the United States and with cities in the Mexican northern frontiers (see Rothstein 1982 and Massey et.al. 1986) where relatives live. Networks of interaction thus extend to include the influence of other environments, even if they are located far away, and often regional contexts are distant from the everyday lives of the people of Ayuquila. This implies that one should not predefine social relations in the village by assuming that they simply reflect the characteristics of the immediate region of Autlán-El Grullo.

In the same way, asymmetries in Ayuquila cannot be assumed to correspond only to ethnic or class differences. Access to land, as I have mentioned, influences the economic activities people engage in, their networks and even their social position in the village, but is not the determining factor. We have seen how people with land also engage in low status activities such as tomato labouring and domestic work. Social differences within the village may be

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8. See Roberts 1978 for a similar conclusion based upon a review of the Latin American migration literature. See also Massey, et.al. 1987.
identified according to income, capital, gender, age, work, family background, neighbourhood, education, place of origin, etc., but it would be too simplistic to establish beforehand the centrality of any one of these aspects, in this case economic resources. One acquires little insight into Ayuquila's social life and the power relations taking place within it simply by listing the resources people possess. As I suggested above, the combination of different elements, organized in specific ways, configure social positions that are granted status, authority, and power.

In observing social life in Ayuquila, it became clear to me that such combinations of elements, such forms of organization, differ within particular contexts of interaction. In the ejido, for example, certain 'rules of the game' were recognized by its members that would seem irrelevant in other contexts. Specific relations were forged with respect to resources and social positions were 'fixed' according to unspoken norms. These contexts of interaction - which I depict as domains - portray areas of social life wherein practices are routinely organized within specific locales and where certain authorities, values and identities are recognized, reproduced and transformed.

Such domains do not only entail undertakings pertaining to distinct levels of articulation of power ('power domains', as Adams 1975\(^9\) depicts them), nor do they demarcate specific fields of social analysis - such as the economic, political or family-kinship. Activities within domains involve a heterogeneity of relationships - that could be labelled political, economic, religious or emotional - and they intertwine power relations that draw upon diverse normative frames. For example, as we have seen, in the domain of the ejido, leadership and authority may be bolstered by recourse to patron-client, institutional and class models. In the same way, working under a tomato company regime entails social relations and status differences amongst workers that 'extend' from village domains.

Interaction within a domain is usually focused around certain activities such as playing football or picking tomatoes, or it can center around the functioning of an institution such as the church, the family or the ejido. Van der Zaag (1992: 166), who studied the irrigation district in this region, points to the relevance of such geographical and social domains of interaction: he describes

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9. Power domains are defined by Adams (1975:68) as 'any relational set in which there are two or more actors of operating units of unequal relative power with respect to each other. If A has greater power over B than B does over A, then B is said to be within the domain of A.' Hence, in his conception, the scope and definition of the domain is fixed by the power of A, whilst I am referring to power relations as an outcome within the diverse sets of relations in a specific domain.
the efforts to create an association of water users who would eventually take over many of the functions of the Ministry of Water Resources, and explains how, because the meetings to elect representatives for such associations were held in the *ejido* setting, local leaders were often able to dominate, balancing votes and opinions in their favour. Van der Zaag (1992: 188) uses the notion of domain to designate specific physical settings where:

'People's practices and their interactions emerge... it can be seen that domains are more than simply spatial or physical settings. In a particular domain, people behave in particular ways and also expect particular attitudes of others, and value particular things that in other domains might be quite irrelevant.'

Diverse practices in agriculture shape different domains. Links that are forged with the market, producers' organizations and the state colour the relations that take place within such diverse domains of interaction. Specific coordinates to measure and judge behaviour, for example, are established, as are particular boundaries which must be respected or negotiated.

The *ejido* itself, or the family, or any other domain of interaction, cannot simply be conceived of as a fixed, bounded entity. One can point to places, symbols, forms, or paperwork which identify the specific domain, but the domain itself is constituted, organized and given meaning through specific practices (see Nuijten 1992: 204) and is thus constantly changing. Hence, its 'characteristic traits' are not inherent to a domain but are continuously redefined depending upon the actors and interests that are being pushed forward. However, the nature of the domain itself provides strong bonds of continuity. A sort of culturally-constructed common ground is forged whereby issues are carefully rethought among similar lines and commitments are established and reinforced.

Organizing practices involve kin relations, networks of friendship, and sanctioning categorizations according to social class, gender, group alliance, personal and family history, etc. Long-held quarrels sometimes configure domains more markedly than economic differences or political affiliations, since they frequently involve spatial distanciation as well as delimitation of loyalty and solidarity networks. Practices within domains also lead to a specific definition of identities and forms of power relations.

In the struggle for definition of identities and the establishment of power relations, an important feature of domains manifests itself: that of exclusion. We have seen how the domain of the *ejido* excluded those who had not suffered the struggle for land, how only certain families could enter migration networks and
how *avecindados* were often viewed as outsiders to the village. Likewise, women's activities are delimited and confined within certain domains in Ayuquila. Membership to the *ejido*, for example, is only accepted under certain conditions (such as being a widow who has inherited land and does not intend to remarry). Hence women's spaces are quite localized and access to agricultural land is not readily recognized as one of them.

The majority of *ejidatarios* are male, with the exception of seven women, most of whom are widows - having inherited their titles from their husbands. One is an unmarried mother who is head of her household and is daughter of one of the main founders of the *ejido*. The other two - Carola (see Chapter 1) and Adela - attend assemblies to 'represent' their sons. Carola is also an *ejidataria* herself, although, with the permission of the assembly and the local municipality, she divided up a large part of her land into plots for urban development. Adela is *ejidataria* of a neighbouring village through inheriting *ejido* rights from her father\(^\text{10}\), but she participates in the *ejido* of Ayuquila meetings wherein she claims to defend the interests of her brother, who had to migrate after allegedly murdering two people in the village.

The wives and daughters of the *avecindados*, on the other hand, mostly work for the tomato companies, wash clothes for other families in the village, work as housemaids in nearby towns, or stay at home and take care of the children for those who work. Once in a while they will work in other *ejidatarios' plots*, and often they complement household needs by picking left-over beans or vegetables from harvested areas. Most women who work for a salary are maids or tomato labourers, both considered as low status.

In the sphere of professional activities, restricted to people with higher education and technical skills, women do represent signigicant figures. These women are generally allowed more space within village domains. Here a degree of 'displacement' of authority and status often takes place by means of which an actor can present him or herself as associated with or representing a whole set of relations with others, hence acquiring a degree of prestige and/or authority. Displacement of prestige and rank between domains is also evident in how transformations in the region such as the introduction of transnational companies, new struggles for land in Ayuquila and changes in government policies opened up spaces for newcomers in specific domains. Thus those who managed to acquire better income when venturing into new enterprises and

\(^\text{10}\) It is not so common that women inherit land in this way, but there are a few cases in the region. Often, these women are also elected to hold posts within the *ejido* organization, frequently as treasurers.
those who linked themselves to promising political networks, obtained a degree of status and influence.

As I stressed above, whilst my concept of domain carries with it some notion of ordering, such order as exists is fragile, liable to redefinition, and requires continuous negotiation. Rules and boundaries, once "fixed", become the focus of struggle.

The project as a domain

It is through specific domains that institutions are linked to village life in Ayuquila. Communication to the "outside world" is thus screened through sets of values, organizational practices and locally-negotiated power relations. Hence, global conditions, whilst influencing village life in a strong way, are reprocessed within specific domains. This was the case of the UAIM project, which, on the one hand, opened up spaces for women in Ayuquila, and on the other, was placed in specific social sites which shaped its material and social conditions of existence, thereby becoming a domain in itself.

In 1980 a social worker from the Mexican Ministry of Agrarian Reform presented herself to the head of the ejido hoping to organize an Agrarian and Industrial Unit for peasant woman (UAIM), following the guidelines of the national law of agrarian reform. Tactfully, the comisariado asked his niece, Marisela, to help him call a meeting for wives and daughters of ejidatarios. As a man, it was not convenient for him to do so directly. Marisela, in turn, instructed a few youngsters to go to the homes of those women she considered eligible to invite them. A number of women attended the meeting arranged on behalf of the social worker. Here a mechanism of exclusion took place. Since the UAIM was organized through the ejido only those women linked in one way or another to ejidatarios were invited. The names and signatures of the women who were interested were listed, and in this way they became recognized as a group that could receive aid under the government scheme.

Partly because of the difficult and time-consuming nature of the work, the group (originally consisting of 22) reduced to 16 members. Fourteen of them are married. Their ages range from 18 to 77, the majority being between 30 and 50 years old. One of them, the oldest, cannot read or write; 11 have finished the first primary school grades, and 3 have received some post-secondary training. The majority are from Ayuquila or have lived there most of their lives. Even though most of them have regular family incomes, be it from their crops, cattle, or husband’s and son’s jobs, all but one of them are or have been involved in complementary economic activities, such as dressmaking, day
labouring, and selling clothes, perfumes or shoes, using fully their 'spare time' to obtain a few extras. Of the seven dressmakers in the village, four are beekeepers. The group was thus confined to certain sectors of Ayuquila's population. Table 1 (p. 64) gives a breakdown of the social characteristics of the members of the UAIM.

Having entered Ayuquila through the domain of the *ejido*, the project became enmeshed in certain economic, political and social relations and frictions. At the beginning, the establishment of the group did not cause much commotion. Other attempts to create groups of women had been made by state officials, and this group did not pose a threat for anyone. It was only when allocation of land had to be coupled to the venture that problems arose. In accordance with the law, the *ejido* was compelled to give up a piece of land for the new UAIM initiative. Land, as I have mentioned, was scarce, and a number of *ejidatarios* were reluctant to comply to such stipulations. This led to conflicts where authorities recognized as such in village domains questioned the validity of the project (as I describe in Chapter 5). However, positions were divided, especially because all of the women in the group are related, either through kin or marriage, to the 'old' families of Ayuquila.

None of the members of the UAIM are *avecindadas* and only two belong to families who do not have access to land. Of the three women in the village who have access to land and also work in the tomato fields, one - Rosa - is a beekeeper. However, she is 'on the margins' on several accounts: although she married into one of 'old families', she is not from Ayuquila; her husband is one of the more marginalized *ejidatarios*, possessing only one hectare of *ejido* land, and she finds herself torn between the benefits of day labouring in the tomato fields and her work and social relations in the group. I will describe her case in more detail in Chapter 4, where I also document the webs of interaction between the members of the UAIM and the ways these are linked to other village domains. It is clear that village networks intersect the group, that rivalries between the families, church activities, economic enterprises and household problems entered the UAIM and shaped its development.

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11. See Figure 9 in Chapter 4, where I provide a genealogy of the beekeeping group (the characters representing each woman in Table 1 correspond to their specific places in the genealogy).
Table 1: The Social Characteristics of the Members of the Beekeeping Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Genealogy</th>
<th>Place of Origin</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years of education</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Other places of residence</th>
<th>Family resources</th>
<th>Economic activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Petra</td>
<td>B7</td>
<td>Cacalote</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Visits USA</td>
<td>E; cattle, truck, co-owner tractor</td>
<td>Occasionally bakes and sells bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soledad</td>
<td>B13</td>
<td>Ayuquila</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Mexicali (5 years)</td>
<td>Husband &amp; son working in the USA</td>
<td>Dress-maker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>C11</td>
<td>Ayuquila</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juana</td>
<td>C9</td>
<td>Ayuquila</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Ex-President</td>
<td>USA (3 years)</td>
<td>Cattle, son in USA</td>
<td>Sells shoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Ayuquila</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9+secret.</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Ameca (J)</td>
<td>Husband is drummer in band</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luisa</td>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Ayuquila</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Ex-Treasurer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E; cattle</td>
<td>Sells perfumes makes dresses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Ayuquila</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Sister is E; cattle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dora</td>
<td>C13</td>
<td>Ayuquila</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Union de Tula (J)</td>
<td>E; half plot</td>
<td>Sells ice-lollies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eugenia</td>
<td>B16</td>
<td>Ayuquila</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Mexicali, Mexico City etc.</td>
<td>E; cattle, truck</td>
<td>Dress-makers, sells clothing &amp; ice-lollies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benita</td>
<td>B18</td>
<td>Fuerta del Barro</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>El Grullo, Mexicali etc.</td>
<td>Rents land &amp; husband is day-labourer, sons USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes</td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>La Teja(J)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>San Clemente (J)</td>
<td>Nephew &amp; grandson in USA</td>
<td>Takes in washing, was traditional mid-wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastora</td>
<td>B20</td>
<td>El Grullo</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Guadalajara (J)</td>
<td>E; half plot</td>
<td>Knits for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsa</td>
<td>C14</td>
<td>Ayuquila</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9+nursing</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Mother E; cattle</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosa</td>
<td>C15</td>
<td>Mesquitan</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E; husband rears fighting cocks</td>
<td>Day-labourer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magda</td>
<td>B5</td>
<td>Ayuquila</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Los Angeles USA</td>
<td>Sons work in USA</td>
<td>Cooks lunches for workers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: E = Ejidatario family; J = Jalisco State
Thus, whilst the UAIM project - conceived at the top levels of the Mexican government, as Mantilla asserts - imposed certain conditions on the women and the local population, it was nevertheless constructed through specific relations that moulded its perspectives in Ayuquila. Social asymmetries in the village, as well as conflicts between families, specific gender relations, women's linkages to church activities and other village institutions, their economic ties, their political affiliations, and their experiences vis-à-vis the government and markets, influenced the organization of the group and shaped the relations between the women and the village, the ejido, and state officials.

Geographical, economic and political contexts are important to people in Ayuquila because they relate themselves to the context and recreate it in meaningful ways. The context itself cannot act upon them since it has no agency, but the beekeepers, the villagers and the ejidatarios recreate it, using of course elements from the 'external' world, to which they relate directly through face-to-face contacts, but also indirectly, using interpretations shared by members of their own networks. In the following chapter I explore these shared interpretations, the knowledge processes sparked by the implementation of the project, the remodelling of identities and self-images, and the claims to power entailed.
Two years passed (during which time the women never met as a group) until another social worker, this time from the Government Rural Bank (BANRURAL), came to offer them credit to raise goats, pigs, chickens, or start whatever economic activity they wanted, as long as it fitted into the formal requirements. The group now had twenty-two members. In the intervening period, some had married and were not permitted by their husbands to continue, and others had gone out to work or study. The group finally chose beekeeping, as it did not involve a daily commitment. They now laugh at this decision, saying that they picked the worst activity, because they are constantly being stung by the bees.

In their interaction within the UAIM programme, the beekeepers were pulled into various decisions where roles were ascribed to them. Their self-images underwent changes, their problems were in many ways redefined, as were the values attached to many of their activities and to their future careers. But the project itself was also shaped by the women’s knowledge frames and their perceptions of their roles within such an enterprise. In this chapter, I describe the initiation and evolution of the beekeeping project, and direct the reader’s attention to the changes taking place in the diverse encounters between the beekeepers’ self-images and others’ categorizations of them as women, of their tasks, capacities and identities. I highlight the significance labelling had in terms of their activities and their relations to others, and how the names the women attributed to themselves were modified.

This implies an analysis of discourse, of the unique codings embedded in everyday social life, in people’s attitudes and in the language they use. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, performances are adjusted to 'scripts' which are largely taken for granted, but which constitute reference points for projects and identities. Discourses are situated within domains of interaction - as I
have also argued in Chapter 2 - and entail delimitation of boundaries, demarcation of activities and values to be accepted or rejected, definitions of public or private arenas, etc.

Here I will focus on the domain of the beekeeping project, highlighting the boundaries the women set to their undertakings and ambitions, as well as the struggles they have to undergo in the defense of their own space when interacting with the state, but also with the ejido - commonly labelled a 'men’s world' in the village. In this endeavour, I examine what I consider critical social interface situations, where members of the group are exposed to encounters with people from ‘the outside’ and to definitions, ideas, representations and interpretations.

Exploring the discursive practices through which the project was forged brings social categories to the fore, showing how these shaped and were shaped by new encounters. It also highlights the mechanisms of classification, rating and ranking which, within the project domain, often led to practices of subordination and provided grounds for power relations. At the same time, these processes of categorization and classification were shaped through power relations. As Foucault (1980a: 93) argues:

'in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth.'

As we shall see in the following account of the evolution of the project, diverse discursive elements are drawn together in an effort to negotiate the appropriateness of specific images and labels, to adjudicate status or authority and define values. Power is entailed in the attempts to ‘win the struggles that take place over the attribution of specific social meanings to particular events, actions, and ideas’ (see Long 1989: 11). By providing boundaries, values, roles and interpretations, discursive practices constrain the scope of action for the people engaging in them.

Although discourses are not coherent units of speech, complete systems of thought or a rationality of action, in specific contexts they do appear as consistent sets of values, as systematic ways of relating to the environment,
to objects and people within distinct domains, where discursive elements are pulled together in particular ways. In the processes of blending, enlisting and splitting of these elements, people's interests are important, but so are loyalties, feelings of belonging and the desire to please others.

But let us start exploring these issues in the context in which the project was initiated from the point of view of Victoria, a 'progressive' woman who used to be a member of the group.

Victoria: the genesis of the group and the accepted norms for village women

I had heard a lot about Victoria before I met her. From what villagers told of her, she was a strong, wilful, interesting woman. Socorro, her mother, pretended to disagree with the way she sat down to eat with the men at the table\(^1\), waiting to be served instead of serving them herself, but she could not disguise a proud smile. Her father respected her: 'she is like a man' he said.

Victoria was then already a successful schoolteacher with a stable position in Michoacán, a neighbouring state. In the afternoons, she held another post as director of a primary school. Her husband shared - to a degree - housekeeping jobs and taking care of their two children, although he worked all day teaching himself. Before she left Ayuquila with her family to occupy her post in Michoacán, she had been an enthusiastic member of the beekeeping group. She spent most of her holidays visiting her family, and was considered a citizen of Ayuquila. I later learned that she was as interested in meeting me as I was in meeting her, so communication came easy and we became friends. She provided what seemed to me a clear picture of the genesis of the group, which had been a difficult theme to draw out from most of the beekeepers.

\(^1\) Sitting at the table with men is not uncommon for women in Ayuquila, although it is expected that they first serve the rest, and see that everything is ready. However, tortillas have to be heated or made just before consuming them, otherwise they get cold. Generally a woman is expected to be heating tortillas and replenishing food while the rest eat. When there are several women in the household, only one of them carries out this task while the others sit at the table. Often daughters or daughters-in-law wait for 'the second table' and eat with their mothers. Victoria's attitude is notorious because she has many brothers and often expects them to get up themselves for warm tortillas or more food.
As far as Victoria could remember, the first time social workers came to the village to try to organize women was in 1972. She was in sixth grade at the time, travelling every day the eight kilometers from Ayuquila to El Grullo - the capital city of the municipio - to attend school, since Ayuquila’s small school only covered up to fourth grade. The social workers - a man and a woman - introduced a programme for obtaining latrines, and started a club for toy-making, sewing and cooking, but did not manage to interest more than six women. This group had a short life, as did other groups that were organized by different social workers who came and went, interested in providing activities for women. Most of the time they gave cooking, sewing, embroidery or manual crafts lessons, and rarely did they continue beyond a few months or a year for one reason or another. However, the experiences were relevant, because, as Victoria explains,

'We organized ourselves. All the social workers ever did was write down our names and bring someone in to give the courses. They did, however, introduce the idea that women could have their own money. At that time we did not earn money and we didn’t even want to, really. When we had the club, what was most worthwhile was that we had fun together and became integrated as a group. On the other hand, some of the women did learn to sew in those groups, and they now dedicate themselves professionally to it. Juana, for example, can now do it very well, and gets a little extra cash from it.'

Victoria considers that Ayuquila has progressed much due to the fact that many of its citizens - like herself and her brothers, but unlike her sisters - have gone out to study. She remarks that about two percent of its inhabitants have some academic title or another, but she complains strongly about social prejudices and how they have constituted an obstacle for women to develop:

'It was hardly tolerated that we women go out and study or work at the time. The idea prevailed that whoever went out was ‘libertina’ (loose, licentious). And that idea still predominates. I can count only about three or four men from this last generation that have changed their ways of thinking. Before, a woman could not go alone to El Grullo... My mother says these prejudices were justified because one saw ‘many things’ happening in the canals and the river when women went to wash their clothes or when they went to the fields to pick up leftovers of beans or maize. Some women became pregnant,
and as a consequence of the bad reputation of two or three, the rest were not trusted. New generations are leaving that behind, but prejudices and ignorance of men still hinder many women from studying... Before, *que esperanzas* (no hope for it) they did not let you go alone to Autlán, much less Guadalajara. It was always associated with *libertinaje* (looseness, too much license). Then, if the woman *fracasaba* (blundered, meaning became pregnant), she had to leave the village (*el rancho*). That was what Josefina and Margarita had to do. But this does not apply to those that are *preparadas* (prepared, who have studied). They stay at home and have their babies as if nothing had happened.

Victoria reacted strongly to what she describes as the idea that women *‘son las que tienen que fregarse mas’* (are the ones who carry the burden). She exclaims that it is important for them to be seen as equal to men. In the club, they discussed these things but they had some conflicts at home. She explains she could count on the support of her mother, who was convinced of the validity of her work, but her brothers and father did not want it. (At this point, her brother, who overheard our conversation, interrupted, claiming that they only tried to avoid her being gossiped about.) Victoria, however, makes her points strongly:

'I do not like to be dependent, and, although sometimes I have to conform, I perform with another idea. I remember very well what motivated me to change. When I was thirteen or fourteen years old, I decided I did not want to live like other women in Ayuquila, who do not have their own pocket money. I wanted better conditions...'

When asked what she meant by better conditions, she explained:

'Especially when it comes to planning for your kids to study... Anyway, look, it is never the same to wash at home as to wash in the canal, although one does have to keep on doing it once in a while. The women here have had to change some of their practices. One of the things I hate the most, for example, is to take men their lunch all the way to the *potrero* (the field where they are working). I felt threatened and angered by the other women who did it. It represents a great amount of housework, for me it is too much.'
In 1980, Victoria was home on vacation from school when the beekeeping group was formally started. Victoria heeded Marisela's invitation to attend the meeting, encouraging her sister and her mother to come as well. A number of women were present. Some of them signed the documents, accepting to become members. Others waited to consult their spouses and family or simply dismissed the possibility, claiming they lacked the time. In this way a group was formed, and they were recognized as apt to receive aid under the government scheme.

Socorro, Victoria's mother, commented:

'At the beginning we didn't know what it was about. They called an assembly, and the woman asked us if we wanted chickens, or pigs or goats, or a sewing group. We said bees because we could just leave them and they would work on their own. We would just visit them when we wanted to harvest the honey. Sewing? No, the material is too expensive, and then we would have to go out and sell garments. Chickens, we would have to work hard every day, and when the price of the feed goes up, we go down. Goats would have been nice, then maybe we could have divided them up between ourselves, instead of having to work as a group, but no, goats are very destructive (dañeras), they jump fences and get into the ejidatarios' fields, and we don't want problems with them. So we chose bees, but now we regret it, because we constantly get stung!'

Victoria argues:

'We started to participate because we were looking for entertainment, for a way out, something that would take us out of the routine of everyday housework, which was really tough and tedious. The group provided us the opportunity of thinking about different things, in addition to obtaining some cash without having to leave our housework. I became interested in the group when they assured us that one day we would earn money. I was also interested in obtaining rights to own ejido land.'

She seems to think it over and continues:
'This project was not particularly special. In the end, it worked because, after they had offered so many projects, one of them had to spark'.

**Libertinas, fracasadas, educated women and 'being like men'**

Labelling played prominent roles in women's lives and in the advancement of the project. Using labels, spaces were cut off or opened, hierarchies were configured and identities forged. Wood (1985: 5) suggests that a focus on labelling can 'reveal processes of control, regulation and management which are largely unrecognized even by the actors themselves'.

'Positions of envy and ridicule - of high and low status - are created, bestowed, occupied and deployed. All interaction requires labelling (see Goffman 1972). Labelling is used in the ranking of people according to moral proximities (Bailey 1966). Status and worth are distributed according to these and other criteria. We act to uphold such decisions, modifying them with experience. We abstract from the individual and stereotype, sometimes with comic or tragic outcomes. We emphasize an aspect of people's lives and relate to them on that dimension' (Wood 1985: 7).

In Ayuquila, an image of vulgarity and of low status was implied in the label of *libertina*. Thus, a woman who lacked restrictions was indecent and low. This points to the ways in which women were expected to confine their movements to certain social and physical space, and to the interpretations other men and women could legitimately attribute to women's actions.

To be free from social norms was to act irresponsibly, uncaring towards kin and family bonds. A measure of social regulation was implied. However, a better understanding of social norms was expected to be acquired with education. Education was presumed to bring with it more 'refinement' in the compliance to proprieties. Thus the label of *libertina* was mostly attributed to illiterate or poor women - to 'unthinking' women who 'go around with different men', who 'have no real motives to visit other places', alleging they had no business to pursue. These were the ones who were inclined to be considered as *fracasadas*, as having failed in establishing a decent life for themselves, mostly through getting pregnant out of wedlock. As Victoria suggests, 'educated' women were generally regarded in a different light. She complained that if educated women made a 'false step', such as getting
themselves pregnant, they were not usually labelled *libertinas*, they were not seen as unthinking and irresponsible; it was either interpreted as a mistake, or vindicated with the indication that she was in love. On the other hand, women's efforts are not often oriented to questioning the label itself, but to disowning it, stressing other factors that have not been considered or defining the case differently. It is not uncommon to use it towards other women, thus legitimating its use.

One cannot attribute authorship to such labels, one cannot claim that men thought them up as devices to establish and maintain their power over women, but one can see the ways in which they are used to endorse certain behaviour. However independent she wanted to appear, Victoria did not want to be labelled a *libertina*, accepting that 'a few guilty women were the cause for others to be accused' and that women 'instigate' the situation, 'they start it and are not capable of stopping before it's too late'. Actions are judged within complex webs of meanings and values, and labels are brought in to evaluate a situation with different criteria according to the circumstances. Labels are enacted within discursive practices. The label of 'being like a man' referred to Victoria's command over situations, to not subordinating herself to others. Victoria made statements by sitting down at the table with the men instead of serving them their food, in part building upon her status as an 'educated woman'. Discursive practices discriminate, situate and constrain the activities of women, incorporating interpretations as to economic situation, kin ties (if she belongs to a 'respected' family, or if she is daughter of a close friend) and education. Making a statement often already carries with it recognition of social standing or authority attributed to the 'speaker' him or herself.

Hence, village notions of women's roles and identities were not homogeneous and diverse meanings of commonly used labels were played off against each other in diverse contexts. In the implementation of the project, state officials' interpretations of women's identity and of the perspectives of the project were subject to local trials and constant negotiation. As Victoria suggests, new needs - such as the urge to earn money as women - were introduced. This aspiration was pregnant with new discursive elements which entailed particular relations and activities. But other commonly accepted values, such as the conviction that women should not engage in an enterprise that would create conflicts with men, and the fear of being labelled *libertinas*, were also shaping the boundaries of the project.
Roles and identities from the point of view of state officials

Two years had passed before the group was visited again by government officers. Armandina, a social worker from the Government rural bank (BANRURAL), came to offer them credit for some economic activity. In 1984 - by which time some of the women had dropped out, including Victoria, who was already working as a school teacher - the project was formally initiated by a loan of 775,000 Mexican pesos (approximately 1550 US dollars) from BANRURAL for the purchase of the beehives and basic equipment. They started with 50 beehives, which they bought in a nearby village with the aid of Armandina, who helped them buy the new equipment and explained how they should keep their accounts and minute books. She comments:

'As a social worker, my job was to organize groups of peasant women, orient them... this type of enterprise is historical, it is a stage in the history of peasant women. It is only now that small women’s enterprises are being established in which the owner is not a male. They have always worked without remuneration... My aim was to participate in the economic development of peasant women, collaborate with them so that they could have their own enterprise.'

In addition, the beekeepers received some formal training from a bank extension worker, although the women say it was not enough, for it was too theoretical.

The various officers who interacted with the beekeepers portrayed diverse images and representations of the project and the women within different situations. During interviews, they often sought to accommodate their views as much as possible to what they interpreted as the 'official' version. Sentences were often repeated verbatim from project documents, and it was clear they made efforts to appear in harmony with government policies. Underlying the 'official' conception of the project, was a definition of rural women as 'marginalized', as mothers and housewives, as lacking training for participating in the process of production except in a subordinate way. Thus, they needed orientation from the state to overcome their 'problems'.

One can point to different assumptions behind government rhetoric, but I will single out two aspects of importance to our discussion. First, the identity of women was mostly depicted through an explication of what they lacked, highlighting missing elements in their constitution as women. An ideal,
'progressive' model of woman was used as a point of comparison, stressing what peasant women 'were not' and what they 'ought to be'. Consequently, women were portrayed as 'underdeveloped'. Second, it was implied that such underdevelopment stems from the social division of labour, where women are tied to the household whilst men participate in the process of production. The path to 'emancipation' - for which women are expected to yearn - is thus to incorporate them into economic activities. The women should desire their own development within a 'strategic conception', they should aim towards 'liberation'.

However, Armandina complained that many of her colleagues in the rural bank never understood the relevance of the project, that in some UAIMs in the region they were disrespectful to female members and sought sexual favours from them, under the assumption that women who were willing to engage in such activities were actually seeking some fun (again the notion of libertinas). She claims she had to fight hard against this conceptualization, but her own work was nonetheless perceived as irrelevant, and she had a hard time since 'power was on the side of the males'.

One could attribute Armandina's assertions to resentment, as in the end she was sacked when cuts in the government budget were established, and, when I interviewed her several years later, she was still bitter. She declared she had given the bank fifteen precious years of her life. Hence, it might be argued that she used labels to undermine the image of her male colleagues, identifying their conduct as machismo. The relevant issue for our analysis is not to deny or validate her claims, but to point to the ways in which 'official' rhetoric concerning women's roles and identities was interpreted by implementors, who used their commonplace understandings (as differentiated from those implied in the project) when translating policy into actions, as well as how labels and counter-labels are employed to judge and regulate social behaviour, both in the case of women as in that of men. Their perceptions changed with interaction, but the officers had little contact with women in their everyday contexts, and were hardly exposed to their self-conceptions and ideas.

Armandina often used her own experiences to explicate the behaviour of the beekeepers. As an unwed mother who was trying to find her way in bureaucratic arenas, she stressed that she was continuously warning the women of the need to enhance their self-respect and not tolerate men who 'only wanted to use them'. However, she spent little time with the group. Although she had visited them with some regularity between 1984 and 1985, in 1988, most of the women had trouble remembering her, and it took some
time before anyone recalled her name. Socorro, Victoria’s mother, who was secretary of the group during Armandina’s period, comments:

‘That woman - I forget her name, so many have come - I don’t know who she was, I think she came from the bank. She was very nice, she took us in her car to buy the beehives. I had never been in such a car before, and she made me get in. I was so embarrassed, she didn’t even wait for me to change. I just took off my apron and went. Others didn’t like her very much. Luisa [then treasurer of the group], for example, said she had a funny way of keeping accounts. Luisa had everything in order, in a simple way that she could understand. The woman [Armandina] would come and change everything. They would then take whole days to organize all their numbers. One time the woman [Armandina] argued that Luisa had an extra million pesos flying around! Luisa knew it was not true. She had her accounts right, but she had to stay there with her, leave her housework and her children. In the end, she kept her numbers her own way, the way she understood them better.’

Nevertheless, the beekeeper’s description of the events during that period depict some images that could have been influenced by Armandina and other people from government institutions interacting with them. However, their self-conceptions and the commitments to a certain type of enterprise, although largely influenced by project planners, were also embedded in the acceptance or negotiation of shared values and practices in the village.

Ranks and hierarchies which ground and shape power relations

‘These idle women don’t have husbands to control them: their old men are mandilones [men who wear aprons, who let their wives boss them around], and cannot maintain them so they send them to work, that is why these women go around as…’

Such was village gossip. Who exactly said what was not clear. Authorship was often attributed to an ejidatario who was especially resentful of the group, but it was constantly repeated by different people as having been said by someone else. The last words were often left to the imagination of the listener. Juana was particularly hurt by the situation, as she had received a sharp comment to her face by the wife of this ejidatario. The Ministry of
Agrarian Reform required a formal statement signed by the ejidatarios where they granted the UAIM an initial plot of land, and she had had to seek the relevant people in their homes to collect the signatures. Juana knew some of them did not agree, but they were polite to her and signed anyway. It was humiliating to have to face each one - mostly men - even though it was now an official assembly agreement and the paperwork was recognized as a pure formality. She had to ask agreement as a favour, as if requiring each one their permission, but the papers were needed urgently and she kept on.

Only this one ejidatario was openly rude to her. He did not even come to the door, but sent his wife to say that he would not sign, that the women should look after their kids and tend to their household obligations instead of going around looking for trouble. Juana guessed the man was drunk, but she did not know that he was bitter towards the comisariado - who happened to be her father-in-law - because the latter had denied him a signature he needed for some transaction with his cattle. At that moment she did not link his reaction to the fact that he was one of the ejidatarios who had not received a decent piece of land himself, even though he considered he had every right to such a plot. The words stung because she knew other people were saying the same behind her back, because by accusing her husband they were accusing her, because she did not want to be described as a lousy mother or wife, and because as a group they had not intended to take sides in the ejido's political activities and now they appeared to be in the middle of it all.

The label of mandilones is a strong one. The accused is likened to a weak, impotent male who has no voice vis-à-vis his wife. Implicit reference is made to feeble male sexuality thus giving the epithet a forceful character. The ejidatarios who accused the beekeeper's husbands of being mandilones might orient their target towards discrediting the decision to give the women a piece of land, or they might attempt to denigrate the image of particular persons for reasons that have nothing to do with the group or with women as such (for not having signed a document concerning credit for cattle, for example). However, in doing so, they were alleging an analogy between a man that cannot control his wife and one that cannot make proper decisions. Thus, dependence and subservience of wives to their spouses was re-appraised as 'respectable' behaviour to be used as an argument in the context of another dispute.

Hence, female identity is interwoven with male identity. To clear their husbands' and their own names, the beekeepers needed to defend themselves from village gossip. They were placed in a position that required them to stress their spouses' authority, emphasizing their image as housewives, as
having cleaned the house and prepared the food properly before going out to work with the bees, etc.

'Ama de casd' (housewife) was a term often used to address themselves. None claimed explicitly to be a model housewife, but Petra, the President of the group, often boasted about her skills in cooking and was proud of the way she had reared her children, in spite of the problems she had with her husband, who wanted her to spend more time in the house. Sara spoke with satisfaction about how good her sons were, the way they went to church on Sundays, but also about her kind and faithful husband, and how she walked kilometers across the fields to take him a hot lunch and then stayed a bit to help out with his chores. She proudly showed her sewing and embroidery to her visitors. Socorro bragged quietly about how she cooked for her family, which was now only composed of boys, since the girls had married out.

Hence, being a good housewife had its gratifications and joys, but it also meant conforming to what was considered a 'good', 'respectable' role for women in the social circles in which they interacted. Although the actual implications of the notion varied for different people within different scenarios, it was certain these would include the role of mother, housekeeper and wife. It was thus convenient to present themselves as women whose priorities were in the household. The price was high, as it included, among other things, a degree of confinement to the household and a degree of subordination to 'male authority', but it also had its rewards. Besides, open failure to conform carried with it unwanted penalties. It was not uncommon therefore to find the beekeepers emphasizing their housewifely activities to present themselves as 'respectable'. However, the women did not always comply with these expectations and yet still found ways of justifying their conduct, even by reference to the very image of 'respectable woman'.

The notion of housewife has been much discussed in feminist literature. Women are associated with the domain of the house as the physical space where non-valorized production takes place and with the family as the social space where gender subordination is produced and re-enacted. The household is described as the 'private' sphere, to the exclusion of a 'public' sphere where structures of power are allegedly defined.

These conceptualizations would not be found alien in Ayuquilu, as the notion of housewife is commonly associated with subordination and inferiority, where housework is often perceived as non-productive and as outside of the main core of relevant decision-making. Thus, adjudications of power are coded into such labelling. However, the notion is highly valued by the women themselves in other spheres. Women can refer to the joys of motherhood (see also Schrijvers 1985 for similar situations in Sri Lanka), to
the satisfaction of maintaining a united family, to their success in controlling their husbands and sons in keeping with social norms. On the other hand, the notion of housewife implies roles for the men as well. Men should comply to certain household rules: the absolute bottom line involved social legitimacy to the family - providing 'respect' and a name to offspring - but activities as fathers - entailing disciplinary functions vis-à-vis the sons and daughters, and looking after their wellbeing - and a variety of household chores such as those dealing with mechanics and electricity were ascribed as well. Husbands were also expected to make the proper political decisions pertaining to the future of the family. Thus, women accepted roles on the understanding that men would in turn play their part. What each part promised and the obligations attached to it were constantly disputed and changed, and to claim that consensus was arrived at is not to claim that the attribution of power was equal on both sides.

But the man accusing the beekeepers of being irresponsible and idle was working upon the assumption of a 'general acceptance' of such notions - including women's endorsement of the image of 'good housewife'. His positive appraisal of dependence of wives on their spouses and their subservience was accepted as valid under these considerations. However, the social meanings attributed to the notion of housewife were different within diverse situations. Victoria's negative depiction of dependence and subservience was also approved of as true, contemplating other features of it. On the other hand, the same people who accused men of being mandilones, under different circumstances, could admire and respect a strong woman, or they might agree with Victoria when she defended the independence of women as necessary.

There is, therefore, not only one image of what being a 'respectable man' or a 'respectable woman' amounts to. Whilst labels are used to define ranks, social standards and behaviour, their meaning is situated within domains and reinterpreted according to the different contexts in which they are applied. Claims to truth are negotiated, calling upon different connotations of the concepts. The beekeepers also assume, recreate or reject images of their identities and roles, and struggle to impose on others the meanings they consider appropriate. This negotiation and bargaining of images was particularly important in their exercise as beekeepers and their experiences within the project, where the women often tried to downplay their capacities in order to discourage conflict.
The beekeepers were finally granted a hillside plot by the ejido. Once they began working, however, they encountered major problems which they solved by contacting some beekeepers in the vicinity, who gave them other more practical courses and much advice. In October 1986 the group was extracting honey. The yields were very good. Petra - who was then Vice-President but later became President of the group - comments that it was like a dream to see so much honey. They gave away pieces of honeycomb and jars of honey to friends, neighbours, relatives, and to public officers with whom they interacted. After that it was even better. As soon as they had finished extracting the first yield, the combs were full again. Although their actual profits were meagre, they harvested again in November, then in December, and once again in January.

For many people of the village the success of the beekeepers was a surprise. Many say they had not believed that the women could really do it. Still fresh were the conflicts between ejidatarios because some did not agree to their being given land, arguing that they were women who neglected their duties (desquehaceradas, with no household obligations) and would not know how to manage the enterprise.

Even the beekeepers described themselves many times as mujeres pata rajada (with cracked feet). Pata rajada is commonly used in this region to describe a hard working, uncultured but tough person who can work in the fields barefooted, thereby getting cracked soles. Fissures on the soles are the result of walking barefoot on the hot earth, or wearing typical huaraches (cheap sandals), but it is something local people refer to as a trait or characteristic of a lower category of people, in contrast to ‘la gente refinada’ (refined people), who wear shoes and therefore do not suffer from cracked soles. Sometimes, however, the word was used by the beekeepers with a mocking connotation, a way of ‘putting themselves down’ strategically, while obviously not really believing it themselves to its full implications. They were, as Victoria phrases it, 'performing under another idea'.

The beekeepers had sown their plot in the hillside themselves - with their fingernails - as they put it, commenting that only ‘primitive’ people will do it in this way, but their resources were too scarce to do otherwise. ‘We are not ejidatarias, we are poor.’ Juana explained to us during our first meeting:

'Only the poor would be involved in things like this. A rich woman would not go to the hills to scrape the soil with her nails, nor would
an educated woman. We chose the worst activity because bees are vicious. Not even my husband will come near them. At the beginning we were all full of stings, we ended up all swollen and some even got fever and required a doctor, but now we are not affected by them.'

As I indicated in the previous chapter, there is a shortage of land in Ayuquila, with some ejidatarios having less than one hectare of arable land. The plots on the nearby hillside, which are used either for grazing cattle, or for producing pasture for sale. The women’s group, which had been donated a hillside plot by the ejido, adopted the same strategy of selling pasture. With the money they earned, as well as from that received from the sale of their honey, they decided to build a small store. It was a big sacrifice for them not to receive a share out of their small earnings, as each one had many ideas on what she would do with her portion. But it was a real problem to store in their houses all their tools, the bulky extractor, the big 200-liter can, and the growing number of wooden boxes and frames for the wax. When they were extracting honey, it was an even greater inconvenience, not only because the sticky honey and wax got all over the place, but because the house immediately filled up with hungry bees.

The decision to construct a store was unanimous, given the need for a physical space in which to work, to store their things and to hold meetings. An ejidatario sold them a small piece of his urban plot and they contracted a local bricklayer. This entailed an investment of 1,113,000 Mexican pesos (approximately 1113 US dollars at the time). Although the store was small, it satisfied the requirements of their enterprise. They only needed sufficient space for the extractor and the decanter, a space for capping the combs, and a place to keep the boxes and frames. The space was also big enough for the sixteen members to meet. Benita, one of the beekeepers, caressed the walls fondly: 'This’ - she said - 'this is ours'.

The construction of the store had implications in terms of the women’s conception of themselves as part of a project. It sealed an unwritten pact to proceed as a group, and revealed ambitions to continue the enterprise, however small. The beekeepers would carry on despite criticisms from some of their neighbours, who had scornfully labelled them ‘abejeras’

2 There is no direct translation of this word, as it is not a proper word in Spanish. Abejeras is used instead of apicultoras which is the technical word for beekeepers. One can make a parallel between this labelling and the commonly used 'zapatero remendon' - instead of the normal zapatero, which literally differentiates
However, they took it lightheartedly, and half mockingly assumed the term themselves, giving it a different connotation altogether. *Abejeras*, pronounced by the members of the group, implied a *pata rajada* who worked under the sun, covered from head to foot with dirty, smelly clothes (they explained that bees do not like the smell of perfume and attack more readily when they use this or certain soaps) but at the same time it denoted 'progressive' women who defied criticisms and dared shoulder a responsibility such as the beekeeping enterprise.

But *pata-rajada* and *abejera* was not an ideal identity from the point of view of state officials - although in their everyday life they might subscribe to such images of the women. However, as representatives of the state, they referred to the group as 'peasant women' and hoped that one day the latter would see themselves as entrepreneurs.

**Changing boundaries: *mujer campesina***

One could observe that the beekeepers' self-images underwent changes. New ideas seemed to permeate from the 'educated' people of Ayuquila who went abroad and returned with new conceptions about women and their roles. People like Victoria, for example, learned about every detail of the project each time she came home. Although at times the women were sceptical about her yearning for independence and her 'male' ways, her strong opinions had an impact on the beekeepers' conceptions of themselves. The beekeepers also narrate proudly the time when Benita's relative, who came for a short vacation from his work in the United States, made a video of them working. They describe how he congratulated them heartily for their work, and how he admired them for their go-ahead spirit.

Not least important were the formal visits from senior officers who came to learn about their group, about how they worked, and to discuss some future possibilities for credit. Sometimes ideas verbalized or implied in these encounters were later repeated by the women as theirs, but often they were expressed in different contexts and with variations in meaning.

The beekeepers had different interpretations of the scope and possibilities of such a project, conceiving its prospects within the boundaries of what they considered their roles and orienting their activities to suit their own aspirations and immediate needs. In the actual implementation of the project,
the notions of 'peasant women', 'women entrepreneurs', and 'strategic development', reached the beekeepers in different ways. Direct and indirect information, passed on through discursive and non-discursive communication, leaked into the group, not as 'pure' data, but reinterpreted and recreated differently by each 'receiver' as well as by each 'sender'. This 'joint creation of knowledge' (see Long 1989) constitutes an ongoing, dynamic activity which shapes interface situations in many ways, while at the same time being shaped by these encounters. The new ideas configured social processes at the same time as conforming to them. They were, of course, internalized or resisted, or rather recreated within different contexts.

The beekeepers' identity was shaped by the practical actions they undertook, by 'playing the game' of the project, by acting out roles in the village in order to avoid social problems, by attending meetings, by interacting with government officers, and by committing themselves to beekeeping activities.

One can identify changes in the boundaries the women set to their projects. However, these boundaries, shaped by the individual or shared identities and self-images of the members of the group, should not be considered as fixed: the women presented themselves differently according to the audience and circumstance, and their self-images changed in the course of events. When asked directly, the beekeepers might spontaneously address themselves as housewives, describing their activities within the 'private' sphere, but they could also use the term 'peasant' which classified them within a more 'public' sphere, within the category of other rural women and men in the country who were poor and were struggling for a better life. On the other hand, when accused of being only housewives who knew nothing about production, they defended themselves and the project by identifying themselves as 'entrepreneurs'.

The label of 'mujer campesina' (peasant woman) would be used once in a while. It was not a category the women placed themselves in before the start of the project, as it implied an awareness of wider geographical and social horizons, i.e. a contrast with working women of the cities, or with industrial women, and an identification with other rural women in similar situations as theirs.

The notion of 'peasant' has strong agricultural connotations. Many of the beekeepers had visited other places, where they worked for some periods, doing different types of odd jobs, from cooking in a restaurant, making tortillas or feeding working squads in the agricultural fields, to sewing in garment factories. Their work had never been restricted only to agriculture, and their self-description did not make a clear cut differentiation depending
on type of work. They considered themselves basically as the same women, and their roles and responsibilities towards their households had not changed drastically. However, they quickly learned to apply the term 'peasant women' to themselves, which they now perceived as something worthy of dignity, using it especially when presenting themselves to outsiders since it allowed them to receive attention from the public sphere.

**Women entrepreneurs**

At the beginning, the label *mujeres empresarias* (women entrepreneurs) was seldom used among themselves in serious conversation, though sometimes implied. While some toyed with the idea, for others to use it was to move too far. Sometimes they would employ it when having fun, satirizing it, and expressing it as something remote and impossible.

However, crucial situations involving change in the beekeepers' margins for action originated from the incursion of officials from another Ministry, the SARH (Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources) - previously outside the scenario. The regional office of the Ministry fostered a development programme oriented to peasant organization. They were facing problems of finding groups willing to collaborate in their programme because of its orientation to collective work. The UAIM of Ayuquila was interesting to them for several reasons: it already had a legal status, they were backed by an *ejido* institution, they were women and they were working collectively. These arguments could be used to attract financial resources and political prestige to their own government agency.

Thus, they offered to create a 'real' agro-industry, which implied a larger storehouse, more modern implements - including an electric extractor and a vehicle - and more beehives. Embodied in the new enterprise was the notion that women should view their activities with a managerial mentality, that they should think of honey as a commercial product which could be exported. Of course, they would first need an intensive technical training.

A new discourse was thrust upon the beekeepers, whereby they were exhorted to take on new roles with regard to their undertaking as 'entrepreneurs'. They were asked to engage in the beekeeping enterprise as a full-time job and to think big, which had implications with regards to their roles within their households and in the village. This was further reinforced by the suggestion that the beekeepers would become a model for other peasant women and even for other men who were reluctant to organize and 'develop' themselves further.
However, once the local officials received the go-ahead from their superiors to construct the agro-industry and were allotted the necessary funds for it, the building became an end in itself. The women should see themselves as entrepreneurs, and as such they should accept the new store. Almost taken for granted within this 'official' discourse, was the need to avoid 'charity'. The 'beneficiaries' of the programme should contribute some effort so that they could claim the enterprise truly as theirs. Hence, although the store was offered as a donation, the beekeepers would have to provide the labour. In practice, this was negotiated, not only because labour was expensive, but because the convenience of having a new store was not clear to all of them. Having to spend their earnings on labour was only part of the problem, though it was an important part, for, as one of the oldest in the group, Eugenia, put it:

'I would rather have my share, even if it is only enough to buy myself some tennis shoes, for it will not be long before I die, and I want to see the profits of my work. If I die, my daughter will not take over and risk being stung by the bees!'

However, Petra, the President of the group, was quite enthusiastic about the promise of a new store. She saw her dreams of a productive and efficient enterprise reflected in this project. It was no problem for her to put her household chores to one side. On several occasions she commented that all her time was at the disposal of the project. For her it meant the possibility of 'growing', even if they had to sacrifice a little for the moment. Being a Jehovah's Witness, and loving commercial activities, it fitted in nicely with her personal projects.

Petra was supported to a degree by a network of close ties, centered around the current office-holders and women in her kin grouping, although they, like the rest of the group, had some reservations. Part of the problem was that they feared they would run out of money half way through the project and not be able to fulfil their commitments. Some, especially Sara, who is 'finely in tune with nature', felt that the present store was enough for their needs, that it was near and convenient for everyone. Dora - one of the young beekeepers - for example, could leave her new born baby with her mother who lived close by, and could then easily go to meetings and still be within calling distance. Benita has quite severe problems with varicose veins, and when she cannot work because of this, she can at least get to the meetings. These individual problems had collective underpinnings: the perception of themselves as housewives more than as entrepreneurs led them
to desire a small, centrally-located meeting place, which could allow them to combine beekeeping with home responsibilities.

Furthermore, the idea of a new store implied looking for a new plot, which was unlikely to be located close by. They wanted a centrally situated place where they could be observed by neighbours and kin, in order to avoid gossip. The new plot would also involve more problems with the ejidatarios, who were in fact short of land and had been quite reluctant to allot them the first one. An additional problem was that they would have to accept a new loan from the bank for the agro-industry. They were relieved that they had almost finished paying the original loan, uninterested as they were in a large enterprise, and thus were reluctant to take out a new one.

On the other hand, most of the members agreed that it was an opportunity they could not easily turn down, even though they did not conceive of their project as a large enterprise that required such a big and costly building. The thought of expanding had not been one of their dreams. It implied more time away from their household tasks and their families, as well as the fear of not being able in the long run to fulfil their commitments to the enterprise.

Although they had already declined the offer of the new store, an imposing visit from the mayor - considered an important local authority - made them reverse their decision. He was invited by the Ministry to help convince the beekeepers, and he offered to help the women if they ran out of money, but most significantly, he stressed their importance in the region as a group, how they were now becoming 'relevant to our village and our country'. The beekeepers often told the story of his visit, emphasizing his remarks about the enterprise having a different perspective from just crude business, because they could provide jobs and bring fame to the village.

Furthermore, the women's personal projects within their village networks and kin loyalties were at stake. The head of the village, whose support was crucial for their spouses' and family undertakings, exerted pressure on them, as he had special interests in the new enterprise. His own relations with the mayor and the Ministry could be jeopardized if the women did not accept the new store. He is a respected person in the village and has helped them on many occasions, which made it more difficult to refuse. As women in close relation to an institution such as the ejido, they had commitments: they should listen to the authorities, understand that what they said was best for them. Hence, defining their position towards the new store also implied defining their identity as 'peasant women', 'respectable' women and abejeras. These images also served as points of consensus influencing their decision.
An escalation of the entrepreneurial project

The women accepted the store, deciding not to share out the profits from that year's harvest and thus save as much as possible until they knew how much the labour was going to cost. They also decided that if they had no other alternative, they would sell their small store, but that would only be as a last resort because they had become fond of this more modest building. After all, it was the product of their own work and adequate to their current needs. Nevertheless, they did not want to let the authorities down by not agreeing, and they preferred to have some cash in hand, since, as they constantly asked each other, 'What if the people from the Ministry come and we have nothing?'

In the end, the agreement was that the store would be constructed, and that the bank would provide credit for the necessary implements, plus - and here lay an important problem - the purchase of at least 400 more hives. The officers alleged that the investment was too large for the 100 hives that the women already had. They had to think big, to think of a real enterprise. The women wondered how they would be able to manage, since coping with 100 hives was already a big issue. Some of them were still reluctant to neglect their household tasks, as well as other small enterprises - such as selling shoes or perfumes - from which they obtained extra income.

However, an escalation of the 'entrepreneurial project' was taking place, enabled by the actions of the beekeepers themselves - albeit in a largely unintended way, as it was clear that many such actions had really been oriented to defending other spaces within the village and their households. But, as a consequence, the women now needed an urban plot for the group. This plot should be a flat accessible piece of land, not far from the urban area. This involved a series of new negotiations and confrontations with the *ejidatarios*, who controlled the distribution of *ejido* land. (It would be unthinkable to buy a plot from private landowners as such a plot was not available and they would not have the money to do so even if it were.) They were supported - or rather pushed - by government officials who also put pressure on the *ejidatarios* to accept.

In the negotiations two important processes took place. One was that, in the practicalities of asking for a new plot of land, they had to accommodate themselves to the *ejidatarios*' established procedures, as well as to their own commitments within their networks. They had to act within particular discourses, which implied the need to measure their steps carefully and make sure they did not transgress any social norms, consulting prominent male members of their kin networks. Hence they had to manoeuvre to maintain an
acceptable position as 'the wife of' or 'the niece of' particular persons (see Chapter 4). This brought into the group some of the power struggles going on between family groupings within the village, since the request would affect the personal interests of whichever ejidatario had claim over the selected plot or hoped to use it in the future.

The other was that the women were obliged to defend themselves as entrepreneurs, and in doing so, they used the very notions they had been questioning before when they considered the idea of an agro-industry. Hence they resorted to discourses, to words and labels used by state officers to back their arguments. Whilst defending the project, they were also coming to terms with its importance. In the end, the plot was grudgingly granted, and the store built.

I was surprised to find that very soon the beekeepers described themselves as being privileged with the construction of a new store, and even denied that there had been any resistance. To a degree, they had changed their self-images and goals with respect to the project, adopting identities such as 'peasant women' and 'women entrepreneurs'. However, the meanings conferred by such labels varied from those of state officers and from the official versions of development programmes. The women were still reluctant to expand their number of hives, for example, thus diverging from the cost-efficiency logic entailed in the official entrepreneurial project. In fact, the issue was a focus of constant debate between the beekeepers and different state officers.

During my visit in 1992, I realized that the costs of operation had risen drastically due to the implications of the new technology for dealing with the African bee, which involved transport to the distant places where they had to keep their apiaries, as well as the use of specialized clothing to protect themselves (which had to be bought in another part of the country at a very high price) and new instruments for artificial breeding of queen bees, etc. The new store also brought with it many expenses they had not considered, such as the installation of electricity and the construction of a small bridge. To cover these, they sold their old store and undertook economic activities such as preparing dinner to sell in the evenings, and retailing chicken, which they bought from a chicken farmer and took turns to slaughter, wash and clean. Their profits from the honey had not increased, apparently because they had not pursued the 'market' orientation proposed, but also due to droughts and pesticides used by tomato companies. Nor had they achieved a better control over the bees, or increased the number of beehives as had been expected.
Leaving aside all the blunders that one can attribute these circumstances to, I want to stress the issue of differential understandings that underpinned the process.

One could, of course, conclude that the government had 'won' because it enrolled the women into the construction of an agro-industry with political gains where claims to power were recognized. At the same time, such claims to power were used to legitimate definitions of problems and solutions which were crucial in enrolling the women. But the power wielded was not a stable, all-controlling exercise. Its weaknesses concerned, among other things, the differential interpretations of the process, involving issues as crucial as the 'efficiency' of the project, to mention but one example. Although officials often mentioned aspects of efficiency and cost-benefits (in harmony with the cost-efficiency rationality central to planners' conception of the project), their invested interests, their understandings of the women's process and the negotiations taking place led to the prioritization of other aspects.

To be model entrepreneurs, in the terms of government officers, implied owning an agro-industry, acquiring credit from the rural bank and commercializing large amounts of honey. This was in tune with official plans. The local office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources had been allotted money from the state government to construct agro-industries and a visible building justified such expenditure. The programme entailed the joint endeavours of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Rural Bank, so credit was important in order to involve the latter institution. But for the women to accept and to expand their enterprise, they had to envisage themselves as entrepreneurs.

From the point of view of the women the enterprise entailed other values and priorities which sometimes clashed, or at least obstructed 'development' as perceived by government officials. The beekeepers wanted to earn money, perhaps to have an efficient enterprise, and might accept the label of entrepreneurs within certain contexts, but they were not willing to disregard their loyalties towards village authorities, their commitments to household needs and their feelings of solidarity towards each other. Hence, for them, being an entrepreneur did not necessarily entail engaging in a large enterprise full time, acquiring credit which would take years to pay off, although in the long run it might be good business. Furthermore, a business-like attitude according priority to market operations often neglected people's feelings, which were of utmost importance to them. Thus, although formally accepted by both parties, the notion of entrepreneur had different meanings for the different actors.
Gender identity and discourse in the forging of the project

We have seen how, in the process of forging the project, boundaries were set and identities defined through the intertwining and contrasting of discursive elements which crystallized in specific practices. But we have also seen how particular practices pulled discourses in 'through the back door', with the constraining and enabling effects these entailed. With the acceptance of their roles as women in the village, the self-images of the beekeepers were much influenced by the notions of the 'respectable woman' and 'good housewife'. The category of housewife, as I have mentioned, carries with it a connotation of a division between private and public spheres, and a consequent demarcation of domains of influence. Barbara Rogers (1980) points out that this separation excludes women from important decision-making arenas in the political and economic spheres. Thus, building upon a housewife identity can restrict the space for action of women, and the weight accorded to their opinions in other spheres.

We also described how the women were compelled to avoid behaviour that could earn them the label of libertinas, desquehaceradas or fracasadas. These labels, as we have seen, were not neutral, and their use was instrumental for demarcating the activities of women, setting boundaries on their projects and delimiting their scope of action. Thus, in everyday interaction, people position themselves and others with reference to accepted categories and classifications.

However, these images and identities did not have a fixed meaning, and as Strathern points out with reference to gender imagery in New Guinea, gender markers do not totally encompass the person:

'the object of denigration may be less crucially women themselves than what they stand for. That a contrast between male and female is used to symbolize a disjunction of values does not ipso facto imply an antagonism between men and women... Although the relationship between social and personal concerns, as well as the antithesis between the prestigious and the rubbish, are symbolized in stereotypes based on gender, the values themselves are held across the divide, by men and women alike. Women can dissociate themselves from the handicap of being female, as men have to prove they can utilize the potential of being male, because these gender markers do not totally encompass the person' (1981: 178).
The women accepted labels and reproduced specific images because of the interlocking of particular interests and practices. This was also evident in the accounts I presented of the three women in Chapter 1. Carola and Juana, as we have seen, were not only willing to present an image of subordination, but actually encouraged and desired it in some ways. Other important issues were at stake, such as the respectability of Juana's husband, which was important for her own projects, and the efficiency of Carola's enterprises. As Strathern also explains for the case of New Guinea,

'the acceptability of the model rests on three notions: that women agree with the basic social values at issue, which involve matters other than the relations between the sexes themselves; that all that is put on the female side in not in fact negative, even though it may appear antisocial; and that as persons women can free themselves from the gender stereotype' (1981: 178).

However, certain activities pulled the actors towards the delimitation or extension of a specific boundary, while the conception of the boundary itself shaped the activities in many ways. Power relations were reproduced or transformed at different levels in the process, and one can see how particular discursive practices, how labels, identities and gender images were instrumental as mechanisms of exclusion or inclusion. Identity, labels and boundaries for action were created, negotiated, sanctioned and re-enacted with the effects of restricting the projects of others, of channelling them to more 'controllable' domains, or of 'empowering' them, reinforcing, expanding or transforming their meanings.

When focusing on their effects, one is tempted to describe these discursive practices as part of a coherent discourse that is controlled by an actor or a set of actors - such as the state with the purpose of regulating the actions of others. But, as the story of the project shows, diverse discursive elements are brought in within concrete circumstances and reinterpreted to form part of other discourses. Power is implied in the exercise, but one cannot speak of a totalizing discourse in the hands of a master. As Foucault suggests:

'Indeed, it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together. And for this very reason, we must conceive discourse as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable. To be more precise, we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded
discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies' (Foucault 1980b: 100).

The processes the women underwent in their experiences within the UAIM project, the struggles, negotiations and conflicts that took place between the different conceptions of what was necessary, appropriate and good, point to the ways in which interpretations of others’ interests and negotiation over what was to be considered best for them constrain their actions, but also to the ways in which people draw upon labels and discursive elements in the pursuit of personal interests. The beekeepers used the notion of *mujeres pata-rajada* strategically and changed the interpretations others attributed to the label of *abejeras*.

Hence, it is inadequate to perceive 'rationalities' (such as the official discourse or gender discourse) as a colonizing or dominating system which acts in an autonomous way. Discourses cannot exist but through the practices of people; hence they are also immediately contaminated with emotions, power relations, associations and understandings pertaining to the spheres of specific domains. One has to take great distance from social processes to visualize them as endowed with coherent and compact rationalities.

Although this leaves us with the problem of being unable to pinpoint a precise location for power, it suggests that one should focus on how such relations are constructed, the mechanisms implied in the setting of boundaries and the relevance of knowledge in social processes. This is the critical point.

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3 I will discuss this issue further in Chapter 7, when addressing Habermas’ notion of 'the colonization of the lifeworld'.
Chapter 4

THE WOMEN, THE PROJECT, AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

One of the questions that guided my fieldwork was how the women came together as a group and forged enduring relationships amongst themselves. I wanted to identify patterns of group interaction and trace the social relations which influenced the adoption of identities and the acceptance of particular interpretations of the project and their roles within it.

Such social relations are the focus of this chapter. I explore how the beekeepers were clustered into particular networks - often linked to other village domains - where issues were discussed, commitments and non-verbalized agreements shouldered and emotions, loyalties and opinions shared. This also entails an analysis of the fissures within the group, and of how these were dealt with, or supplanted by other linkages. As it is, these splits and the ways in which the beekeepers attempted to fill the gaps between them, provided valuable information about the 'gluing together'.

In previous chapters I have referred to kin relations in the village and indicated how they shaped social situations. Here I describe the ways in which they feature within the beekeeping group, show how they are not motionless, nor present as an external structure, but are brought to life and resignified by the different actors in their interrelations within specific networks. Hence diverse webs of relations are interlinked; the subgroups that are formed within the group are also patterned by the circumstances that each woman faces and by the family’s sources of income, her membership of other village groupings, etc.

In this chapter, four kinds of network configurations are presented and contrasted: 1) a genealogical map of the network of kin and affinal ties encompassing the members of the women’s group; 2) a series of net diagrams representing specific types of transactions and commitments among the members; 3) an aggregated net diagram depicting the multiplexity and density of ties; and 4) a tree diagram which contrasts the patterns formed by the various sub-group clusters and illustrates their social distance vis-à-vis
other members and clusters within the beekeeping group. The ways in which different ties are combined and resignified, however, is largely defined through the lifeworlds of the different women, or rather through the intersection of lifeworlds that takes place within the project. This is evident in the three profiles of women beekeepers which I also describe in this chapter.

I have chosen three beekeepers, drawn from different social clusters in the group, to explore aspects of their everyday lives, and their experiences, motivations and interests within the project. I highlight the significance of the group, its encounters and activities, for shaping the lifeworlds of these women. The individual women used the project and its sense of ‘belongingness’ to reconceptualize their own life circumstances and expectations, and to sustain them in their efforts to change their social relationships and strategies. They thus create space for themselves and reconstruct their lifeworlds.

The women’s commitment to specific networks shapes their practices and influences their views of the UAIM and its perspectives. But networks also open up spaces for them, that is, they put people in touch with different sets of relations. Whilst networks provide coordinating mechanisms for the allocation of resources and the circulation of meaning, they are not totalizing systems, and whilst they entail some kind of governing coalitions that regulate behaviour, as such they do not control. Actors draw upon networks and rework them in response to their immediate needs, resignifying them through personal experiences, and using them whenever possible to achieve control. Hence, networks have no life but through the organizing practices of the lifeworlds of their members.

Webs of interaction within the group and its links with other village domains

In 1988 the criteria that appeared to facilitate members being elected to hold office in the group were: having older children (which frees them from the ties and worries associated with some household chores), a degree of economic stability (which enables them to give time to group activities), a knowledge of bee management, and the boldness to enter the men’s world and move around in government offices and travel to different towns, be it

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1. The names of families and of individuals are pseudonyms. Individuals are identified in the text by generation and number in the genealogy presented in Figure 9 (e.g. Petra is generation B, number 7).
by bus or through asking for a lift from relatives, and sometimes even in the extension officer's pick-up. They must also display some skills in discussing and negotiating with government officials of whatever level, and must have a husband and a family who will allow them to undertake these duties. Moreover, access to political and social networks was relevant, as well as maintaining support clusters within the group.

By 1993 several of the beekeepers had improved their skills in discussing and negotiating with government officials, and most husbands' reluctance to allow their wives to undertake duties within the group had subdued. Figure 8 portrays the webs of ties and affiliations within the group as I perceived them in 1988. At the time, Petra (B7) was President of the group, having recently replaced Juana (C9). In 1993 the President was Magda (B5). The reader will observe the density of social relations encompassing the different Presidents, which suggests the importance of such ties in establishing positions of leadership.

Figure 8: Composite network of ties and affiliations within the beekeeping group in 1988

Letters and numbers = positions in genealogy
This net diagram was elaborated by aggregating different sets of interactional ties, including work relations within the group, friendship ties, economic cooperation outside of beekeeping, ritual kin relations and associations through activities considered as leisure. These various types of relationships are depicted below in Figures 11 and 14, and are accompanied by an explanation of the criteria used to identify them. Computerized versions which describe the clusters found in each set of relationships are presented in Appendix 1. The ordering of the individuals in the figures and matrices has been rearranged by the computer programme, using CONCOR (convergence of correlations) procedures (see Mitchell 1989) to bring out clearly the social network clusters. I return to discuss this further in later sections of this chapter. For the moment I want to direct the reader’s attention to the subgroups that largely coincide with genealogical ascription: the Gomez-Romero family, the Valencia family and the Martínez family.

Most of the beekeepers are related by kinship or affinity to the two biggest family groupings, the Gomez-Romero and the Martínez families. This is shown graphically in the following genealogy of the beekeeping group (Figure 9). The Valencia family is not as prominent, partly because they are ejidatarios of Puerta del Barro, a neighbouring village.

Figure 9: Genealogy of Ayuquila’s beekeeping group

![Genealogy Diagram]

KEY: * = members of group  
O = female  
△ = male  
*∠ = married  
△∠ = siblings  
* A = deceased  
θ | θ = outside Ayuquila

P = President  
Ex-P = Ex-president  
T = Treasurer  
Ex-T = Ex-treasurer  
S = Secretary  
Ex-S = Ex-secretary
The Gomez-Romero and Martínez families participated in the foundation of Ayuquila. Both families are considered affluent, although within each there are significant differences in terms of levels of income and their careers. Conflicts and alliances between these two families have penetrated the group and cast its development in various ways.

Members of the Gomez and Romero families arrived separately in Ayuquila during the time of the hacienda, and mostly hired themselves out as peones. Several of them became trabajadores de confianza (workers who hold positions of trust, working close to the boss in his home or as overseers) of the owner and administrators of the hacienda, and, as mentioned in previous chapters, were slow in joining the struggle for land. This aroused feelings of distrust on the part of the Martínez and other families in Ayuquila, and was later augmented by problems over the distribution of land, use of water, and competition for markets. On the other hand, the Gomez and Romero families resented the close relations that the Martínez family established with García Barragán, a regionally important political figure (see Chapters 2 and 5). They also criticized the Martínez for incorporating most of their family members into the ejido, and accused them of taking over other ejidatarios’ land.

The Gomez-Romero cluster was the most active core of the group in 1988 (see the density of their relationships in Figure 8). Decisions were almost always discussed between them before the meetings, and they shared moments of work and leisure within group activities as well as outside. This subgroup was constituted by Petra (B7), the current President of the group, Juana (C9), the previous President, Socorro (B11), ex-Secretary, Ana (C11), current Treasurer and daughter of Socorro and Soledad (B13) sister of Socorro.

The following account of Petra’s lifeworld provides an inside view of this subgroup. Petra (B7), a critical figure in the beekeeping group, is related to the Gomez-Romero family through her husband (B8). As we shall see, she had her own project within the beekeeping venture, part of which entailed the consolidation of links with her family in-law.
Profile of Petra, President of the women’s group

We first met Petra in 1987 in a workday which I will describe below. She introduced herself as the President and invited us to accompany them to see how they work with the bees. She had with her a notebook in which she recorded the names of the members who had turned up to work that day. The regulations of the group state that if one misses three workdays and/or monthly meetings in succession then one loses the right to a share of the earnings and one risks being expelled from the group. Petra, we learnt later, is very meticulous in recording attendances and is considered hard (muy dura) by the members for the way in which she organizes people and runs the affairs of the group. During the work session Petra, assisted by the Treasurer, Ana (C11), assumed a directive role, answering any queries that came up and making sure personally that each hive, its queen and bees, was in good condition. She also kept up a running commentary for our sakes, explaining the details and routine of managing beehives and pointing out to us particular features or problems as they were encountered (for example, how to recognize sick bees, an old queen, and too many drones). Throughout Petra projected herself as being both in charge and knowledgeable about beekeeping.

This impression was further reinforced when later the same day we met the group at their bodega (store and workshop) to discuss the formation and objectives of the group. This meeting took place early evening, after the members had returned to their homes to cook for their families and to carry out any necessary domestic or other tasks. They joined us at the bodega around 5 o’clock, smartly dressed in brightly coloured dresses or blouses and skirts: some wore stockings, high-heeled shoes, and underslips; most were wearing make-up and a few, earrings and other forms of jewelry. Like the rest, Petra was well dressed but wore no make-up. She arrived with the Treasurer (C11), her niece, who was, perhaps, the most engagingly dressed, wearing a pink, low-cut dress, with earrings and a necklace. The two sat together throughout the meeting, silently giving each other moral support.

After some minutes of general discussion, Petra gradually assumed the central role in answering questions, clarifying points and conducting the meeting. She conveyed an enthusiasm and commitment to the enterprise,

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2 These profiles were elaborated jointly by Norman Long, Gabriel Torres and myself. We carried out the first six weeks of fieldwork with the beekeepers together, hence the ‘we’ form that often appears in the accounts. Similar versions of two of these profiles are presented in an article co-authored by Long and Villarreal 1989.
The women, the project, and social networks

despite the difficulties the group had encountered in getting the project off the ground (it took almost five years before they were formally recognized and given a loan by BANRURAL). She explained their plans for the future. They would, with the help of SARH and beekeeping experts, ward off the expected attack by the African bee; they would eventually acquire a truck for transporting the honey and for moving beehives to new locations; and their earnings from honey might later be invested in some other activities, such as establishing a maize grinding mill in the village. They had attended courses, taken notes from the blackboard and had studied hard to learn the techniques and science of beekeeping and hoped to increase their knowledge through membership of the newly-formed Regional Association of Beekeepers. At one point, when one member was explaining the enjoyment they received from beekeeping, it being a break and a change, Petra intervened to insist 'but we work hard in the break'. For her, it is not simply an amusing pastime; it is serious business that requires dedication and study!

There was, Petra emphasized, the need to learn more about 'the society of the bees'. They had, for example, discovered that during the nuptial flight, it was not one brave drone that fertilized the queen but about eight. This provided the queen with sufficient sperm to produce for about three years. And another eye-opener came when they learnt that the worker bees were not destined simply to perform one single type of work during their very short life-span of about three months, but passed through different 'sociological ages' (edades sociológicas), starting first with domestic duties, such as cleaning out and ventilating the beehives, then moving on to defending the beehive from invading insects, assisting with the elaboration of the honey and wax and with the feeding of larvas, and then later making expeditions beyond the immediate vicinity of the hive to collect nectar. When speaking of the techniques and science of beekeeping, her face lit up to communicate her engagement and genuine interest in the subject.

Petra as tough manager and local expert: organizational ethic

Petra, then, shows an involvement in both the organizational and scientific aspects of beekeeping. Before becoming President she had already established a reputation for herself among the group as one of the 'experts' in beekeeping and as a good organizer of work parties, which she did as part of her job as Vice-President. In return for devising a division of labour among members, Petra claims she was allowed to do less work ('porque me traen de un lado para otro'). Once elected to the Presidency (early in 1987) she quickly assumed an even tougher management line, earning the label of
being 'muy dura' and insisting upon maintaining discipline in the work ('tener orden en el trabajo'). In contrast to Petra, the previous President Juana (C9 see Chapter 1) is said to have been much too flexible and easy-going, which she herself openly admits: 'When I was President, I was not so strict, but now we are fine'.

Since becoming President, Petra has initiated a discussion of the rights and duties of members and of what should happen to those who do not fulfil their work obligations or pay their quotas each month. As she explained:

'We are following rules given to us by those from the bank though previously no one ever paid attention to them. Non-active members do not have the right to a share of the honey production, even if they have someone standing in for them. Recently, somebody (from the bank) has been to read the new set of rules but some members don't want to follow them. All they want is to be given the money, but that is not what it's all about; it's about doing the work and fulfilling your commitments. Luisa (C3) was annoyed with me on one occasion because I had told her off for not attending a collective workday. The group expect and ask me to impart justice. If someone doesn't go I consult the majority about what to do so as not to impose, especially when it concerns going into the fields. Anyway one is never right, for there are so many ideas....this new set of rules, for instance, I studied it and consulted them to see if we should apply it. Now they are calling it 'Petra's law' and I don't like that. One has to put laziness (la flojera) aside and get out there to supervise the bees, otherwise with the black ant and the frogs and sickness, within 15 days they would be finished. One has to be as organized as the bees.'

There are two categories of women that do not strictly comply with the requirements of the group: those who are infirm or pregnant, and those who work as day labourers or have other duties that interfere with their obligations to the women's group. So far this matter remains unresolved since the group is divided as to how strict one should be, but Petra continues to pressure them to come to some agreement, however difficult, on how to handle these cases. For example, there is the case of Doña Mercedes (A3) who is poor and old. She is therefore unable to make much of a contribution either to the work or to the operating funds of the group. Petra comments:
'Doña Mercedes has never helped or been of service. I don’t think there is any justice in considering her an active member and it would be better to have something in writing, something to the effect that she has not accumulated sufficient work to have earned the right to pass on her membership to someone else. Because of her bad legs she is unable to go out to the fields and so cannot even fumigate. It feels bad to cut her out and some of them have said as much. It would be better if she resigned, but she enjoys being in the group and is cooperative. Maybe we should also put it in writing for we don’t want her to think we are just cutting her out and announcing her dead. She has some nieces in the group who, when a meeting was held to find out the group’s opinion, said not to throw her out. But she is not so poor; she has a grandson of 15 who works and other sons, although they are all a long way away.'

However, as Petra’s assessment of the case of Doña Mercedes clearly brings out, it is one thing to recognize a good law or principle, and quite another to implement it to the satisfaction of all. She hopes that one day such anomalies will be ironed out.

The thirst for knowledge

As revealed in our first meeting with Petra, she possesses a considerable interest in improving her knowledge of beekeeping and other practical skills. Before joining the group she had been a regular attender of courses on weaving and macrame at the DIF (Family Development Unit) and Caja Popular (the small cooperative bank) in the municipality, and for a period was the President of the DIF committee. Since joining the group, she has participated enthusiastically in any courses that have been provided. She showed a lot of interest in the study sessions specially organized for them by BANRURAL on organizational and book-keeping procedures, and particularly in those given by a number of experienced beekeepers who came to teach them the basics of beekeeping.

Petra enjoyed these meetings and took copious notes on most topics. She began reading carefully the pamphlets on beekeeping that were circulated and watched a series of TV programmes on the subject. She recalled how the group itself would each week prepare a particular chapter of the book they had on beekeeping and would be expected to answer questions based on the text at a group meeting. She enjoyed this type of study session, which, it seems, resembled the way in which her father (a Jehovah’s Witness) had
instructed them in the Bible. Petra characterizes her father as having been a morally upright man and a successful baker and shopkeeper:

'My father was not a drinker, nor smoker nor a womanizer. He was a God-fearing man who found time from his business affairs to read the Bible to us and this has left us with the urge (‘la espinita’) to keep to and read the Bible. It is lovely to have a religion and believe and not behave like an animal.'

Petra - herself a practising Jehovah's Witness - therefore sees a connection between moral rectitude and abstinence and seeking Godly knowledge. The organizational skills and dedication of the Witnesses in achieving this are qualities that are also essential for succeeding in a new group venture such as beekeeping that entails the acquisition and utilization of new forms of technical and other knowledge, as well as a degree of personal commitment, as she puts it, 'a sus compañeras' (towards her colleagues in the group). Many of the attitudes and values of the Witnesses can be seen at work in Petra's approach to her work and compañeras. Mercedes (A3) was later expelled from the group, and so Petra had her way.

**Developing her own project**

These courses and study sessions were, in Petra's eyes, important not only for the technical knowledge they imparted but also for the way in which they helped them, not only with the bees, but 'as women, to face life'. Petra wants the beekeeping business to become a sound money-earning venture. This would give some degree of economic independence to the women and, if managed carefully, would lead to augmented profits: 'by getting the fire started, we will harvest more' (haciendo la lumbrita, sí vamos a cosechar más). Later she envisages that the group may be able to diversify into other economic ventures. They already sell to local livestock owners the pasture from their hillside plot donated to them by the ejido for keeping their bees; but they could also, she suggests, grow plums and nopales (cacti) in their coamil and, with additional capital, open a grinding mill in the village (at present there is not one).

In many respects Petra's interest in seeing the women's project develop into a successful economic enterprise reflects her general background and orientation to life. As well as being a Witness, Petra's father was a well-known and relatively successful businessman. The father and family had at one time lived in Ayuquila but 'there arose envy and he received anonymous
threats’ so they left for Cacalote (a neighbouring village) where they established a bakery and small shop, and where other Witness families live. Several surviving family members still live there. This background gave Petra the taste for commerce: as she puts it, ‘I very much like business because it provides for daily necessities’.

Petra’s work for the women’s group and her growing expertise in beekeeping is helping to consolidate her ties with women from the Gomez group, of whom several presently hold or have held positions of responsibility. All but one of them commented favourably on the work of Petra and they all stressed the importance of ‘solidaridad’ (solidarity) within their group. Another of her sisters-in-law in the group, a senior woman of the Gomez family, Socorro (B11), is a devout Catholic who belongs to Acción Católica and participates regularly in various church activities; yet even she praises Petra for her diligence and knowledgeable about beekeeping. Also recently, when one group of bee-hives was inundated when the Ayuquila river burst its banks, the main organizers of the rescue operations were these three Gomez-Romero women, Petra, Socorro and Juana (C9 see figure 8). On hearing of the flood, they quickly mobilized those members who were available and, together with the help of some husbands and sons, went down to the river area to save the hives (see Juana’s account, Chapter 1). They used trucks owned by Socorro’s and Petra’s husbands.

All this suggests therefore that Petra’s ‘project’ includes the building of better relations with her sisters- and nieces-in-law and thus consolidating her position within the women’s group and her network within the village as a whole. How far she succeeds in the long-run will, of course, depend very much on the fortunes of the group itself. Hence the success of Petra’s personal project and the destiny of the women’s group are inextricably intertwined.

The clash of two worlds: Petra and her husband

Petra’s involvement in the women’s group has generated new opportunities and interests for her. Although in certain respects one can see her activities as complementing those of her husband, her increasing commitment to the group leads to some separation, if not incompatibility, between their two social worlds. This process has, it appears, also been instigated by their different religious views, to the extent that they once came close to divorce.

Pancho (B8), Petra’s husband, is an ejidatario possessing a total of eight hectares of land inherited from his father (A4). Originally Pancho had some 10 hectares but lost two as a result of the construction of the canals and the
road to El Grullo. He devotes most of his time to agriculture, although recently things have gone very badly for him:

'Concerning the maize, the river made two hectares into ponds and swept away the soil. The previous harvest of tomatoes brought disease.'

Until recently, these various agriculturally-based activities constituted the foundation for their household economy, although over the past few years Petra’s husband has devoted more time to commerce and trucking than to production as such. According to Petra, agriculture is now a big risk: 'water, pests, the high prices of agricultural inputs and low prices for our crops destroy us'.

Pancho shows little interest in her beekeeping activities, and certainly does not think of honey production as contributing much to the household budget. Only in emergencies, like the recent flood, is he prepared to lend a hand, certainly not on a regular basis like Luisa’s (C3) and Eugenia’s (B16) husbands. For him, 'this is women’s work'. Petra explains:

'People who help are much admired; for example, Luisa’s husband, who often goes out with us and fumigates and helps us down with the heavy hives. Don Marcelino (B15) is another who helps... my husband is not keen since he was once stung. When the river threatened to flood the hives though, the bravest and pluckiest was Pastora (B20), not the men. She threw herself into the current to rescue the boxes.'

Also, according to Petra, her husband got tired of having his house cluttered with beekeeping equipment. Moreover, like many of the husbands, he objects to her attending the bees and not being available to prepare supper for him and the children. Petra herself recognizes this as a point of difference between them and the double standards that operate for men and women. Husbands, she commented,

'they arrive home at one or two o’clock in the morning, because of their work or other reasons, which is not always true; sometimes they are drunk or whatever.'

Membership of the women’s group, therefore, has also generated friction between Petra and her husband. As she increases her standing among the
women and comes to realize her own project, so relations between them become more strained.

The situation between Petra and her husband worries her sisters-in-law. Soledad (B13) comments that it would be very painful for her to see her brother married to another woman and her father’s (A4) land bequeathed to other offspring. She remarks half-jokingly that her sister Socorro (B11), who is very Catholic, has prayed so hard for the problem to be solved that her knees are all scraped (from treading down the church isle on her knees in hope of having her prayers answered). She explains that Petra’s religion makes the situation difficult for her brother. It makes it difficult for everyone, she argues, since often Socorro, Lorena (wife of Pancho’s and Soledad’s brother) and herself had been to visit Petra and found her locked up with her son and daughters reading the bible. Petra would be embarrassed by these situations and would immediately hide the bible and unlock the door, but her in-laws felt they were interrupting and began to distance themselves. Furthermore, Petra would not allow her offspring to attend parties because these often commemorated saint’s days. Nevertheless, their joint participation in activities within the beekeeping group fortifies the relations between Petra and her in-laws. The group provides space to interact, to share worries and concerns and to establish close friendship ties.

On the other hand, Petra reckons she has carved out more space within her household, due to the recognition they have received as a group by government officers and other relevant outsiders, to her having gained experience in participating in meetings and events held in other places, and to her interaction with people outside the village such as other beekeepers.

In financial terms, she estimates that on her own she could earn more money for the household, as she did a few years before when she baked bread to peddle in the village. However, at the time, she observed that her husband tended to rely on her to pay for household provisions and to use his money on other women and drink, so she stopped baking. She deems it his responsibility to provide their household expenses. When they eventually receive more profit from the beekeeping enterprise, she explains, it will be different, since she will have more possibilities for negotiating with her husband. Anyway, she considers that his attitude has been changing. He now listens to her more often, and she has acquired more space in household decisions concerning money, even if he continues to relegate the project to the realm of ‘women’s things’.
Reinforcement and reorganization of kin and social ties

Petra’s profile provides insights into how kin networks were reinforced by her participation within the group. It also points to how patterns of relations within the group could be shaped by the affiliation to kin networks. The Gomez-Romero members constituted an important cluster which influenced group decisions and the circulation of ideas. Not all kin networks operated in the same way, however, since kin relations were drawn upon differently by members of the different clusters. In this section, I will describe how work relations, friendship and economic ties cast kin networks differently within the group. Let us start with work relations.

The women’s activities as a group

The women get together to work at least once a week. They meet at the house of Petra, the President of the group or at the store. There, they prepare their instruments: fumigators and the dried dung, corn cobs, pine chips and petroleum for lighting them; antibiotics for the bees; wedges to open the beehives and clean them of the surplus wax; machetes and pichoacas (i.e. different types of knives used for cutting down weeds); and the large wooden boxes that serve as breeding chambers. Sometimes they also have to carry 20-litre cans of water mixed with sugar to feed the bees when there are too few natural flowers around, together with small jars for supplying each beehive with a portion of this. Initially they had to walk or hopefully hitch a lift to the apiaries, which were located along the main canal some 2 or 3 kilometres from the village, but after they moved the beehives - some as far as 10 kilometres away - they have had to pay neighbours and relatives who own vehicles for transport.

We first met the group and its President at such a work session. Although now they have to wear special outfits, at that time they all came dressed in trousers, some worn under a dress and tied up with string at the bottom or secured with socks to prevent the bees from getting in. Their attire was completed by long-sleeved shirts, maybe inherited from their husbands, and home-made protective masks. Some masks resembled professional gear with specially shaped eye pieces, others wore local sombreros with improvised black netting tied around the headband, and one woman sported ‘appropriate technology’ in the form of a green nylon net shopping bag. Some had taken along drinking water, fruit and biscuits to share in the field. They began work immediately, dividing themselves into several small groups with specific tasks: cutting down the grass and cleaning up the area around
the beehives; putting bricks and rocks under some of the beehives; fumigating the beehives when opening them up for examination; removing the frames and cleaning off the surplus wax in order to observe the state of the bees and the wellbeing of the queen; and then, when replaced, making sure the lids of the hives were properly secured. That day they had not been given a lift and had walked, carrying the heaviest things on their heads.

Other important tasks entail the extraction and bottling of honey, which the beekeepers carry out at their store. The honey combs are capped with a knife to open the small cells. This is done over a wire netting placed on top of a large container to receive the honey that drops out. They then place four combs at a time within the manual extractor and the women take turns turning the handle. They must turn the handle eighty times before the four combs are empty. Labour is often divided by distributing the combs (in 1988 they had an average of about 160 per harvest) between them. In that way each woman knows how many combs she has to cap and extract and can work at times she considers convenient, although the work must to be done the same day. They often work in pairs or small groups of three and help each other. Whilst one caps all the combs, the other turns the wheel. The honey is then placed in 200-litre containers. Bottling the honey is not considered a difficult task, and the President - who is in charge of the commercialization (receiving help from whoever is available at the moment) - fills 20-litre buckets or empty milk bottles and other small containers they manage to acquire. Neighbours who want to buy honey bring their own small containers to be filled.

What is considered a nuisance is the cleaning that has to be done afterwards. Often the President ends up doing this with the women who come last to work. Her close friends often check to see that she is not left on her own. Hence, solidarity is important in the group. For example, Socorro (B11) has health problems and her kin and friends team up with her to make sure she does not overwork herself. Because of her age and frailty, Mercedes (A3) is allowed to do less work both in the fields and in the store. Whoever finishes first helps her out with her task. Seldom is anyone left doing her work on her own.

Figure 10 maps out the patterns of cooperation the women established whilst working together. this was elaborated on the basis of my field observations. Since the beekeepers often involved me in small tasks it was

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3 After the construction of their new store, this situation changed, as they also acquired an electric knife and an electric extractor which held more combs and did not require so much manual labour.
difficult to keep an eye on all changes in work relations. However, I did record 10 full workdays in detail. For the present purposes, only partnerships which lasted at least 30% of a workday have been included. The lines in the figure indicate work relations which repeated themselves more than three times during those work days. The continuous lines represent initiative in establishing the working relation - although this was often reciprocal - and the dotted lines indicate compliance.

The core cluster of the group, represented by the Gomez-Romero family, is evident in Figure 10. As can be observed, Ana (C11) initiates work primarily with her kin cluster, as does Petra (B7). Juana (C9), Socorro (B11) and Soledad (B13) spread their relations to include others, although they also work with their kin. The cases of Pastora (B20) and Sara (C5) are noticeable because they hardly initiate work relations but are chosen to work with. Both are considered hard workers and knowledgeable about agricultural issues, but perhaps due to this experience, both seem to prefer working on their own. They often arrive at the field or the store and commence working before the others, not waiting to be told what to do, although they readily accept partners when someone approaches them.

**Figure 10: Work relations within the group**

A ———————————— B
= reciprocated links

A ———————————— B
= A initiates link to B but is not fully reciprocated

A ———————————— B
= B initiates link to A but is not fully reciprocated

Letters and numbers = positions in genealogy
Dora (C13) appears unlinked to others because she was absent for all the workdays I attended, due to her difficult pregnancy. Mercedes (A3) was also absent in all but one of these days, as was Elsa (C14) who sent her sister in her place. Rosa (C15) was present three times and sent her daughter for the rest of the days. Both Elsa’s sister and Rosa’s daughter worked with whoever called upon them to assist. Benita (B18) was either absent or worked for only short periods due to problems with varicose veins that had become infected.

Meetings, parties and friendship ties

Other important group activities are the monthly meetings, which take place at the store on the first day of each month. The President takes the roll-call, the Secretary reads the minutes, the Treasurer informs them of the expenditures they have incurred, and then, under general business information, the President gives an overview of the work to be done, visits to government offices, etc. At the end of the meeting, each member signs to prove attendance and pays the monthly fee to the treasurer. After this come the snacks, which members take turns to prepare. The latter is probably the most important activity of the meeting, for, besides being the one they devote most time to, they plan it ahead and always try to make something special. The group also arranges acts of solidarity, such as sending flowers when relatives of members die, and organizing parties for each other.

Dora (C13), for example, was given a surprise baby shower a few weeks before her baby was due. The members each presented a gift to her and they prepared games for the occasion. They play-acted a farce of a birth (where the mother was screaming with pain, whilst the father was drunk) and laughed all afternoon until the special meal was served. Sharing these moments was an important event for the beekeepers, who did not have many opportunities of partying where children and husbands were not present. Juana (C9) recounts the Christmas party they organized, describing the gifts each received and telling how she was on a diet on that occasion and could not eat the greasy food they had prepared. Her 'compañeras' (colleagues in the group), however, provided a special dish for her. 'How can I not be happy in the group,' she exclaimed, 'when everyone is so nice to you, when there is so much solidarity!'

Hence, bonds were created in the group, which was now considered, not only as an economic enterprise, but as a space for friendship and entertainment. Figure 11 maps out these close friendship clusters. Since I interacted with the beekeepers on a daily basis and showed interest in their problems, I was often confided about personal concerns, and was able to
detect to what degree they also shared these problems with other beekeepers. I also gathered data on the exchange of personal favours and on information flows within the group. In addition I explored key problems the group was encountering, such as the request of a plot from the ejido, the situation of Rosa and Mercedes, and so on, and focused on whom they discussed these matters with. In the process, I saw how friendships were often severed by these very problems. When Petra could not, for example, discuss the issue of the ejido freely with Gloria (C1) whose father was adamant that the beekeepers should not receive the plot, a degree of distance was established towards her. Petra’s position towards Mercedes (A3) also increased her distance from Sara (C5). In Figure 11 continuous lines represent personal problems that were shared and dotted lines those where a beekeeper offered a listening ear but was often unwilling to share her own problems. This I use heuristically to indicate close friendships.

Figure 11: Close friendship ties within the group

A ——— B
= reciprocated links
A ——— B
= A initiates link to B but is not fully reciprocated
A ——— B
= B initiates link to A but is not fully reciprocated

Letters and numbers = positions in genealogy
Friendship ties linking the core cluster members are clearly evident from this figure. Socorro (B11) and Ana (C11) are mother and daughter and as such, maintain close relationships in everyday life. Although Ana is married and lives separately in her own nuclear family, she visits her mother every day and helps her out with various household chores. Soledad (B13), sister of Socorro (B11), also makes her presence felt strongly. She is often consulted about decisions by the core group and participates in many everyday activities with them. In 1988, they constituted a kind of 'gossip circle', sharing their personal problems and discussing topical events. However, in terms of friendship, Juana (C9) enters into this core group basically through her close interaction with Ana (C11), who is her sister-in-law. Whilst the others value her opinion and are sympathetic to her problems, they do not share many events in their daily lives except through their relations with others. For example, when Juana has a problem with someone else in the village, she tells Ana. Ana then tells Soledad, and Soledad shares Juana's point of view and sympathizes with her. Yet the issue is not openly discussed between Juana and Soledad. This points to an important feature in social networks. Two people from the same network may be pulled together by third parties more than through direct contact with each other. In other words, these others may, as it were, fill in the missing link.

Another interesting network dimension is illustrated by the cases of Juana and Petra. They are placed in similar positions within the Gomez-Romero cluster (see genealogy, Figure 9), since they are both married in (although Juana is from the village and is not only related to this family through her husband but also, in a more distant way, through her mother). Because of this common family context and network, they receive similar information about and interpretations of village affairs. Hence, despite their distinctly different natal family background and contrasting religious affiliation, they often share opinions and adopt a common stance.

Other economic ties

Let us now return to Figure 8, where we see that Soledad (B13) is the beekeeper presenting the greatest number of linkages, followed closely by Ana (C11) and Magda (B5). Ana's associations are strong in terms of friendship, leisure (see below) and work within the group. Soledad and Magda's linkages, on the other hand, extend to more members of the group. Soledad interacted in one way or another with 11 beekeepers and Magda with 10 (which of course does not mean they do not interact with the rest).
The strength of their ties is connected with economic activities, albeit in different ways. Let me explain.

Soledad’s (B13) economic ventures provide linkages into the group in two forms. One is through joint ventures with the Valencia family, her husband’s kin, that is, with Eugenia (B16), whose husband is half-brother to her husband, and Benita (B18) half-sister to her husband. Part of the income of the three families is derived from the land and cattle belonging to Benita’s mother (A7) - who is mother-in-law to Eugenia (B16) and Soledad. This land is worked by Soledad’s son on behalf of his father, who is presently in the United States. Benita is resentful of this, since she claims that such land used to belong to her father and she has more rights to it than Soledad’s husband, who is product of her mother’s second marriage. Eugenia’s husband is not affected since he inherited land from his uncle. However, his land, as well as his mother’s, is registered with the *ejido* of Puerta del Barro, which is adjacent to Ayuquila, and their links within the village are not as strong as those of the Gomez-Romero and Martinez families.

In an effort to avoid further conflicts, Soledad, always mindful of her husband’s family, attempts to strengthen her informal contacts with them, offering a listening ear to their problems and trying not to contradict them within the beekeeping group. This prompts her to be careful in making open declarations of support to the core group in situations of conflict, especially concerning issues such as that of Mercedes (A3) which could jeopardize her affinal ties. Soledad hardly participates in extra-village activities undertaken by the beekeeping group, such as attending meetings of the Beekeepers Association or visiting government officials in El Grullo or Autlán, for fear that her husband will receive malicious gossip about her ‘wanderings’ whilst he is in the US. This could further jeopardize her family situation. Soledad’s cluster of affinal ties can be appreciated from Figure 12, which depicts the pattern of joint economic ventures, other than those relating to beekeeping.

What I was not able to portray in Figure 12 were the other kinds of relations, also relying on economic ventures, which link Soledad to the group because of their indirect nature. Soledad’s networks in Ayuquila are largely created though her work as a prominent dressmaker. Many women visit her often as clients, staying for long hours to chat whilst Soledad works. Thus, Soledad has access to a lot of information concerning social relations in the village. And she has many friends. Not all the beekeepers are her clients, but often their mothers or close friends are. Hence, relations with friends bounces back into the beekeeping group, where Soledad’s opinion is valued and respected.
The women, the project, and social networks

Figure 12: Other economic ties

Figure 12 also brings out the economic transactions between Ana (C11) and Socorro (B11), her mother, who helps her financially when she faces difficulties. Magda’s (B5) and Luisa’s (C3) families share economic endeavours as well. Luisa’s family relies partly on the income generated by their two nephews (sons of Luisa’s husband’s deceased sister, also sister to Magda) whom Magda reared as children. Luisa’s family thus consider themselves indebted to Magda, and for this reason, but also out of family solidarity, often help her by providing maize, beans and at times financial aid. The rest of the economic ties have been generated within the group, particularly by Magda.

Magda is well liked in the village and the beekeepers spoke well of her. However, in 1987 she only maintained close relations with Luisa (C3) and Eugenia (B16) within the group. Magda was known to be a good cook and she loved economic enterprises, but was shy and would quickly get very
nervous when many people were around. She had in the past engaged in selling meals in the evenings, but only with the help of her daughter, who attended the clients. When her daughter migrated to the United States, Magda stopped these activities, and her nervousness (which she explained was a sickness which in fact often sent her to bed) increased. At the beginning of her participation she would hardly join in group activities, especially when outsiders were involved. In meetings where government officials were present, for example, she would stay by the window of their store listening for a while and then would go home to rest.

With the engagement of the beekeeping group in other economic activities to make their ends meet, Magda's skills in cooking and selling meals turned out to be of great value. She became a central figure in the making of tamales and pozole (special Mexican dishes) and the members of the group relied on her to coordinate activities. Later the beekeepers no longer needed the extra income as a group, but some had enjoyed selling meals and welcomed an extra bit of cash for themselves, so they continued the activity independently of the beekeeping enterprise. Two groups were formed, one composed of Petra (B7), Juana (C9), Ana (C11), Gloria (C1) and Magda. The other involved Magda as well, but included only Eugenia (B16) and Luisa (C3). The two groups took turns in selling meals so as not to compete with each other. Magda's position within the group strengthened considerably, so much so that she became President in 1993.

This activity triggered off fresh relationships between the Gomez-Romero and Martínez clusters, though the Martínez family followed a different pattern to that of the Gomez-Romero within the group.

The Martínez family

Once again I direct the reader's attention to Figure 8, now focusing on the Martínez cluster. It is evident that ties within this kin group are not very intense. Except for Magda (B5) and Luisa (C3), whose families are also linked through economic relations and who are neighbours, the rest do not relate very well to each other. This has to do with past experiences and problems outside the group, but it is interesting to note how Magda's new relations provide links between the Gomez-Romero and Martínez family clusters. Gloria's (C11) relations, on the other hand, are also mostly oriented to the Gomez-Romero. From Figures 10 and 11, we can see that it is she who often seeks association with members of the Gomez-Romero cluster, but this is not always fully reciprocated. Her efforts to relate to some of the Gomez-Romero are also evident in compadrazgo (ritual kin) ties, which I
show in Figure 13. Gloria invited Socorro (B11) to be madrina (godmother) at her wedding, which makes Gloria’s parents compadres of Socorro and her husband. She also invited Ana (C11) as godmother to her son when he was baptized, so Ana and Gloria are comadres (co-mothers). For Gloria, as for many Mexicans, compadrazgo ties are often stronger than kinship. Compadres frequently address each other using ‘usted’ (a more respectful form of ‘you’) instead of the common ‘tu’ (you) to show their respect and appreciation for the person. Gloria never calls Socorro and Ana by their names, but refers to them as madrina and comadre.

Figure 13: Compadrazgo
Gloria participates actively with the main core of the beekeeping group in extra-village activities, and is Secretary of the group. She is one of the main organizers in baby-showers and other parties. Two issues separate her from the rest of the group, however. One is that her links to the *ejidatario* domain are weak. Her husband does not possess agricultural land (his main income derives from being a member of the musical band of Ayuquila). As I have explained in Chapter 2, differences are often made between *ejidatarios* and non-*ejidatarios*. Secondly, her father, who is an influential *ejidatario*, often takes strong positions against the beekeeping group (see Chapter 6). Gloria keeps her distance when these issues are being discussed.

*Compadrazgo* ties were also significant in the cases of Mercedes (A3) and Rosa (C15), but I will return to this in later sections. For the moment let us concentrate on the Martínez family sub-group, who, despite the social distance between the four members⁴, are frequently pulled into conflicts which consolidate their kin ties, thus separating them from others of the beekeeping group. Although Gloria tries to avoid being pulled in, she is none-the-less classified as a Martínez, which detaches her from the rest. This is further explained in the following profile, which describes Sara’s (C5) situation within the group.

Profile of Sara, a peasant woman

Sara (C5) was only half paying attention to us when we first interviewed her. Fanning herself with her apron, she excused herself for being all sweaty, explaining that she had just arrived from the maize fields, where she had helped her husband for a few hours. She shouted at her son to close the corral, making sure the cows wouldn’t get out and to verify that they were ready to be milked the next day. Then she asked her daughter to shoo the chickens out of the house. She apologized again, saying that her daughter had stayed to clean the house and wash dishes, but that one couldn’t rely on these girls. Sara commented that the girl was ten years old and old enough to do housework, but sometimes she preferred to take her to the fields when she was not in school. This way she could keep an eye on her and give her small chores to do because she only wanted to play all day.

⁴ Actually Magda is not a Martínez, and is linked into the family by the affinal ties of her brother, husband of Luisa (C3), with whom she maintains very close relations.
Sara and Tomás, her husband, have eight children, the eldest, a woman, is 21 and works as a secretary. They have two boys, aged 19 and 17, who work as *peones* but also help their father when required. The eldest boy only studied up to sixth grade, and the other four girls are still at school. Two of them, aged 15 and 13, work as *peones* as well when friends or kin invite them to work and when they are not in school. The youngest is only six.

**The beekeeping enterprise**

Sara had joined the UAIM in its initial stages, upon an invitation from Marisela, the first President of the group. She says she joined because she did not want to be impolite and snub an invitation. Then she continued in the group because she couldn’t disappoint their expectations of her, and now, she finds it impossible to back out.

Sara attends dutifully to work sessions and group meetings, although she speaks little and hardly ever stays to chat afterwards as do the rest, frequently arguing that she has some pressing household chore to attend, or that she is in a hurry to meet people from the savings cooperative, who also carry out their meetings on the first Sunday of the month. Her participation in festive events organized by the group is also meager. Once or twice she accused Petra of not inviting her. Her relations with Petra are tense, and she does not involve herself in economic activities with the members of the group outside the beekeeping enterprise itself. However, she is interested in the enterprise, and all the members of the group speak of her as a hard worker and responsible member, and they enjoy working with her, as revealed in Figure 10.

Before enlisting in the UAIM, Sara knew nothing about bees, but she has learned quickly, and is eager to engage in tasks such as breeding queen bees and producing pollen and royal honey. However, she does not like to involve herself in other activities such as marketing honey or attending regional beekeeping meetings. She is shy to speak to government officials and prefers to busy herself attending the bees, harvesting honey and carrying out other tasks.

Unlike a few of the group members, she found it easy to work in their *coamil*. It was a familiar and enjoyable task. Her eyes light up when she speaks of the possibilities they have of planting wild plum trees, or better still, *mezcal*, which her husband says can be sold quite easily in the nearby Tonaya, where *tequila* is distilled. Since the *coamil* is registered in their names, they can plant perennial crops, unlike other *coamileros*, who must return the land to the 'owner' as soon as they harvest. However, as a cattle
owner, Sara values pasture and agrees that it is also good to grow maize. For the past two years, the beekeepers opted for lending their *coamil* to local producers and selling the pasture, as most *ejidatarios* do.

*In the midst of family quarrels*

The use of pastures, however, became a focus for divisions within the group. Last season the pastures from their *coamil* had been sold to the Gomez-Romero family, and the Martínez family, to which Sara belongs, accused the President (Juana Romero) of having sold the pastures almost gratis to her husband and father-in-law. Sara was thus caught in the middle of the dispute, and she had her own reasons for taking sides.

Sara’s cousin and uncle were interested in the pastures and she thought a better price could have been obtained had the women considered their offers. The issue was often discussed in Sara’s family circles, and she was pushed to defending her kin. Although Sara does not mix readily with her two cousins in the group, they did take common stands with the Martínez when required (although Gloria [C1] is very cautious about it and will not take positions unless she is pressed). In the case of Mercedes, for example, Sara spoke out clearly, declaring that it was unfair to sack her from the group because she was sick and old. She commented:

‘Petra does not think that she herself will be old one day and that other people will have to look after her. Besides, Mercedes helps us out whenever her condition allows it. Look, turning the wheel of the extractor is tiring, and when she goes to the fields, she holds the fumigator, which none of us likes to do because those things can get very hot!’

Sara (C5) felt the group should be solidary with Mercedes (A3), also as a gesture towards Magda (B5) who was Mercedes’ niece. Magda is related to the Martínez family through Luisa’s (C3) husband, who is her brother. Both Magda and Mercedes participated in religious excursions with Sara.

Sara’s father and grandfather were members of the founding group of the *ejido*, and her father is remembered as an honest, hard-working man who at one point had been head of the *ejido*. However, in the early fifties he was murdered whilst irrigating his fields, a drama that Sara finds difficult to come to terms with, as she claims he was a good man and owed nothing. She comments with some resentment that she has since been careful to avoid
village gossip, and is adamant in her position to stay out of other people's business, instructing her family to do the same.

Another issue that kindled Sara's dissent was the new ejido plot that the group was compelled to apply for when they were offered a new store. Male members of the Martínez family were strongly against granting the beekeepers a new plot, and Sara argued that the group should not involve themselves in problems with the ejido, insisting that they should stick to their land on the hillsides, and construct the agroindustry there.

Although she seldom confronted Petra or any of the Gomez-Romero group openly, she demonstrated her position with gestures and silence, and spoke out within her own gossip circle.

**Her passion for agriculture**

Sara claims she loves agriculture, although she always speaks of her agricultural activities as complementary to those of her husband. She started looking after cattle upon the death of her father, when she was only twelve years old. She then took on the task of helping her mother, as she was the eldest of two daughters, and also hired herself as peon to her uncles to work in the cotton fields. Her grandmother left her land to Sara's sister, but she is a teacher living in Guadalajara, and she lets Sara and Tomás till half of her land. The other half is rented out for sugar cane. Sara's mother also lives in Guadalajara, and had previously rented out her land to Tomás. Tomás was born in a town near Unión de Tula, about 60 kilometres away. He arrived in the valley as a labourer, and owns no land. Sara is a bit resentful of the fact that her mother now rents her land to a compadre of hers, who is also her neighbour.

On one occasion I accompanied Sara to the fields. She invited me because, she said, she did not have much work to do. That morning she had prepared breakfast to send to members of her family working in the fields. She wrapped warm tortillas in clean, ironed napkins, embroidered by herself, placed beans and stew in small containers and packed three bags: One for her eldest son who was working as peon for an ejidatario, one for her husband and younger son who were in irrigating the corn fields, and another for her two daughters who were labouring with a neighbour in his tomato fields. This day she had managed to send her husband and sons their breakfasts with others who were going that way and had walked the two kilometres to provide the girls with theirs. She was happy because she had stayed to work for a few hours in the tomato fields and earned a bit of money, which, she claims, is never to be slighted. She then hurried home to
prepare and send her working family their midday meals. She was lucky that her young son came on his bicycle to pick up the father's lunch, that her neighbour sent one of his workers to pick up the girls' meals\(^5\) and that her eldest sons' lunch was also dispatched with a friend. So she was free. She called her youngest daughters and we set off together.

On the way, she we saw guamuchil trees with ripe fruit hanging from their high branches. She asked her daughter to climb one of them and then - complaining that she was wearing a dress and slippery sandals - climbed herself to pick the fruit for me. We were still at quite a distance from their potrero (agricultural plot), when Sara recognized two of her cows approaching a maize field. I couldn't see anything, and wondered how she could distinguish her own cows from others, but, sure enough, the cows had found an opening in the fence and were approaching the maize plants. She shouted to her daughter, who was still climbing trees, to run and head them off, and then she herself ran to help her, explaining that it was still early to bring the cows home, but these particular ones had small calves and were eager to return.

When we arrived at the potrero, she proudly showed me a small vegetable patch which her husband had planted. There were some cauliflowers and cabbages. She picked the largest of each to give me, complaining that neighbours had been picking them, and that they had very few left. 'Honesty', she grumbled, 'is not their virtue'. They do not know what respect for others is. Then we hurried into the maize field, and she was happy to notice that her husband had already irrigated most of the field. She called out for him, but before he arrived, she busied herself thrusting her hands into the mud to remove stones and other obstacles from the rivulets of water to facilitate its flow to the last rows.

Sara greeted her husband warmly and asked whether they had eaten the food she sent, had the water guard arrived, had he seen the patches of weeds growing at the edge of the road that could be taken home for feeding the pigs, and informed him that she could not stay and help him this time, as the cows were eager to go home. She sat down to chat whilst she prepared some agua fresca (lemonade), and then quickly and skilfully washed two plastic cups to offer us drinks. Whilst Tomás was telling us of the events of the day - how he had been programmed to irrigate that night, but had been able to

\(^5\) The normal practice of delivering meals among ejidatarios is that the person who hires workers should organize the picking up of the food. Only when a male worker has no women available to cook for him will the employer provide the food himself.
forward it because his neighbour was not yet ready, how he only needed a few rows to go, what his plans for selling the maize were - she looked around for the lunch napkin, collected the scattered plates and spoons, and started searching for a spade, which she explained had been lost last week but was too expensive to leave just like that. Men were careless, she complained, and didn’t look after their things properly. She found an old jumper which belonged to Tomás, which she had missed in the wash the day before, and packed it carefully with the other things.

On the way back, Sara cut weeds for the pigs and picked a maize stalk lying in the road to feed her pregnant mare. We stopped alongside the field where the mares and horses were grazing, and called a mare softly. She was slow in approaching us, unlike the horses, but Sara waited, telling me how this particular mare was precious to her, as she had reproduced efficiently, and now they had several horses to their name.

Someone on horseback was approaching us. It was Sara’s uncle (B2) - part of the Martínez network, brother to her father, and father of Luisa (C3) - whom I had met before in ejido meetings and had held informal conversations with. He was one of the large cattle owners in the village. Before we even greeted him, he started complaining about the ejido meeting held the day before (see Chapter 6), warning us that the women should think carefully before selling that pasture from their plot. Using contemptuous language to refer to the Gomez-Romero members of the group, he emphasized that the women should not let themselves become beguiled by those people, as Alejo (whom Sara called cousin because he was quite young, but who was actually half-brother to her father) was willing to pay a lot of money for the pasture. Sara answered that Alejo had spoken well in the meeting, that he had told them the truth when he accused the women of mismanaging the produce of their coamil. She would inform the other women about his offer, see if they took it seriously. Her uncle left before she finished speaking, so she turned to me, saying that it would depend on the determination of the committee (namely Petra [B7], Ana [C11] and Socorro [B11]), obviously wary that they would make the wrong decision.

The small herd of cattle was now walking home slowly, urged on by Sara’s daughter. Sara hurried to catch up with them, afraid that they might try to enter some ejidatario’s field and the girl would not be able to control them. The family owned 10 cows, two bulls and some calves. Their first cow was given to Sara by her mother, in payment for looking after her cattle. Later, Tomás managed to acquire more cows, and their herd increased slowly. However, when Sara’s mother decided to rent her land to her comadre, she also passed on her cattle to be tended by the latter. Sara claims
that they mismanaged the animals, and her mother was left with nothing, so she and Tomás decided to give her a cow. Sara still looks after her mother’s house and chickens, which she promptly fed as soon as we arrived home, checking one of the hen’s legs, which had been hurt by someone throwing a stone.

_A second-rate Catholic_

Religion is very important for Sara. She prides herself in having taught her sons and daughters religious values, although she claims she is a second-rate Catholic and would like to do better. Her entire family attends mass regularly - including her husband, who is one of the few males to do so. But she does not often attend the prayer sessions organized by other women in the village, since she prefers to pray with her family at home every night. She does, however, join the bible study group which is organized by her cousin (sister to Alejo, the cattle owner; again Sara calls her cousin, since she is so young, but she is actually her aunt), with whom she has a close friendship.

Protestants, she claims, have changed religion because they have been deceived. They believe the untruths that are presented to them by outsiders. Sara does not like to offend them or tell them off, but she is distrustful of Petra (B7) - the Jehovah’s Witness and President of the group - admonishing that if she tries to push any of her Protestant ideas they will have to cut her short. Sara feels she would be embarrassed to change her religion.

One of her pleasures in life is participating in religious excursions to visit the virgin of Talpa, or _el santo niño de Atoche_ (the holy child of Atoche). These trips are usually organized in El Grullo, but several women from Ayuquila attend, and Sara has established close ties with them.
Sara's outlook on life

Although the profits the beekeepers received\(^6\) from the sale of their honey were meager, most of them were happy to see fruits of their work. Sara took the small sum and immediately bought herself a cheap, but comfortable chair. She had been yearning for a comfortable chair to sit on whilst sewing, which she enjoyed doing in her leisure time. She would place the chair near the door, where there was more light and where she could also watch passersby and greet friends and neighbours.

Embroidery is one of Sara's favourite hobbies. She travels once or twice a week to Autlán to take a special course given by experts, and comments that she always wants to learn more. Even though the course is a bit expensive, and she has to make time to visit the town, she considers it worth the effort. Previously she had taken a course to tailor men's trousers, and was one of the few women in Auyuquila who could make them.

This activity is very much in tune with Sara's outlook on life as a woman. She enjoys being feminine, dressing her family properly, looking after their meals and their Catholic practices, and keeping her family united. Her husband, she claims, is one of the few honest and hard-working men left. There is much corruption going on around them, but he is faithful to her and does not get into trouble. At times, his attitude is sneered at by other men and women in the village, calling him 'the saint' and declaring he does not know how to enjoy life. Sara turns a deaf ear, knowing that villagers also rely on him when they need someone, for example, to sell beer at fiestas, since he is honest with the cash and does not drink himself.

Within the beekeeping group, she acts responsibly and continues more because she feels she must fulfil her commitment than from an urge to construct a successful enterprise which will provide large amounts of money. In fact, she is constantly trying to slow Petra's pace, arguing for example, that they should not be ambitious for a large enterprise but continue with a more manageable level of activity. Loyalty to her kin and fidelity to her Catholic principles also conflict at times with the other members' projects.

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\(^6\) The profits from the first honey harvest had been invested in their small store, and from the next harvest they received about six US dollars each. In the past years they had been receiving small sums like that, plus two litres of honey from each harvest. Later they had to invest their returns in the large store and were slaughtering chickens to increase their funds. In 1994 they were happy to receive approximately 13 US dollars, having paid all their debts, although this included profits from the slaughtering of chickens.
The peripherals

I can now see, in retrospect, interesting aspects that were not so obvious when I first identified these networks of relations in 1991, based upon an analysis of my 1988 field notes. In 1992, when I travelled to Ayuquila for a short visit, Dora (C13), Rosa (C15), Mercedes (A3), and Elsa (C14) had left the group. In 1993, Pastora (B20) had also resigned. This means that all members of the last cluster have abandoned the group (see Figure 8).

In 1988, the five 'peripherals' were outside the core sub-groups in diverse ways. They were not necessarily unlinked to the main families (see genealogy, Figure 9), but a combination of circumstances separated them from the beekeeping group. One of these was age. Whilst Elsa’s family was well regarded in the village (her grandfather, foster parent of Don Jose, the comisariado, was one of the main founders of the ejido) and the beekeepers often tried to pull her into group activities, her own pursuits, which can partly be attributed to her youth (she was only 18 in 1988), departed from group endeavours. Although she had, at one point, worked in the tomato fields, and had hence established friendship and compadrazgo relationships with Rosa (C15 see Figures 11 and 13), she looked back on it with distaste. She was more interested in her work as a nurse, which took up much of her time. She often sent her young sister to work in her place, and later formally passed on her membership in the group to her.

Mercedes (A3), on the other hand, can be considered as well within the genealogical network of both the Gomez-Romero and Martinez families, but was too old to collaborate on an equal basis. In a way, Petra’s (B7) love for discipline and her particular interpretation of justice - influenced by her religious ideas - were significant in excluding Mercedes. However, other activities propelled kin relations back into life. Such was the case of religious trips, which Mercedes loved to join, as well as Sara (C5).

Mercedes’ enjoyment of religious activities and trips has favoured the reinforcement of ties with other group members, especially Sara (C5), Eugenia (B16), and Magda (B5). She was linked to Sara and Eugenia by compadrazgo, but these relations were rekindled with joint involvement in religious activities. Every year, the four women (sometimes accompanied also by Luisa [C3] or other members of the beekeeping group), together with other men and women from the village, visit the virgin of Talpa, for which they have to travel many kilometres by foot. The trip is heavy, since they have to spend a night in the open air along the path to Talpa. They also sometimes visit other virgins. In 1988, they all participated in a pilgrimage to Guanajuato, located in the central region of Mexico. Mercedes shared her
problems and concerns during their travels and feelings of solidarity were triggered. Her position was endorsed by other female travelers from the village, thus compelling the beekeepers present on the journey to speak in favour of not expelling her from the group. Sara, Eugenia and Magda constituted a solidarity network, pulling those close to them to support Mercedes. This made the decision to exclude her all the more difficult, and it took more than a year before they finally agreed to pay her a small sum on retiring from the group, which Mercedes accepted readily as she was desperately in need of money.

Figure 14, then, depicts the patterns of interaction within events such as picnics, football matches and trips for religious purposes. Those relationships involving three events or more are represented with continuous lines. Figure 14 depicts only leisure events that the beekeepers shared with selected others within the group and outside activities pertaining strictly to beekeeping.

**Figure 14: Leisure**
Figure 14 again shows the close relations among members of the Gomez-Romero cluster, and the ways in which Magda (B5) is pulled into the group by the others (this was partly because they considered she needed to take her mind off worries and overcome her nervous state). However, if space would have allowed it, it would have been interesting to portray the ways in which relations outside the group shaped ties within it. The case of Mercedes provides insights into how networks forged with outsiders influence struggles in the group, but there are also many cases where the beekeepers were disengaged in some ways from the beekeeping group by their participation within outside informal groups with whom they shared leisure activities, or by conflicts that members of such informal groups had with members of the beekeeping group.

Pastora (B20), for example, is related to Elsa (C14)’s family through her husband, who is the brother of Elsa’s mother, Pastora’s good friend. Pastora is a hard worker, and is reputed to manage better than men in the field. Rumours in the group circulated that she could even carry an empty 200-litre can on her head. Pastora also accompanies the group when they need to speak to state officials, so she is useful, and, in fact, Petra was as one point considering nominating her as President of the UAIM when her term of office came to an end. However, Pastora has a flickering temper, and her conflicts with other women in the village often placed the beekeepers in difficult positions with their friends outside the group. One or two women who had been invited to join the group had declined because of Pastora. The latter finally left the group when she joined her sons in the United States for a period.

Dora (C13) was not only isolated because of her pregnancy - which was a difficult one (she was exempted from work for a long period) - but also because she hardly sustained relationships or joint ventures with any of the other women of the group. Although the group made efforts to incorporate her, such as organizing a baby shower for her benefit, her informal networks within the group never strengthened. As I mentioned, she later left the group, excusing herself by saying she had to care for her baby.

But the case of disengagement from the group due to involvement in other informal clusters is perhaps clearest in the case of Rosa (C15), whose closest friends were tomato pickers, and who, as I mentioned in Chapter 2, identified herself as belonging to a tomato workers’ 'culture', within which life was enjoyed and money valued. The following profile of Rosa describes her situation and gives us an insight into the relevance of the beekeeping group for her as a 'peripheral'.
Profile of Rosa, the dilemma of a day labourer in the women’s group

Our first impressions of Rosa

We first met Rosa (C15) when we attended the workday for cleaning out the beehives near the canal. At the time she was still a member of the beekeeping group, from which she was later compelled to resign. We do not remember her very clearly on that first occasion, since she did not participate in the inspecting of the beehives but instead worked, together with a couple of other women, chopping down the long grass and clearing the area of ants. She seemed to be somewhat separated from the active core of members. Moreover she did not attend the afternoon meeting we had with members of the group, although during the discussions she was mentioned as a day labourer working for a tomato company.

Later, during interviews with individual members, her name came up regularly as someone who had difficulties in fulfilling her obligations to the group because she worked as a caba (foreman) for the Leones company, and because of her husband’s negative attitude towards her membership of the women’s group, which he claimed took time out of her duties towards the family and himself. He was reputed to be particularly worried about the possible loss of earnings when she chose to work for the women’s group rather than for the company. It was said that she

'worked in the tomato company to help her husband, sometimes taking one of her children out of school to go with her... Members of the committee had told her once when she said she couldn’t go and work with them that she would either have to fulfil her obligations or leave the group. It isn’t right that she doesn’t go and work with us.'

Rosa attended a Workshop on the 'History and Problems of the Group' that we organized, but she missed many general meetings. She also missed the 'Baby Shower' organized for Dora (C13), whose first baby was due soon.

A glimpse of her family situation

Wishing to talk to Rosa, we went in search of her. Petra, the President had pointed out her house directly across the street from her own. Rosa received us on a patio in front of a room with a TV, a not uncommon feature of rural households that have electricity. In the patio were two dogs and many cages
containing fighting cocks. The area was unkempt and crammed with fruit trees and animals. During the interview eight young women arrived to watch the TV soap opera. Rosa explained that these were women friends from the work group (cuadrilla) of tomato workers. Also twice people called to buy mangos and avocados: her daughter attended to them only interrupting her briefly to check the prices. Then her husband arrived on a motor bike with a friend of his. With barely any greeting, he proceeded to mix food for his prize cocks. He spoke little and gave some of the mixture to his friend who then immediately left. The rest of the time the husband stayed within the house and, although invited to join us, he refused. He only once came out to ask Rosa whether he should turn off the mango drink she had cooking on the burner.

Rosa portrays herself as a hard working woman, claiming that she is probably the one that works most among all her peers. When she is not labouring in the tomato companies or in the beekeeping group, she washes clothes for other people in the canal, or cares for her elderly neighbour for which she gets paid quite well. She also embroiders napkins in her 'spare' time, while watching television or chatting with friends. She emphasizes the fact that she has helped her husband a lot through her work, but quickly explains that he does not depend on her work, as he is a good provider.

The money she earns - she insists - is for her, as she likes to dress well, buying new shoes or dresses regularly, and to eat well. She often treats her family to dinner in local cenadurias (improvised 'restaurants' in the village often consisting of tables that are set in the streets in the evenings). On one occasion, she explained that she did not invest her salary in the improvement of her tiny house, although it was almost falling apart, as she never knew what was lying for her in the future, and if her husband decided to leave her, or if they parted for any reason, he might take the house away from her. Hence it was better to enjoy the money whilst she could.

Rosa’s involvement with and views of the women’s group

Like Petra, Rosa joined the group as a replacement for someone who dropped out. She had no previous experience with village clubs or groups, nor had she been a member of any church association. She was invited to join the group by her sister-in-law (who has since resigned), during Juana’s Presidency, at the same time as Petra. Like the majority of members she had no previous experience or knowledge of beekeeping. She attended the courses given by BANRURAL and by Beto, the beekeeper from Puerta de Barro, who had been invited through Petra’s sister who is his neighbour in
Puerta de Barro, to advise them on beekeeping techniques. But, as Rosa explained, she faced some opposition to her joining the group:

'I had to ask permission from my husband and, although complaining, he accepted. The small amount of money from the collective earnings pacifies him. It's a lot of work but being together is nice. My relatives joked about it in the beginning but they have become adjusted to it.'

Although she has never participated one hundred percent since joining, she was enthusiastic about their activities, finding working in a group

'nice, because we give each other support and it is beneficial for oneself and there are also earnings... The solidarity between us is great.'

She went on to give the example of Dora (C13) who had been going to quit because she could not fulfil her work quota. But, after consideration, the members decided to excuse her from duties for eight months because of her pregnancy. She also mentioned the surprise 'Baby Shower, and compared this with the women's group in Mezquitán (the village where she was born in the same region, see Chapter 6) that had kept chickens, but

'they quickly got tired of each other and quarrelled and shared out the chickens. Our group is united but at times the burden of the work and the lack of earnings cause friction among us.'

She supports the views of her friend Petra, the President, that they must be punctual and that there should be good control of the absentees and late-comers which must be recorded each month in the minute book:

'It is good to have order. We put forward points and discuss what is gossiped about at the dances, and things concerning the group, but we never involve ourselves with other things, such as the village fairs.'

Rosa has few close friends in the group, though Elsa (C14) is her comadre (co-mother or ritual kinswoman). As she explains, her closest friends and compadres are people from Corcovado and Mezquitán, from where she herself originates. In 1988 her only trustworthy friend in Ayuquila seemed to
be Petra, who, as we mentioned earlier, lives opposite her. Like Rosa, Petra is also married into Ayuquila, and likewise, suffers a little from being a 'foreigner'. Petra has a positive attitude towards her working for the companies: at one of the group's meetings she said that the companies were a good thing for they brought regular work. Later their relationship ended with conflicts within the group.

Rosa says she would not want to be chairperson of the women's group. She thinks she is hopeless at expressing herself. In the workshop we organized, she found it difficult to introduce Elsa (C14), her neighbour and comadre. 'My companion is a nurse', she hesitated, and then after a long pause 'she is very young'. She also took a very minor part in the role playing drama that depicted the history and problems of the group. She explained that one day she would have to take her turn as an officer, but she hoped they would give her a low-level position. In any case, 'the years are long and many' and therefore it would be a long time before they called upon her. It is the same situation with the beekeeping activities: she took a back-seat role, preferring to be told what to do by the experts Petra and Juana. In striking contrast to this, she said she liked to be in charge of tomato production. She is the foreman (caba) for one of the work squads based in Ayuquila, and has worked as a day labourer with the companies since she was about fifteen. She is therefore very knowledgeable and experienced in the various production tasks. She argued that with tomatoes there is more of an atmosphere; they are running around, sharing and gossiping all day,

'You with your group of cock fighting men and me with my group of beekeepers'

As our first encounter with Rosa's husband suggested, their conjugal situation is fairly divided. He takes care of his affairs and she is expected to be both the dutiful wife and a second income-earner.

Rosa's husband is an ejidatario of the segunda ampliación (second extension of the ejido) and is not considered as a core member. Because of his status, he was allotted less land than the rest (only two hectares), of which he is resentful, blaming especially Federico (B10), Socorro's (B11) husband, for not having distributed the land properly and for taking his money paid as quotas and spending it on himself. Like Rosa, her husband is outside the village's main kin network (see genealogy Figure 9) although he was born here. He stresses his 'marginal' status and claims that some people
have 'fed off of his work', but that he does not need them, and hardly participates in ejido assemblies or other major events.

On his two hectares of land, Rosa's husband grows sugar cane. He also works as a cabo for tomato companies or hires himself as a day labourer when his whole squad is not needed. In addition, he raises cocks for cock-fighting. Presently he has some cocks ready for fighting, many of which are kept in cages near the house. His networks are stronger within the tomato companies in which he works and with other cock breeders like himself than in the village.

Cock-rearing and cock-fighting are his great love. Like himself, many of his friends are cock fighting men (galleros). Several of them, who come from different villages within the valley, are also his partners in cock-rearing. They meet regularly to discuss their cocks and to attend cock-fighting sessions in the valley towns and villages. They often place bets themselves and sometimes make good winnings. He moves in a circle which is regarded as essentially 'macho'. Rosa's husband and friends often drink together and turn up at his house expecting to be served food. Rosa finds this rather irksome. She also complains about the way in which he expects the children and herself to look after and feed the cocks when he is away (not only those kept around the house but also those kept in the farming plot):

'This martyrdom began five years ago; it's enough to drive one mad. But he likes it and it earns money. The other day he sold one for about 50 dollars.'

However, his involvement in cock-fighting gives her some excuse for developing her own interests. As she would say to him:

'You with your cock fighting group and me with my group of beekeepers.'

Although she could earn about 4000 pesos (in 1987, approximately four U.S. dollars) a day working for the tomato company, during the first interviews she explained that sometimes it is more worthwhile to join in the activities of the beekeeping group where she could find 'togetherness' and 'solidarity'. But according to her, this had frequently sparked off quarrels with her husband who
'complains because I have lost a day's work, and I feel bad to see that at the end of the week I have less salary than the others in the work squad.'

Rosa, then, was caught in a dilemma: she enjoyed the women's group and was able to use it in her attempts to assert a little independence from her husband, but if she were to participate more, then the result would be less income. The beekeeping enterprise had not reached a point where the earnings from it could compete with those from agricultural wage labour. Also, increased participation simply exacerbated the conflict of interests between her macho husband and herself. Keeping a balance between day labouring and the women's group became more and more difficult, although by combining the two she could benefit from the camaraderie of her work friends as well as the social support of the women's group in Ayuquila.

Accustomed to losing in life

In 1988 Rosa's participation in the group declined considerably. She often sent her young daughter to work in her place, arguing that she lost 6,000 pesos (pérdida de ganar) every time she had to skip a workday in the company to join the group. At times she preferred to pay the 'penalty quota' for not presenting herself, as this was cheaper than missing a day's work. Rosa explains that the beekeepers do not know what it is to earn cash regularly, so they do not value their time as she does.

The beekeepers put pressure on her to define her situation, insisting that economic contribution was not enough, as her presence was required. Personal conflicts arose, kindled by conflicts between the families due to ejido affairs and other village gossip. Rosa thus decided to resign, but demanded a share of the investment, claiming that she had given the group a lot of work. This was a complicated issue, as every member of the group had long been waiting for a share of the meager sum of money the group had as earnings. However, they did not want conflicts, and in the end, the group calculated the capital they had in terms of the small store (they had not yet constructed the larger one) and the beehives and gave Rosa what they considered fair (300,000 pesos in 1988). Rosa laughed at the amount, (saying that with her work and all the investment they had in the store she should at least have received 15 million pesos) but accepted, bitterly avowing that she was already accustomed to losing in life.
New configurations in group patterns

In 1993, two other beekeepers had resigned, both members of the Gomez-Romero family grouping. One, Socorro (B11), had to leave the village for a short period due to marital problems, and the other, Soledad (B13), had to resign when her husband arrived from the United States, since he did not agree to her participation in the group. Adding to these personal problems was the fact that the enterprise was becoming a burden for the women. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the new store had been built, but they were obliged to pay for the electricity, which was expensive because a new transformer needed to be bought, since the village lines did not extend to the place where the new store was built. Furthermore, upon advice from the Ministry of Water Resources, they had contracted a company to buy the transformer and connect the electricity; but the company simply never turned up to carry out the assignment, and did not return the money the women had paid them. So the group had to contract another company and therefore pay twice for the job.

They also constructed a small bridge over the canal to their store, and, in addition, were compelled to buy special outfits to defend themselves from the African bee which had established itself in the region and was considered very aggressive. With the arrival of the African bee, the beekeepers had to pay for transport to their apiaries, as these had been placed in distant places so as not to endanger the population. On top of this, the honey yields had been low, and the women were having to engage in other economic activities to sustain their beekeeping enterprise, often providing cash from their own pockets.

However, urged by Ministry officials, who considered the investment in the agroindustry far too much for a few women, they invited two new members, both of whom were young, unmarried girls. Furthermore, Elsa’s place was taken by her younger sister, and Pastora’s (B20) by her daughter, so the young contingent of the group increased. Another woman in the village offered to take Dora’s (C13) place by paying cash compensation to cover the time and work she had invested. Thus Dora, like Rosa (C15) and Mercedes (A3), was given some financial reward upon her departure from the group. Socorro (B11) and Soledad (B13), on the other hand, did not ask for any compensation, showing understanding of the difficult financial situation the group was facing, and even expressed guilt for deciding to leave the others. On top of this, Ana (C11), left for a few months to the United States.
These departures demotivated the remaining members, leaving the Gomez-Romero group very weak. This coincided with the fact that three years had elapsed since Petra was President, and it was time to choose another. Magda (B5), as I mentioned, was elected to replace her. Although in 1988 I could not have imagined her as President because of her shyness in speaking and her inability to cope with social situations, an observation of the social networks that were laid down in that period makes clear that she was already developing important links that spread out to embrace diverse members of the group.

Multiplicity, multiplexity and propinquity in social networks

In analyzing the webs of linkages and patterns of interaction between the beekeepers, I have portrayed three different 'representations' of networks which reflect distinct ways in which social relations take place: the genealogical map of kin and affinal ties encompassing the members of the beekeeping group; a series of net diagrams depicting specific types of transactions and commitments among the members; and an aggregated net diagram which depicts the clusters in the group and the density of ties between them. Different levels of complexity in the social relations are depicted in these representations of networks.

The genealogy and the net diagrams are based on what Boissevain (1974: 30) characterizes as uniplex or single stranded relations, where persons are in touch with each other in terms of a specific role, i.e. as kin, friends, work partners, etc. In observing the multiple transactions between beekeepers within specific roles, several interesting features pertaining to the creation and reproduction of social networks have surfaced: kin relations, for example, are strengthened by the ways in which land tenure and the management of economic resources are organized; linkages to 'outsiders' bounce back into the ties that the women create among themselves, but can also disengage them from specific clusters of the beekeeping group; and people 'fill in the missing links' in their interaction with others. Hence the patterns we find within the multiplicity of single-role relations and the densities they display are not disassociated from other areas of social life in which the women participate.

In Chapter 3, I discussed the issue of roles and identities, how these are negotiated to incorporate diverse meanings and have differential implications in terms of values, expectations and social ranking. These processes of negotiation are shaped by the intertwining of relations that take place in the
interaction between two or more people, where activities, associations and alliances often overlap. As Boissevain asserts, 'people are in touch with the same persons in many different roles'. This he describes as multiplexity in social relations (1974: 30). Such multiplexity is evident in the composite network of ties and affiliations depicted in Figure 8. Hence, we are not simply speaking of single-stranded social networks, but of the intertwining and overlapping of networks which include diverse linkages with dissimilar densities. Multiplexity brings out other features of social networks, such as how roles attributed to positions within genealogical configurations influence the beekeepers' access to information flows and hence their stance vis-à-vis conflicts within the group, which in turn shape the friendship and work ties the women establish amongst themselves.

However, having identified clusters where interaction takes place in various degrees of density, it is interesting to map out the patterns that are formed and compare them in order to represent graphically the social distance (propinquity) that the individuals establish vis-à-vis each other in their clusters and vis-à-vis the beekeeping group. Such patterns are more clearly portrayed in the tree diagram of Figure 15, which shows which sets of actors have similar sets of relationships to one another.

The tree diagram was elaborated using CONCOR (convergence of correlations) procedures to correlate the relations portrayed in Figures 10-14. The relationships of each pair of actors across all five networks was registered by the programme, as well as the overall density. The elements were separated into two sets according to their negative or positive correlation, after which the densities within and between these two sets were calculated and compared with the original density. It then proceeded to split each of these two original sets into subsets and continued to create subsets until the elements in the subsets were reduced to trivially small numbers. At this stage a tree diagram was created by continuously splitting the sets (see Mitchell 1989 for a fuller explanation of this procedure.) The series of matrix outcomes for the different sets of relations is reproduced in Appendix 1.

In Figure 15, the Gomez-Romero cluster is immediately singled out vis-à-vis the rest of the group (see stage two in the tree diagram). The differences in the patterns of relationships between and within these two large sets are evident. We have described the density of links within the Gomez-Romero cluster above, which, at the same time, brings them close to each other as a group and distances them from the rest. It is interesting to note, however, that Soledad (B13), who is also a member of the Gomez-Romero family, emerges as linked to the second cluster. We have seen the
ways in which her affinal family relations as well as her associations with other village networks commit her to establishing other ties and to distancing herself from the core group when critical issues are involved. However, she is in many ways a linkage point and a 'broker' between the two large groups. I will discuss the issue of brokers further in the following chapter.

Figure 15: Patterns of social relationships within the beekeeping group

In a similar way, Sara (C5), is separated by the computer programme from her kin cluster into what I have labelled the cluster of the 'peripherals'. Indeed, we have described her reservations towards the core cluster and her own family grouping within the beekeeping group. Sara’s distance is likened by the programme to that of Dora’s (C13) and Rosa’s (C15), both of whom we have described as marginal, and a parallel is made between these three
and the other three peripheral's relations to the group (i.e Mercedes [A3], Pastora [B20] and Elsa [C14]).

An analogous pattern of relationships is portrayed within the core cluster. Petra (B7) and Juana (C9), as I have mentioned, are both married into the Gomez-Romero family, and this (as well as other social attributes) is reflected in their standing with respect to conflictive situations and in many of the relations they establish with others within the group. They are depicted as having the same pattern of relationships vis-à-vis the others in the group, as does a sub-cluster formed by Socorro (B11) and Ana (C11) who are mother and daughter.

The tree diagram points to the relevance of kin networks. Comparing Figure 15 with the genealogy in Figure 9, however, also indicates how these are reworked. Actually, it was in the combination of four kinds of networks that the clustering processes appeared significant. The social relations created by the beekeepers as portrayed in Figures 8, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 are crossed and shaped in many ways by the sets of circumstances each woman faced, by the ways in which she reorganized her projects and by other social characteristics such as their kin, family sources of income, and their membership of other village groupings.

It is important to underline at this point that the fact that we can identify networks, that we can distinguish some kinds of structuring linkages and associations, that we can calculate their densities and show their correlations, does not necessarily imply that these are the backbone of social life within the beekeeping group. As with all research techniques, the kinds of networks we find are, of course, related to the kinds of information we recorded and the kinds of questions we were asking. As Clyde Mitchell rightly argues:

'the observer cannot help but select from the wide variety of phenomena which comes under observation, and the elements which are recorded are selected in terms of the interests of the anthropologist' (1989: 77).

Indeed, the criteria used to select information and measure linkages can, as we have seen, be quite problematic. A further problem with measuring techniques is that often all the 'variables' are recorded as having the same weight (as is the case with our tree diagram).

This is all the more relevant because, as we have seen, networks do not exist as structures external to peoples' lives; they shape their lifeworlds in many ways, but at the same time actors rework and resignify them on the
basis of their own experiences. Focusing on the lifeworlds of the different actors, then, can highlight how:

'everyday life is experienced as an 'ordered reality' by individuals. This 'order' appears both in the ways in which people manage their social relationships and in how they attempt to give social meaning to their everyday experiences of 'the world around them'. Hence it implies simultaneously both action and meaning. It is a 'lived-in and largely taken-for-granted world' which, however, 'we modify through our acts and which, on the other hand, modifies our actions' (Long and Villarreal 1989: 111, paraphrasing Schutz and Luckmann 1973: 5-20).

Like networks, lifeworlds are more than settings for action, contexts, or 'background resources' upon which people draw to give meaning to their actions, nor can they be 'decoupled' from reason or rationality as Habermas (1987) suggests. Life-worlds are always present as milieux for action but the actions themselves cannot be separated from them; they constitute and recreate them.

The women, the project and social networks

Hence the interplay of lifeworlds and networks generates and reproduces complex structuring processes, cultural constructions, specific practices and shared discourses. The ways in which particular women have experienced the beekeeping project elucidate this complexity. The actions, thoughts and aspirations of these women are set off, motivated, censured, enabled, restricted, encouraged or sanctioned by the emergent features of social practices and discourses. This is important for understanding how the women create space for their own projects, how they redefine situations through unique codings which not only draw upon cultural meanings, but reorder and resignify them.

Although the members of the beekeeping group were constrained by social rules and regulations, by cultural understandings and moral standards, by environmental circumstances and economic limitations, these were lived through their own experiences; they were reinterpreted through the combinations of multiple factors, not least of which were certain emotional responses, which we have encountered, for example in the profiles of Petra, Rosa and Sara. Feelings of hate, hope, fear and despair impinge on
The women, the project, and social networks

The women’s relations and commitments within their households constrain their participation in the project, in the same way that they can profit from their relations and experiences in the project to create space in their households. But borrowing, associating, and translating meanings from one domain to the other, is not always a conscious exercise. Both Rosa and Petra, as we have seen, change their conceptions of their roles within the household after engaging in economic activities in the project and in the tomato companies and face conflicts at home, since their husbands are operating under different understandings.

On the other hand, historical events of the ejido and frictions between the Gomez-Romero and Martinez families are present within the beekeeping group. Gloria (C1), for example, did not manage to break the bounds placed on her as a member of the Martinez family. The interweaving of relations within the group in 1988 narrowed her possibilities for accessing the Gomez-Romero cluster of members. Furthermore, the 'peripherals' within the group were in many ways also peripherals in the village. Hence the patterns of interaction between the group of beekeepers show how social relations, normative elements and conflictive situations pertaining to personal, village and other broader domains (such as the tomato companies, the Jehovah’s Witnesses or the national UA1M programme), intersect the project and shape the processes taking place within it.

The action of networks within broader domains is discussed in Chapter 6, where the social construction of power is tackled more explicitly. The workings of networks, which, as we have described above, entail linking, de-linking and filling in the 'missing links', attributing value to social positions and negotiating associations, as well as dealing with the 'bouncing back' effects of other networks are of relevance to the understanding of power processes. In a way networks can be seen as governing coalitions which shape the practices of their members and also impinge upon the practices of non-members. Ideas and meanings circulate through networks and justify, legitimate and exclude other people’s actions. Juana and Petra shared similar interpretations of village life and of the project even before discussing it with each other, in the same way that Petra and Sara disagreed almost beforehand. Petra and Rosa, both 'foreigners' to Ayuquila, have strong ties to broader domains outside the village, not only to their kin networks, but also to the worlds of Jehovah’s Witnesses and the tomato companies. Rosa’s valorization of her time, Petra’s love for discipline, their differential concern
for investment and the use of cash, can be traced to the rationality of the Jehovah's Witnesses or of capitalist enterprises, and appear either as deliberate attempts by the women to connect their worlds, or as notions infiltrating from 'behind their backs'.

However, such 'governing' does not obey an all-encompassing strategy and networks as such cannot control. Actors draw upon networks to push their projects, and it is the interweaving of 'projects' that in the end produces some kind of constraining patterns. Petra's and Soledad's need to consolidate their affinal ties colour their decisions; it pulls them into specific networks where labels, perspectives, and interpretations are shared. Sara's commitment to her family recreates frictions within the group and her experiences in agriculture mould her aspirations for its future. Friendship, everyday interaction, kinship and religious activities consolidate links or establish differences. But more than that, they show how particular people pull their social worlds into an economic venture such as the beekeeping project, and how, in turn, the enterprise is shaped by these very social worlds.

The process entails the use of symbolic and cultural resources to access and reinterpret others' codings and to act upon or through social networks. It also involves the actions of brokers who negotiate and translate definitions and ideas from one domain to another, often acting as 'keepers', since, to carry out their strategies successfully, they need to take into account others' points of view, sentiments and beliefs, thus reproducing and legitimating discourses and associations, whilst also introducing elements of change. Hence, before turning to discuss networks at a more macro level in Chapter 6, let us turn to the issue of brokers in the next chapter.
Chapter 5

POWER BROKERS AND AUTHORITIES

An ejido meeting where an important decision was to be made concerning the group of women beekeepers was to take place one Sunday in the casa ejidal (ejido house) of Ayuquila. All the ejidatarios, as well as the group of women, were expected to attend. I choose to describe the meeting here, because it allows us to look at the interrelations between domains in a specific context. In previous chapters, I have described the constraining effects of discourses, networks and lifeworlds, and how these are reworked within specific domains. I have also mentioned that each domain is crossed by elements pertaining to other domains. During the meeting, as we shall see, experiences, views and discursive elements were transposed from the domain of the state to the domain of the ejido, from the ejido to the project, etc. The interaction between the group of beekeepers and the ejidatarios shows how agency works to bring such elements to the fore. We can also see how, in a particular moment in time and space, boundaries pertaining to 'formal maps of power' are differentially interpreted and negotiated, how expectations are forged and issues veiled. Power is constructed with respect to access to resources, to the identification and defense of particular interests and the control of means of action. In the struggle for access to resources and control, power brokers emerge and authorities are redefined.

In the meeting I am about to describe, the ejidatarios had to decide whether or not to allot a second plot of land to the group of beekeepers. If so, they must decide whose plot to give them. There was a plot 'available' because an ejidatario was selling his agricultural land for urban purposes and had been 'taxed' with a portion going to the ejido, but many eyes were set on it. The meanings attributed to possession of agricultural land were attached to the different actors' interpretations of their shared experiences in accessing such a resource, and were pregnant with passions, economic and political expectations and understandings as to what the 'rules of the game' amounted to. As such interpretations are very much present in the debates
taking place, I will first provide a briefing on the background of land tenure in very general terms. This will also contribute elements for the discussion of the central concepts for this chapter: power brokers and authorities. I will analyze these concepts in relation to Barnes' conception of power, authority and discretion.

**Los hijos del general: Access to land**

In Ayuquila, as in most of rural Mexico, peasants emphasize the inestimable value of agricultural land, and how its distribution in ejidos and *Comunidades Indígenas* (indigenous communities) was the gain of the 1910-1921 revolution, the legacy of their forefathers. One of the main claims of the peasants participating in the uprising had been the retrieval and redistribution of land held by traditional latifundios (large extensions of land owned by single families), arguing that the latter had seized it from local communities. Legislation was thus established whereby land which had been usurped by haciendas could be restituted to villages.

Immediately after the revolution the priorities were to pacify the country, for which redistribution of land turned out to be useful. Excessively large properties were to be divided, and local groups could request them, even if they could not prove legally that they had been dispossessed by haciendas, so long as they followed institutionalized procedures and the requirements of law. Peasant groups who could prove ancestral collective ownership could retrieve their land under the legal status of Comunidades Indígenas, and other groups who detected large illegal properties, could apply for such land as Nuevos Centros de Población Ejidal, commonly known as ejidos. Government offices were established to study the cases presented by rural groups and determine which were entitled to what land.

Thus, applicant groups mushroomed and political mobilization thrived in the period following the revolution (1919-1940 approximately). Leaders who had access to historical files looked up titles from the Virreinatos in order to retrieve land which was now in the hands of hacendados or large landowners, and others, having detected large properties, studied their titles and, if they exceeded the legal acreage or were not lawfully established, made claims for such land. The process was not easy, as hacendados and rich landowners presented strong opposition and used every weapon to counter such claims.

Once accepted as ejidatarios and comuneros (members of Comunidades Indígenas), peasants did not legally own the land - since it was state
property - but could hold it 'in possession' and bequeath it to their offspring or close relatives. This meant that under certain conditions - such as not tilling the land for two consecutive years or getting involved in criminal acts - the ejidatario or comunero could be 'dispossessed'. Although this implied complicated legal processes, the threat constituted a useful weapon to be used by ejido authorities and state officials to keep their 'strings attached'.

Bartra (1985: 17) suggests that through processes of redistribution of land the Mexican state legitimates itself vis-à-vis the peasants, and procures social support. Peasants are marked by a peculiar trait: their land is 'borrowed', their access to land is a state concession, and they are subject to the latter’s conditions and rules of the game:

‘New peasant movements recognize the rules of the game of the post-revolutionary state; peasant movements which - from the moment they admit that their rights to land come from the state - recognize the legitimacy of the new social order and accept a subordinated role’ (Bartra 1985: 23 my translation).

Although the 'rules of the game' have changed in different periods and vary between regions, in general terms these entailed, as Bartra (1985: 17) asserts, that the state constitute itself as mediator between the peasants and the landowners in cases of conflict, as well as between the peasants and ejido, communal or private land. Indeed, national legislation decreed on the distribution and exploitation of territorial property, on the use of unexploited or uninhabited plots, on irrigation works, colonization laws, rural credit, agricultural training, etc. (Tannenbaum 1952: 70; Muriá IV: 442-443). It was established that private properties should be regulated by what government discourse labelled 'public interest'. This would later imply that small farmers should orient their production to certain markets and should be technically efficient. Hence the state came also to play an intermediary role in access to credit, commercialization of products, the acquisition of agricultural inputs and the procurement of irrigation water.

Ayuquila had been slow to gain access to land. Different versions of the story of how they finally acquired it are told and retold by the members of the ejido and the oldest people in the village, stressing the struggles they underwent, how much suffering it entailed for their families, and how a few

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1. This situation has changed in recent years. In 1992, legislation was modified to establish ejido land as private property and hence susceptible to purchase and sale.
trailblazers risked their lives for the sake of others. Don Jose, the comisariado (head of the ejido), explains that when the hacendado's administrator realized that his employer's land would be expropriated, he immediately divided it among the hacienda's sharecroppers (a common practice in other parts of the country as well). The hacendado was known to have been a generous man, and his peones (workers) and sharecroppers were not generally willing to go against him. However, local leaders soon took up the opportunity and started organizing a group. It was Mercedes' [A3] first husband who initiated the legal procedures, but villagers claim that the landowner offered him sums of money to slow down the process and disintegrate the group. Apparently he accepted, and other applicant groups gained access to land which could have been allotted to Ayuquila. However, the father of Carola's father-in-law and Don Jose's (the head of the ejido) stepfather - who worked in the hacienda as peon - took over and started the procedures anew. The process was long and difficult. Conflicts arose between the two leaders, and Don Jose's stepfather was killed. This triggered confrontations between the families, resulting in further murders, one of them being Carola's husband. Finally, however, Ayuquila became an ejido in 1935.

Land had acquired multiple meanings. It was not only a resource in terms of the agricultural produce that could be obtained from it. It was also a compensation for those who struggled and suffered for it. Furthermore, it implied security for the families, capital that could be left to offspring when the parents could no longer provide for them. Feelings of satisfaction when watching their land produce - when observing the product of their everyday toils - created emotional bonds attaching the ejidatarios to land (they depict it as amor a la tierrita). It was also a source of power and legitimation for local, regional and national politicians and large unions - formed with the pretence of helping peasants resolve their land tenure issues. Hence, while the national state had authority to establish laws and regulations, their actual implementation was subject to local and regional power relations, which they were forced to take into consideration, either negotiating with them or enrolling them in their political groups and projects if they did not wish to attack them frontally.

Power brokers (often known as caciques) at local or regional level accrued power by controlling rewards, such as access to information concerning legislation, and to political networks which opened up possibilities of approaching important officers to deal with bureaucratic issues. On the other hand, they exercised a degree of control over peasant movements, and coordinated actions which curbed government initiatives.
These caciques at once used the force of peasant organization to restrain or enable the will of state representatives and worked as gatekeepers for the groups themselves in their relations with politicians and government officers. Their association with one party provided means, authority and force to attain power from the other (hence the label of brokers).

One such cacique in the region was García Barragán (see Torres 1994: 29-34, 104-124 and van der Zaag 1992: 27,31), a general who had been state governor and had headed active political movements in the western states, especially Jalisco. Many ejidos of the region acquired land through his intercession, and Ayuquila was no exception. Although he took over a large ranch - sited on land that citizens of Ayuquila claim should have been allotted to them - he managed to lock them into his own political projects with promises of personal and group favours. Thus he became an indispensable link to government networks. Those closest to him in Ayuquila became leaders of the ejido, and initiated a struggle for the extension of the land grant (la ampliaci6n) which they won with the help of the General's network. The village gained a primary school through his intercession, and he facilitated procedures for several men of Ayuquila to work in the United States legally (later most migrants had to cross illegally, as 'wetbacks'). The General asked favours in return, such as participation in political mobilizations and non-paid labour on his ranch\(^2\). However, ejidatarios soon found that identifying themselves on the side of the broker also implied accruing power for themselves. Later, some of his followers half-jokingly labelled themselves 'los hijos del general' using their association with the 'strong man' in order to convey an image of prestige and influence.

The alliances and divisions between families in Ayuquila - fed by a mixture of hunger for revenge for murders as well as solidarity with kin - now realigned themselves with respect to their association to the General. Those identified with the General included Carola's father-in-law's network, whilst those whose histories had been closer to the hacendado - whose forefathers had worked for the latter as peones - bitterly criticized his measures. Both parties struggled jointly at one point to acquire land, and were thus together in the ejido, both holding office at different points in time. However, the former managed to take control of the distribution of land to benefit themselves and their own networks, and achieved a greater say in decision making. This division between the two factions coincides

\(^2\) See also Rothstein 1986 for a similar account of what she identifies as patron-client relationships in the state of Tlaxcala, Mexico.
largely (but not completely, since there are a number of marriages linking these groups) with the two main family networks in the village: the Gomez-Romero and Martínez families which, as I mentioned in previous chapters, also cut across the beekeeping group.

**Caciques and authorities**

The clout exercised by *caciques* frequently blocked government endeavours, since struggles for land and political influence often contradicted the interests of those holding office in the state apparatus. De la Peña (1988) suggests that the local and regional power of 'popular classes' in Mexico were 'by definition a challenge to the consolidation of the modern state, which had to overcome them with blood and fire'. Thus he explains that 'the great feat of the post-revolutionary government was to convert the mobilized groups of peasants and workers into mass organizations to form a part of the state apparatus and to manipulate them by means of mediation and patronage' (see also Huizer 1978 and Cordóba 1974).

The challenge was to change the nature of power relations, reconstructing these in terms of 'powerful' institutions, which could 'govern' strong men, tone down their influence or at least re-route their struggles into manageable organizations. Local leaders and *caciques* were often co-opted, imprisoned or murdered, but also incorporated into the state apparatus. *Ejidos*, for example, were compelled to join the CNC (National Peasant Confederation) which was controlled by government. The establishment of *ejido* authorities can be partly described as an effort to harness the power of local and regional *caciques*. Their activities could be regulated through rules and norms, and could be manipulated more easily using bureaucratic measures. Often, however, *caciques* also had strongholds within government political networks - as was the case of García Barragán - and were thus able to enrol authorities in their strategies and actions. Hence, state measures aimed at controlling local and regional *caciques* also provided space and official backing for the latter. In some cases this implied differential advantage to certain local political figures or peasant groups.

*Caciques* based their influence on direct control of economic resources such as land, money, jobs and markets, and were brokers in the sense that they also manipulated strategic contacts with people who controlled such resources directly or who had access to such persons (De la Peña 1988; Boissevain 1974: 147-169), and to relevant political networks. Power brokers, as I suggested above, use their association with one party to attain
power from the other. A crucial feature of *caciques* as brokers is that of presenting themselves as the spokesmen of local groups, as representing their interests and hence attaining power. Although they had to manoeuvre within certain social norms and restrictions, their legitimation often relied on personal charisma and social skills, on loyalties secured through favours and promises as well as the force of their networks. On the other hand, formal *ejido* authorities - also expected to represent local groups and the personal interests of their members - were legitimated through legal conventions. They were elected by the *ejido* assembly under the supervision of state officials and had to comply with bureaucratic procedures and state legislation. Their space for manoeuvre was thus constrained by 'external' and 'internal' norms, by established routines and the dictates of state and *ejido* members.

In 1988, although struggles for land had subdued and those who had access to land were engaged in other kinds of endeavours and enterprises, the views, attitudes and social relations which involved power were very much tied to the obligations, tacit agreements and frictions acquired in the past and in people's association with specific groups. The women's group, situated at the central interstice of village social organization as we have seen in the previous chapter, was not at all isolated from these associations, nor from political commitments or village conflicts.

**Barnes' notion of power, authority and discretion**

Barnes contributes to the study of power by pointing to the difference between 'power' and 'authority'. To do this he introduces the concept of discretion:

> ...agents with discretion in directing routines ... act not in response to predetermined external signs but on the basis of their own judgement and decision. These, I want to say, are the powers in the society.

A power directs a routine, and directs it with discretion. This is the basis of power, the nature of the capacity to enforce something upon others. The routine can, as it were, be pointed at those others or away from them; and because the pointing is at discretion it can be made consequent upon what those others do: the artillery may fire, or not; the certificate may be issued, or not; the payment may be made, or not; depending. The routine controlled may be made
the basis for a threat against others. Thus, as discretion over routines is extended, power is extended; as discretion over routines is lost, power is lost' (1986: 182).

In contrast, he argues that an authority directs a routine without discretion. 'Authority, then, is power minus discretion.' Hence, 'authorities serve as the passive agents of powers... they are their relays, as it were, in systems of control' (1986: 183), they are 'subordinate controllers' (1988: 73). He points to two usages of the term authority:

'Whereas one possesses [his italics] the authority to do or to act, one typically is an authority on something or somebody. One may be an authority on the geology of the North Sea, or Hungarian folksongs; or on Aristotle or Thomas Aquinas.... This habitual way of thinking is perfectly compatible with a power minus notion of authority... Ideally, knowledge of the text eliminates all discretion in its exposition, so that the authority becomes transparent to the text: the text shines through the authority, as it were, and makes itself visible to us directly.'

According to Barnes, then, there is a tension between authorities and power, as the former will strive to exercise discretion, and thus metamorphose into a power. The issue of power and authority has more 'folds' to it, but before entering into a debate with Barnes' over his concepts of power and authority - which I will do in the last sections of this chapter - it is useful to turn to my ethnographic account of the meeting, which I reconstruct on the basis of taped recordings and detailed notes of my observations. I describe different authorities and power brokers in the event, providing more tangible elements with which to discuss the issue further, opening with an 'involuntary' authority in the scenario - myself.

The first entry in my diary that day reads thus:

April 17, 1988

'I had been looking forward to this Sunday Morning. An extraordinary ejido assembly would be held to discuss the women beekeeper’s petition for a second plot of land. The issue was likely to disturb hot embers of conflict between ejidatarios, many of whom resented the fact that the women had already received a first plot
and were quite unwilling to donate a second one. I was excited because, after almost a year of working in Ayuquila, I would be able to witness direct interaction between the women and the men in the *ejido*, not only as individuals in everyday life, but coming together as groups to negotiate over a piece of land."

'I was conscious that my presence would change their participation a bit. I had already attended several assemblies in Ayuquila before, so they were used to me, and I interacted closely with many of the men and women present, having often engaged in deep conversations with them about personal and political problems. However, this interaction itself had created certain commitments and mutual expectations. I could feel it more strongly in the case of some of the men, who had voiced strong opinions during interviews and informal conversations and now had to live up to them in my presence. (This was particularly clear during the meeting, where for example, Federico [B12] and Pancho [B8] - both husbands of beekeepers [see genealogy in chapter four] - constantly turned to check my reaction to their interventions).'

'On the other hand, I knew I was considered almost part of the beekeeping group. I had been around them so much, visiting them at home, going to work with them, accompanying them when they had to go to discuss issues in the bank, that I was identified as a beekeeper myself (they called me *la abejera del carrito* - the beekeeper with the car). I realized with dismay that it was expected that I would speak for them, arguing that I could say things better. The *comisariado* (head of the *ejido*) had implied this while I was helping him sweep the room before the meeting started. He even suggested I organize a short meeting with the women before the assembly to prepare with them what they should say. As an "educated" outsider, I was considered more "knowledgeable" with words to help convince the more sceptical *ejidatarios*. Besides, it was assumed that I knew more about the designs of the state on the project and the perspectives of the group of women."

'This presented me with a dilemma. Although I wanted to make the women feel my empathy with their situation, my previous experiences as a "practitioner" had taught me that it was always important to let the people speak for themselves if one did not want to substitute their leadership for one's own. Also, I wanted to listen to what the different parties had to say and how they dealt with the issue without biasing their opinions. But most of all, the women
needed the plot to construct a new store, and I was not even convinced that the women should have a new store. I had observed they held ambivalent and opposing positions towards the notion of a big agro-industry and I wondered whether they would stand up and fight for a project which they were so sceptical about only a few days ago.' 

'Ana (C11, Treasurer of the group) also approached me to ask if I could speak for them, at least to explain what the group’s previous meeting with state officers had consisted of, providing the names and positions of the important people who had visited them. I painfully replied that it would be better if they spoke for themselves, that I was not a member of the ejido or of the group and could be seen as an intruder. I offered to write the names down on a piece of paper, so that she could read them. She accepted, and I copied the information from my notes of the day of the visit.'

Following Barnes, I can say that I was identified as an authority on the project and the state’s designs on it, and probably on some broader issues such as women’s perspectives for development, or something along those lines. An 'authority on', as Barnes depicts it, 'derives his standing wholly and entirely from his society, which would empower him to ... treat his expositions as legitimate versions' (1986: 186). Hence, I was classified as having expertise and capable of using the status this gave me to influence opinions. My 'authority' was some kind of resource people could draw upon. Those struggling to exercise leverage in favour of the women’s project hoped to use my 'authority' to persuade the others. Still, I used discretion by not speaking, but my presence was not neutral, it did incline dispositions. An element of power was, of course, involved. I involuntarily wielded power because of the classification into which I was placed. I exercised discretion inasmuch as I refused to speak, but otherwise power was attributed to me by others. They ascribed me with an identity and responded to it. I was some kind of sounding board for their own interpretations. They reacted to the meanings they gave to my presence. But is this power the same kind of stuff as that wielded by the state, whose actions had repercussions on issues as crucial as land tenure and production?
The meeting

The women arrived in small groups. All were nicely dressed, not as elegant as I had seen them on other occasions, but with good, clean dresses, smelling of soap, and some with their hair still wet. They sat, as was expected, clustering on the three wobbly benches in the room, where only two elderly men joined them. The rest of the men leaned on the wall at the back or sat on the stone wall on one side. Some came in work clothes, their huaraches (traditional sandals) still caked with dry mud and sweaty shirts revealing that they had just come from the fields. Their sombreros were kept at their sides, handy to be used as a fan when the heat was most intense.

Privately, the women were pessimistic about the possibility of gaining support from the ejidatarios, remembering that only a few weeks ago they had been accused of idleness and of failing in their household responsibilities (huevonas y desquehaceradas) by some ejidatarios who resented their having received a plot on the hills anyway.

There had been a lot of nervous buzzing and murmuring before the ejido assembly began. A woman remarked:

'Very well accept! They are going to argue that...’ She stopped when she realized that Don Jose, the comisariado, was turning towards the group of women, silently urging them to start speaking to the gathering. A few minutes ago, he had instructed them that they should speak to the audience and explain their petition. The group had been hoping that he would do that, and now they were faced with the dilemma of who would stand up and face the ejidatarios, most of whom were men. Petra, the President of the group, could hardly speak as she had been ill for several days with a throat infection. It was with much effort that she was present; she had not wanted to stay in bed on such an important occasion. Juana (C9) said she would help, but someone else should start. Finally, it was Don Jose who started.

'The women from the group that keep bees had a visit. Some people from different government institutions came to visit them. They had a meeting the other day. Well, I was summoned. I didn’t know anything. I was in the potrero and arrived when the men were almost leaving, but I did gather something. They left with much interest, they were very enthusiastic that the women continue working, and they are going to give them all their support to help them construct a storehouse...’
Don Jose was referring to an event which had taken place five days before the Sunday meeting. The group had been visited by important state officials from different Ministries, and the visit had been impressive. Six cars parked outside the women's store, most of them with chauffeurs waiting, was a major occurrence for the small Ayuquila, where people would peek out of their windows to see what was amiss. Word had circulated rapidly that the Head of the District and 'other important people from Guadalajara' had been there. Don Jose’s message was clear. The women are significant; they were visited by prominent people who have their own plans to promote them. It was important to set this straight before he continued:

'They came to see a plot on which to construct the store. The women already have a plot, but it is not suitable. They asked if there was not another more appropriate one, a flat one, not on the hills, as theirs. Then I remembered that my compadre Pablo was going to donate the ejido a plot\(^3\), so I took them [the people from SARH] there and they liked it. Gutiérrez [the Head of the District] is one of the most interested. I told him that we would have an assembly on the last Sunday of the month to see if you would approve, but he [Gutiérrez] said no, that it should be done very soon, if not the money would be destined for elsewhere. In other words, these are millions of pesos that would go somewhere else. He told me that they wanted to start working as soon as possible... I saw they were very enthusiastic and I don’t want us to fail them, because they spoke very straight about the contribution, especially because the group is united. I, in my way of thinking, I think we should support them.'

\(^3\) Pablo is an ejidatario whose arable land was adjacent to the village urban area. As Ayuquila has grown in population, so there has been pressure on land for urban use. Carola, a widowed ejidataria (see Chapter 1), had recently been allowed to divide her land into plots and sell them to the people who wanted to build a house. The enterprise turned out to be very remunerative, but there were many bureaucratic issues involved. As ejido land could not - at that time - be legally sold or traded and should be kept for agricultural purposes, the ejidatario had to obtain permission from the ejido assembly - who in this case had asked Carola to donate a plot in return - but also from the Ministry of Agrarian Reform (SRA), from the municipality, etc. Pablo had just obtained those authorizations, but had not started selling yet. However, he had been notified that he should donate the ejido a plot as well.
The non-present presence of the state

As became evident during the meeting, the state is not a homogeneous actor exercising continuous and undisputed power in society (see also Arce, Villarreal and de Vries 1994). One cannot attribute discretion to 'the state' as a general category, because, as Skocpol suggests, the state is a 'set of administrative, policing, and military organizations headed, and more or less well coordinated, by an executive authority' (1979: 29). Power is not localized in the state, and the state does not possess power, but officers can use their association with administrative, policing and military organizations to act with discretion and wield power.

Hence, the *ejidatarios* oriented their actions towards specific people, people with their own interests, status and deficiencies. However, these people constituted an epitome of some kind of abstract representation of a power. They were identified as linked to prominent institutions, to distinguished actors who were thought to change states of affairs by uttering a word. They were associated with repressive mechanisms, with those who set laws and provided favours. These associations were summarized in a notion of the state, where many conjectures were made, but also where assumptions were questioned, disputed and clarified, leading to a re-establishment of boundaries, of roles and attributes.

For example, the notion of state depicted by Don Jose portrays it as a 'powerful' actor, but the scope of such power and its implications is subject to negotiation. In the discussion, the state is personified by Gutiérrez, the Head of the District, and by the important visitors from different government offices interested in the beekeeping project, whose names Ana read out to inform the assembled group. Dropping their names added weight to the argument, depicting it, not as a personal whim, but as the will of those in prominent positions within a recognized hierarchy, in their capacity of authority with respect to the *ejido*.

It is important to differentiate the multiple understandings and negotiation over meanings taking place in the debates. The *ejidatarios* were in constant interaction with state bureaucrats, and they recognized different capacities in each official, they were aware of personal interests and political affiliations. Some had particular loyalties to - or conflicts with - specific functionaries or groups within the government, which was not perceived in any way as a homogeneous block. Furthermore, most were aware of the fact that, according to the stipulations of the Agrarian Reform Law, the state could not decide over the internal distribution of land within the *ejido*, where the assembly was - as *ejidatarios* repeat verbatim from the Agrarian Reform
Law - 'the maximum authority'. Legislation stipulated that a plot of land should be allocated to the UAIM, and that had been done. Officials could ask the *ejidatarios* to allocate a second one, but they could not legally impose such a resolution on them, much less decide which plot they should donate. Hence, the power attributed to government officials in deciding over this particular plot had to be negotiated.

Indirectly, the definition of the state as such was also debated. The scope of its authority was questioned, as was its role within *ejido* decisions. But the sole fact that the meeting had taken place with such an agenda speaks of power. It refers us to moral obligations and rights which resignify legal stipulations. Hence the *ejidatarios* recognized the need to heed government petitions and acknowledge their due respect. This was used by Don Jose, the beekeepers and other members of the audience to enforce their arguments, pushing forward their specific representations, and in doing so, recreating a discourse on the state to suit their particular interests.

**Don Jose as an authority and power broker**

The group had assembled in the *casa ejidal*, a somewhat battered adobe house that was donated to the *ejido* by a former landowner. The meeting took place in an open corridor, since it was more spacious and cooler. The green paint on the walls was cracking, leaving some bare, yellowish spots. At the back of the locale was the wooden table that served as *presidium*, behind which the *comisariado ejidal* - Don Jose - and the *ejido*’s treasurer - Consuelo - were seated. Behind them, on the wall beside the window, was a two-meter long painting of the revolutionary for 'land' and 'liberty', Emiliano Zapata, dressed in black and with chinstraps and big sombrero. Close associations are often made between stories and myths surrounding the image of Zapata and the identities of *ejidatarios*, their struggles for land, and the respect due to their rights. Inscribed above the painting were the words: 'Comrade, if you have rights, you also have obligations'.

And this was certainly the idea that Don Jose was stressing. Just before the meeting he had complained to me about the irresponsibility of the *ejidatarios* and their lack of interest in *ejido* issues. He claimed people could not demand more of their representatives if they did not comply with their obligations. Being foster son of one of the founders of the *ejido*, he considered himself committed to continue his performance in favour of the *ejido*, claiming that it was because of this man that they had any land at all.
Don Jose proudly defended the beekeeping project. If they won, and he was sure they would, he would have one more positive action to add to his curriculum as head of the village. His standing with the Ministry would be improved, and his leverage within the village probably enhanced. On the day of the meeting with the people from the Ministry he had given his word that he would help, and he considered himself a solid person (gente maciza). He made it known that he was a man of his word, and his townsmen respected him for it. Don Jose also prided himself in possessing more information than his comrades about the workings of the official institutions and in having direct links to these information flows.

Don Jose wielded power as he had his own projects in the venture, and exercised discretion. As a power broker he controlled access to the state, to information, to legal procedures indispensable for the ejidatarios, but he was also a gatekeeper for the state's access to the ejidatarios, to its prospects of getting its commands obeyed and its authority recognized. Within the limits of these possibilities, Don Jose used his position as mediator between the two social groupings to serve his own interests.

Following Barnes, Don Jose can also be depicted as an authority being delegated power by the state. In some ways, he was an extension of the national Government (ejidos are, by law, formally linked to national institutions and their regional branches, not to municipal or provincial authorities). Indeed he often labelled himself as part of the state. His nomination was legalized by the presence of bureaucrats in the assembly, and he was officially registered in state files. He had authority to make sure the ejido functioned according to the Agrarian Reform Law and the Constitution as well as to ratify internal agreements officially. His signature was important in transactions relating to other government institutions such as BANRURAL and he was expected to provide continuity for state projects and act in tune with state policies. Here it is useful to describe authority as 'power minus', since Don Jose's discretion is constrained by the rules set by the state.

On the other hand, Don Jose was an authority being delegated power by the assembly, who had elected him as their spokesman. He must represent their interests within official circles, and had to comply with established village norms. He could not, for example, trample upon his people's commitments to the church, he must defend the ejidatarios in their struggles.

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4. This intercalary position is similar to that of the village headman described for colonial Africa by Gluckman, et.al. 1958, and also by Long 1968.
for access to irrigation water or credit, and he was careful not to trespass upon the domains of his comrades’ households, especially in decisions concerning women. Hence, Don Jose was a power broker, but in certain aspects he was simply an authority, and his discretion was limited to a ’relay of power’.

Obviously we are referring here to interaction at different levels and to linkages between different domains. Don Jose, both as authority and power broker, served as mediator between these different spheres. In the domain of the ejido, his standing was recognized as pertaining to a slightly superior plane: his opinion was significant and his requests obeyed - or at least considered. However, such levels are not fixed. In everyday interaction, the intertwining of domains also brings to the fore different considerations in terms of the recognition of social hierarchies which are often translated from one domain to the other and influence people’s status.

For example, women’s general status in the village might be considered low, whilst within the project they were important. Their opinion was relevant and they were listened to by state officials. Hence Don Jose relates to the beekeepers differently in the domain of the project, although his authority vis-à-vis the women will be coloured and shaped by other kinds of authority, such as that of males over females. This was evident in the intervention of the beekeepers during the meeting, as I will show in the next section. In this context, the women tended to yield power more than wield it, or perhaps one should say that in order to gain power they must appear to give it up (or actually yield in crucial aspects), they must work at the level of dispositions - of the emotional atmosphere - as well as provide reasons to convince the ejidatarios to accept their request.

**Going through the motions of subordination**

Facing the presidium table were three very old benches, where the women - including myself - were seated. There were five ejidatarias and nine members of the beekeeping group. Petra (President, B7) and Ana (C11) resumed Don Jose’s account, explaining what the contribution of the Ministry and the credit from the rural bank consisted of, and the need for support from the ejido for the donation of a piece of land. It was Juana (C9) who then spoke out more clearly, her voice no longer hesitant:

“They [meaning the people from the Ministry] have many plans for us; that it will not only be for our benefit since we will soon be old.
With time it can become a big industry. Our grandchildren... [she stopped for a second and then continued] it will not only be for women, there will also be work for men, because... well, we were taken to see a honey plant, it was well furnished by the Ministry, and there we learned what it is to work big... for many reasons we have not made more and more, but there are many jobs for men in that place... It is help also for the ejido, because once the store is finished, they could also make a building for the men, so that there is more work here, not only for us.’

Only a few days before the meeting, Juana had been sceptical about the new big enterprise they were urged to push forward. Now circumstances had driven her, not only to embrace the idea, but to sell it to the ejidatarios. Hence, she was according power to state officials by following their request in the creation of the new enterprise, by acquiescing to their wishes. But she knew that to succeed she would have to go through the motions of subordination and give her fellow countrymen their due quota of authority, not only as ejidatarios, but as males. She was recognizing the jurisdiction of men in access to jobs and government projects, and hoped to convince them that this project was also in their interests. She was probably aware of the force of the beekeepers’ petition, endorsed as it was by the officials that had visited them, as well as their profit as a group in terms of prestige, but she had to create an atmosphere of harmony, and reassure the audience that she had no intentions of running against the interests of men, nor challenging the role of women per se.

Petra’s interventions during the meeting also contributed to an attribution of power to the state. Unlike Juana, she was clear in her ambition for the new enterprise. To achieve this, she used the strength of government institutions. Recognition of power of the state was essential; it was a desired condition to get the project across. She continued Juana’s consideration explaining that the enterprise would provide plenty of work, that they would produce royal jelly, obtain pollen, export honey, just as they did in the industry they went to see, and that in addition the Ministry would build them a small workshop. She argued that they did not want to refuse the donation, since it entailed not only a storehouse but a real honey industry, and

‘if God allows we will grow not only in beehives but in the number of women. There will be much work: in the workshop and in the exporting of honey, in the production of pollen, in breeding queen bees... the Ministry will send a capable person to teach us all that.
If the assembly favours us with the plot, we would really appreciate it. If not, we will stay as we are... For the government, for the Ministry, it is convenient because in this way all our work can be exported and also benefit our country, that is why they support us.'

Although Petra was careful not to contradict the 'sacred' ideas that the ejidatarios might hold, she was clear about her position and the changing role of women. She wanted them to understand that as women they can get a boost from the project. She was prepared to accept that as beekeepers the group might not be very capable, if that was the criticism of the men, but they would receive training. It was in the hands of the ejidatarios, she was now saying - it would depend on their will whether this good project grows. She was hence attributing power to the ejido, but softly pressing them by arguing that the future of their enterprise depended on whether they gave them the plot or not.

It was essential for her to get the image of an enterprising peasant woman across. In Petra's view, the ejidatarios lacked the knowledge, the experience of having listened to other people, to important outsiders such as government officials, and the understanding, not only of the implications of the project, but of what 'peasant women' should be. She was looking for the endorsement of the ejidatarios for what should now be the identity of the group, invoking the definition that had been promoted by the Ministry, who, by opening the possibility of credit and the development of an enterprise specifically for women, gave legitimacy to this image. Her aim was to extend the Ministry's definition of women to the audience, first by touching on their personal interests: 'look, it's in your own interest'; she was saying implicitly, 'maybe your wife or daughter can also enjoy the benefits'; but also pointing out their value as women: 'we are relevant to our village and our country'. She continued:

'the people that came from Guadalajara were from different government institutions (dependencias), ... We did not think that we would be of any significance for them. Because we asked for help to construct a small store, we thought that it would be solved fast, but it takes time, and now came the result that they did help, that they saw how we were working. They said they could help us, but not with a small store, with a larger one.'

Petra was cautious not to stir up the emotional atmosphere. She used the 'voice of the state' as the authority to question the commonly held notion that
women are less relevant than men in such issues. 'It is the Ministry who believes we [the women] are important’. She made it clear that it was the Ministry’s opinion - more than her own (claiming she 'did not know’) - that the women were significant (although they could learn and become more competent), but was careful to acknowledge some kind of male jurisdiction or authority. Hence, both Juana and Petra were recognizing the state, men, and the ejido as authorities and power holders, but they also defined roles for such authorities and power holders. As women, they expected specific behaviour from these men, and pushed their own conceptions on them.

Resorting to discourses and techniques: the conflict

Inclining the debate in favour of one or other position implied the use of discourses and diverse techniques: whilst those opposing the donation of the plot had recourse to commonly-held notions of efficiency and cost-benefit rationalities to exclude the women, others brought the ‘authority’ of the state into the discourse to reinforce their arguments. Body movements, gestures, tone of voice and sitting (or standing) arrangements in the room were not irrelevant to establishing dominion over the audience.

Only 21 of the 47 ejidatarios (including the five women) were present, as many of them were living at that moment al otro lado (in the US). Most of them were seated on sacks on the floor against the rear wall looking indifferent or shy. Others, also at the back, were standing, their arms crossed resolutely. A few, like Federico (B12), the husband of Socorro, and Pancho (B8), husband of Petra, were seated Strategically on the low wall separating the corridor from the patio where they could overlook the assembled group from the centre of the room. The rest were seated at the side, wearily waiting for a decision to be made and the meeting to end.

Clemente Martínez (B1), considered the largest cattle owner in the village (and also the one who rents most plots from other ejidatarios when they are in urgent need for cash), protested that the women should use the land they already had on the hill. Throwing up his arms as if to end the discussion, he declared that they had already been given one plot, and that was more than they needed. He was one of the people that resented most the fact that the women had been given land, since this had meant less pasture for his own cattle.

As I mentioned in Chapter 2, the land on the hill was used by the ejido as a communal grazing area. Avecindados or ejidatarios could request a plot to grow maize on the condition that they leave the stalks for ejidatarios to
graze their cattle. Allotting the women a plot had meant less pastureland for
the *ejido*. Moreover, last season, the women had sold the pasture of their
plot to Juana’s husband, who was a member of the Romero family. Apparently
the matter had stirred the still hot embers of long-held rivalries
between the families. Members of the Martínez family claimed the women
had sold the pasture almost gratis.

Alejo, Clemente’s half-brother, shared his feelings about the pasture, as
he too was owner of a large number of cattle. He was in fact very interested
in buying the pasture from the women’s plot this year, and there were
rumours that he was willing to pay a good price. Choosing his words
carefully, with a serious attitude, he used a ‘rational’ argument concerning
notions of efficiency and cost-benefit analysis, suggesting that the women had
no capacity to manage a productive enterprise. He asked: 'How much is that
plot worth?’ (and after a few seconds):

'My question is because I have seen that the women don’t even
know what they have in that cultivation. I think they could get
enough out of the land they already have to buy the plot they need,
and leave this one for a building that could be of benefit to the
whole village... that is why I ask how much the land is worth... The
women could get more money out of their plot... We have seen that
they have not put it to good use, that they have squandered
(*malbaratado*) the pasture. Look, if you have cows in a stable, you
know how much it costs. I am not saying they gave the pasture
away. But, for example, from the sale of pasture they could have
obtained one or two million pesos, and with that they could have
paid for the new plot they need now!'

Voices were raised from different sides of the room, and the low murmur
gave way to loud chatter. The discussion continued over the women’s
capacity to manage an enterprise; of what they would do with the plot they
already had - the beekeepers defending themselves as best they could with
the help of some members of the audience - until Federico, letting his voice
be heard above the noise (for which his seating position turned out to be of
value), put his opponents in a difficult spot by changing the topic and asking
an apparently simple question:

‘...what’s the problem of giving them my *compadre* Pablo’s plot? It
is nobody’s at the moment...’
It was true, the plot had no owner at that time, but obviously many eyes were set on it, though no one would declare this openly. An ejido plot was a juicy source of money, especially for those expecting to hold office in the ejido in the near future, and Pablo was obliged to 'donate' it as a levy for selling ejido land. Pablo, however, had not yet arrived at the meeting, although he had heard of the matter indirectly.

Federico, while not really interested in the beekeeping enterprise in itself, was not hostile to the possibility of women acquiring land. He argued that the women had never gained anything from the enterprise and never would, but it would take his wife's mind away from other family worries. Yet street gossip held that he had his own interests in the plot, since several of his kin were involved. He was known to have taken over land from ejidatarios before, and women were considered an easy target for him.

Pancho, on the other hand, was at the time engaged in a fierce battle with Alejo (half brother to Clemente of the Martínez family) over the use of a tractor they were partners in. Alejo, as we shall see, in a way headed the opposition towards the women. He too was owner of a large number of cattle and shared Clemente's feelings about the pasture. Pancho was becoming quite irritated by Alejo's manner and what he called apparently logical but purely selfish positions. In an interpretation of the Ministry's motives convenient to his position against Alejo, he said that the Ministry was asking them for that plot, that it was the Ministry that wanted honey to be produced.

Federico used body movements to predispose the audience in his favour, making mocking gestures and acting restless. Then, knowing that more than a few of those present wanted to end the meeting, he made it apparent that the argument was silly and he was getting bored. He stretched ostentatiously with a yawn and raised his voice above the rest:

'Speak out, are we going to give them it or not, why are we giving it so much thought?'

The group was about to turn to voting when Pablo, the owner of the disputed plot, walked in angrily. The assembly hushed in expectation. Pablo shouted as loud as he could in his grating voice, furiously declaring that he would 'give the group shit', while approaching the presidium table, where he pounded his fists and repeated that he would give the women nothing. He argued that the ejido had no right to take any plot away from him until he started selling, and only then would he decide which piece of land to give up.
The decision: mechanisms of control

Two moments were crucial in the final decision and its outcomes. One was when Don Jose turned the tables on Pablo, accusing him of slighting his authority and the other when Federico asked for signatures - 'just so that we don’t forget'. Here I want to highlight the mechanisms used to tip the scales in favour of the desired resolution.

Don Jose shouted at Pablo and threw back at him another incident: Pablo had gone to see Rolando, an official at the Ministry of Agrarian Reform (which deals with land tenure issues in the rural areas of the country), on his own account without discussing the matter first with Don Jose. The latter had casually found out from Rolando, instead of directly from Pablo as should have been the case. As I mentioned above, Don Jose was playing the role of broker between state officials and the ejidatarios. What Pablo had done implied that Don Jose did not have everything under control. It made him lose face vis-à-vis the officials, which obviously infuriated him. He was determined to fight for the respect due his position as head of the ejido. He thus shouted at Pablo that it was he who was angry because Pablo was only making him waste time, and he did not like people to make mockery of him.

Pablo maintained - now a bit subdued - that he had gone for another errand, not to see Rolando, but Don Jose did not falter. The rest of the audience silently gave him support.

Don Jose explained that he had already been to the local Agrarian Reform office, and that Rolando, the officer in charge, had very clearly stated that now that Pablo had permission to sell, he had to donate a plot to the ejido, whether he sold the rest or not. It was already signed, and there were legal papers to prove it.

After 15 minutes of hot discussion, Pablo gave in, saying that if the legal statement was ready, he was willing to relinquish the plot. He went to the back of the room. It was not that Pablo had no further choice. He is also a strong-willed man and might have had enough backing from the audience if he had tried a bit more. He knew there were quite a few people who would be on his side. However, it was in his interest to leave it at that point. As his actions in the subsequent days proved, he had other means of making the plan backfire. The battle was still not lost for him.

The assembly then turned to voting. Only three people did not raise their hands in agreement with the allocation of the plot to the women, among them Clemente. The rest accepted. Federico let his voice be heard once more:
’Does anybody have a piece of paper so that we can sign a little recuerdito (reminder, i.e. a record of the agreed decision), at least so that it’s ratified?’

They found a sheet of paper and Ana wrote down the heading, while Don Jose and Federico urged everyone to come and sign. The meeting continued, as they had other points to discuss, but the women only concentrated on the signatures. Federico did not heed the discussion either, urging everyone to sign. In a joking attitude he pretended to trivialize the importance of signing, while continuing to press it. His own experience with this - as he later explained - was that signatures would help make people ’remember’ they had committed themselves to something, besides constituting written proof of the agreement, which the women could use in case of problems.

Federico thus used his skills to achieve control. He influenced opinions by making it difficult to disagree with him: taking on an air of self-assurance and determination, sitting in a strategic position, using strong body language, changing the topic at critical moments, building upon the apathy of some of the participants and making the ejidatarios sign their commitment. His insight of how others would behave was relevant: he knew that - except for Pablo, the present owner - nobody would openly say they had a personal interest in the plot. He knew that some of the participants were oblivious to the decision, and that many would be afraid to voice their opinions, much less disagree with signing. He also knew that once having put their names to paper people would feel committed, even if the document might have no further legal value. In fact, they had used a sheet of paper torn out of a notebook. Federico did not need recourse to the ’authority of the state’ or the promise of personal favours. He had held office in the ejido before, being one of the main leaders in the struggle for the ampliación - which was won - and had his own links into government bureaucracy.

On the other hand, Don Jose had used his authority to incline the decision in favour of granting the women the plot. The ejidatarios acknowledged his position as head of the ejido, as their spokesman vis-à-vis the state and as power broker. They needed his protection and support - even if this often only implied a signature - when interacting with BANRURAL, the Ministry of Water Resources or the Ministry of Agrarian Reform. Many also considered him knowledgeable with respect to government issues. This provided him with elements of control.
Power and authority

One can identify at least six actors (individual or collective) who were recognized as authorities in the event. The state officials, Don Jose, Petra, the assembly, ‘men’, and myself. The nature of each authority, however, was different. I was given the status of ‘authority on’ state designs or women’s perspectives. Don Jose was a legally established authority representing the ejido and the state as also was Petra who represented the group of beekeepers. Bureaucrats were authorities inasmuch as they represented the state apparatus, the ejido assembly was considered a ‘maximum authority’ in decisions concerning their own spheres of competence, and men were ‘authorized’ to exercise a degree of control vis-à-vis women over issues such as jobs or state projects in the village.

One could, following Weber (1946: 294-299), distinguish between ‘types’ of authority. In the case of the state officials, Don Jose, Petra and the ejido assembly, one can identify what Weber depicts as ‘legal’ authority, where the

'jurisdictional competency is fixed by rationally established norms, by enactments, decrees and regulations, in such a manner that the legitimacy of the authority becomes the legality of the general rule.'

The authority of men vis-à-vis women could be considered as some kind of ‘traditional authority’, based on ‘belief in the everyday routine as an inviolable norm of conduct’, on what has always existed. My authority was underpinned by an assumption of a certain expertise. I was considered 'knowledgeable' - although my authority might have been questioned by alleging lack of proof as to my erudition and my capacity of enlightenment.

As authorities, we were associated with a kind of power (of ‘the state’, of the assembly, of males, etc). Some of us could be identified as ‘relays of power’ to the degree that there was indeed a power wielder exercising control through us. Such was the case of Don Jose, for example, who was being used by state officials to extend the application of rules and regulations indispensable in their exercise of power. The group of beekeepers also delegated power to Petra, who was expected to defend their interests.

However, all the authorities exercised discretion in one way or another. Barnes suggests that there is a tension between powers and authorities, because the latter are constantly striving to metamorphose into powers. But the issue, I am afraid, is not so simple, as I will argue in the following discussion on power and discretion.
Power, discretion and agency

As we have seen, Barnes describes power as the 'capacity to enforce something upon others'. According to him, 'the possession of power is the possession of discretion in the use of that power. When one person is said to have more power than another, it is a matter of the one having discretion over a greater capacity for action than the other' (1988: 61). This is in tune with Weber's definition of power as the probability of an actor to carry out his will over and against resistance. To exercise power is to have a command obeyed, to direct routines, to authorize others in the implementation of a decision. Hence, power is dealt with as a conscious practice to direct, control and repress. The power brokers we have described fit well such a description, as they manipulate symbolic, cultural, economic or political resources to dominate. They constitute themselves as gatekeepers in other's endeavours to access power.

However, those wielding power carry out at the same time more and less than their own wills. Less, because they must negotiate with the wills of others; they must allow others' wills to be carried out if they are to succeed - hence, discretion is limited by the force of those in subordinate positions. And power is more than getting one's will across. Generally speaking, those considered powerful incline dispositions and influence processes which are in no way part of their strategies. It would be too simple to regard power as an unidirectional process whereby identified objectives are in the end reached. The complexity of power relations resides in its largely unintended consequences, in the web of routines which are triggered or channelled in specific directions, not only by the power wielder, but by the social constituency that attributes identities and roles to him/her and responds to these very same attributions by locating themselves in a somewhat inferior plane, in a subordinate condition. This implies a notion of power which goes beyond the concept of discretion.

On the other hand, power, in Barnes' view, can be banked up, stored and transferred from the power holder to the authority. I have problems with this conceptualization, which stem from my view that power is also an action of those who recognize it. The power wielder (I prefer to use this term rather than power holder, as it is more active and implies exercise rather than possession) can work towards a recognition of power, to make others comply with his/her wishes, as Federico has done, in order to achieve control. Previous knowledge, such as the identity attributed to the state or to an authority, might be stored, and interpretations can be 'sold' or 'traded' to others in an effort to generate power. Hence, the exercise of discretion
would imply actions to change wills, meanings, attitudes and interpretations, using previous interpretations, and links with relevant social networks, etc.

To be sure, Barnes also points out that power is embedded in the social relationships surrounding an individual, and that the capacity of an agent to generate action inheres in the relevant structure of knowledge, 'just as the capacity of the car engine to generate motion inheres in the structure of the engine' (1988: 59-60). The metaphor is appealing as it points to the relevance of knowledge and social relations in the construction of power. However, one would need to imagine the interaction of multiple engines, each made up of interchangeable elements, some constituted momentaneously and subject to continuous change by the agents involved: hence my problems with viewing power as being possessed or stored. I have stressed before the need to view power as socially constructed, not as an asset that can be possessed, stored and traded, but as attributed to those who wield it by those over whom it is wielded. Power brokers can gain access to power by working on dispositions, by forcing or enticing their acceptance, or by locking others into a specific project. But to wield power an actor must work with the construction of knowledge, with interpretations, meanings and discourses. Hence, class, social position, or networks as sources of power - as constituent parts of the 'engines' - need to be reworked by the agent in specific discursive forms. However, as our case shows, one cannot only circumscribe the exercise of power to the actor's intended actions.

And if an actor can wield power unintentionally, then one needs to revise one's notion of agency. In the social situation I have described I was vested with an identity whereby preconceived links were given form and granted weight, and people reacted to such conceptualizations by opening the possibility of subordinating themselves in respect to certain aspects, by attributing authority to me. Like power, agency lies not only in the action of the person him or herself, but in the attribution of such agency by others. For example, the state as such cannot act upon routines or change situations. One can hardly say that a heterogeneous set of relations involving administrative, policing, and military organizations is an agent. Only the actors who are identified as 'the state' - in their relations with such administrative, policing or military organizations, as well as with laws, buildings, etc. - can actually act. However, it is common to attribute agency and power to the state. One can identify it as influencing and determining behaviour. This is because 'society' is willing to consider it as an agent, and, in general terms, is willing to submit to what are deemed its designs, as I discuss in the following chapter. But let me end this chapter by emphasizing that power implies more than a capacity to exercise a will; it entails a
recognition of such capacity, a predisposition to obey - or negotiate or
confront if the 'power' is considered as opposing one's interests. Hence the
crucial interrelation of power and knowledge, and hence the need to
reformulate the concept of subordination.
Chapter 6

SECRETS OF POWER:
THE WOMEN AND THE STATE

We have analyzed the processes whereby the beekeepers and other women of Ayuquila take on identities for themselves, internalize discourses and reshape their boundaries. I have described the role of networks and the importance of lifeworlds, and have provided insights into the ways in which authorities and power brokers are reproduced in a local scenario. But what about the national scenario? How can we come to grips with the power wielded by 'the state', typically considered a 'powerful' actor? Can we point to the 'secrets' by which differences are made significant and resources marshalled at a broader level without falling into simplistic generalizations where actors disappear?

The UAIM programme was implemented all over the country. Some of the groups that were created were taken over by males or by a few women, others disintegrated, and most faced severe economic problems. However, interesting patterns of relationships were established. Within their particular contexts, each UAIM developed ways of managing their projects and their relations with the state. I will discuss briefly the vicissitudes of different UAIMs in various parts of the country in order to explore yet another dimension of power: that taking place within what might be labelled a macro domain.

This chapter will also help the reader situate the beekeeping group vis-à-vis similar groups in Mexico in their relations with 'the state'. Two of the groups that I describe - that of Las Paredes and Mezquitán - are also located in the Valley of Autlán-El Grullo. Another two are situated in the neighbouring state of Michoacán (Orandino and El Charo). The UAIM of La Viesca, Coahuila, is in the north of the country, and that of Hocúm, Yucatán, in the southeast. I also allude to the ordeals of a confederation of UAIMs which includes 14 women's groups in Nayarit, in the northwestern region of Mexico.

Power attributed to the state is often linked to rules and regulations, money and status. Analyses are centred on the study of state structures, its access to economic resources and the forms of domination over certain sectors of the
population. Power is dealt with theoretically, either as inherent to social structures or as an attribute which is possessed by certain individuals or categories in society. In tune with this perspective, studies concerning relations between women and the state tend to start with the question of whether the state empowers women or colonizes them, how patriarchal forms are imposed on them and what forms of resistance manifest themselves. However, in the previous chapters I have shown how power is not only wielded, but also yielded, and how women accept and reproduce forms of subordination vis-à-vis these 'powerful' others. Hence, we need to turn these questions around and ask: How do women empower the state?

I cannot hope to cover the range of manifestations of authority, control and subordination that present themselves in the relations between the state and the members of the UAIMs, as these take place within intricate processes embedded in broad time and space dimensions. To simplify the analysis, I will narrow my focus to explore one of the forms by which the state manages to snare different actors into a specific web of interaction and to regulate aspects of women's lives. I will concentrate on the UAIM itself as a juridical model and a form of control. I select this focus because the juridical status as an UAIM featured as important in the changes taking place in beekeepers' self-images, networks and associations. A juridical model entails only one form of control, but its analysis provides a window from which to examine the techniques used to construct power at a broader level. One is prompted to explore the ways in which people, emotions, beliefs, money, technology, gender images, legal forms, documents, and social networks are associated and disassociated - physically and symbolically - to generate power or inhibit its development.

However, although such a juridical model became a nodal point in the linkages between the state, rural women and other villagers, one cannot adopt a single-stranded view of the process and one cannot assume beforehand that one of the actors is powerful and thus controls all the critical aspects of the process. Rather, I hope to show how power at national level is not so much of a different quality from that manifested at local level - although its scope and the devices used to consolidate it may vary - and I wish to highlight the ways in which knowledge is used to create and legitimate forms of association that are instrumental in the consolidation of the state as such.

The UAIMs were established by state decree in 1971, the presidential period of Echeverría, a period of intense peasant organization and mobilization. Government programmes involving women were much centred on family planning, but state rhetoric strongly emphasized the need to 'integrate women into development' (Velázquez 1992). It was during this period that the World Conference of the International Women's Year (1975) took place in Mexico. At
national level, state officials were required to enlist peasant women in rural policies. This might not have had anything to do with an actual intention of benefitting the women, but it certainly became important in terms of legitimation towards specific national and international audiences, in terms of channelling discontent away from unwanted peasant unions and coopting large sectors of the population in its institutions. Grindle (1988: 140) observes that:

'The Mexican political system has long been noted for the sophisticated way in which public resources - jobs, a piece of land, access to credit, preferential treatment in bureaucratic encounters - are used for the purposes of coopting potential or active sources of dissent or opposition or simply to pay off loyal government support.'

Thus, the creation of UAIMs was instrumental. In a fashion similar to the constitution of *ejido*, the UAIMs were born as institutions hinging on state legislation, and subject to government authorities for accessing resources, for settling conflicts and for establishing internal organization. The UAIMs allowed the state access to a sector of the population that was previously inaccessible in many ways. It created women's organization in state terms, and through state support.

These agrarian and industrial units were set up all over the country following legal procedures dictated by the state. They were initiated in each group with a formal meeting under the supervision of bureaucrats, where statutes were agreed upon, following a carefully written 'blueprint' where a few blanks had merely to be filled in. The documents were filed in state archives and a copy was given to the group. The women should be financed by the state bank and they should continue working as a group. To confirm membership and establish their rights, a certificate was issued to them, where their names and the names of their 'beneficiaries' - who would inherit their rights in case of death or other drastic circumstance - were listed.

**The social construction of power**

The interlocking of local processes and more global configurations concerning power give way to the creation of new arenas of interaction and diverse patterns of association. Here I am referring to the emergent strategies devised vis-à-vis attempts by the state, for example, to colonize or control specific territorial domains and to regulate social performance. When speaking of colonization, one is addressing issues of domination, of jurisdiction over specific actors and
territories or arenas of interaction. Implicit is the notion of power as inherent in certain hierarchical positions, as controlling the wills and activities of those under its subjugation. This conceptualization is too static, too all-encompassing and makes too many assumptions concerning an ever-present powerful actor. However, I hesitate before throwing it out altogether because of its reference to arenas, to physical and symbolic spaces that are objects of control. In the case of the UAIMs, one can find spaces, domains of interaction that are in some ways 'regulated' by the state, for example. The problem is that control is never total, and cannot be guaranteed indefinitely, but is constantly negotiated and restrained. Furthermore, colonization and control point to purposeful strategies, to intentions that are carried out almost unproblematically. Yet, is power always a conscious exercise to advance one's own volition, or is it possible to govern other people's behaviour without clear intentions, without a preconceived plan and carefully prepared strategies? This issue is widely discussed when referring to power, especially when examining Weber's definition based upon:

'the probability that an actor in a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests' (1957: 152).

Wills and strategic intentions are definitively crucial in everyday situations, but are obviously very difficult to pin down. In the case of the UAIMs, for example, one might conclude from policy documents that the state's will was to incorporate peasant women into the process of production and reduce gender inequalities. However, if we want to have an idea of the power exercised by the state in this arena, it would be idle to try to measure the degree to which peasant women's incorporation into the production process has increased or how gender inequalities have been reduced. Rather the first thing to do would be to look into state documents, find out how many UAIMs were created and how many are considered successful, and thus weigh up the extent to which the state has managed to enrol others in its initiatives. If one goes a bit further to explore the creation and consolidation of UAIMs themselves, a multiplicity of wills and intentions becomes evident, many of which might be contradictory to each other. Intentions cannot be so conclusively ascribed beforehand, and the contexts in which they arise are crucial for an understanding of the process.

The discussion of intentionality has been present for a long time in social science. Unintended consequences are important in the discussion of power. Such is the case of locating power in certain general categories such as the state, a class, colour or gender. This brings into consideration the issue of patriarchy and the nature of the state. The concept of patriarchy directs us to
examine the way gender is kneaded into relations of power - which is obviously critical - and that of the state makes useful allusions to institutions, to authorities recognized as such in everyday life. But can one speak of certain types of power, such as economic power, political power, patriarchal power or black power? Does the exercise of such power vary within different domains, vis-à-vis different people and under different conditions? Does this power also have to be negotiated or is it a 'given' that can be used whenever necessary?

If one accepts the premise that power is a given, then the state would always be seen as powerful, regardless of its possibilities to govern, and those managers or owners of enterprises possessing great wealth would always be seen as being able to control the behaviour of their workers - though understandably one would argue that it depends on whether certain conditions are met, on circumstances, on social norms and regulations. This indication leads to recognize that power is socially constructed. Latour (1986) claims that power is not something one can possess and must therefore be treated as a consequence of the actions of people rather than the cause of such action. He encapsulates the problem of power in the following paradox:

'when you simply have power - in potentia - nothing happens and you are powerless; when you exert power - in actu - others are performing the action and not you... power is... what has to be explained by the action of the others who obey the dictator, the manager, or the dominant female' (1986: 264-5).

If we agree with this, 'male' power must be conceded by women in order to exist. One must then look into the ways in which women are 'edged into', or willingly comply with 'male power'. The issue is not simple, and challenges one to work one's way through the thicket of identities, roles and powers - if that is the way to depict them. The weight given to class or gender differences, the social meanings conferred on the identities and roles of members of one category or another, and the definitions of ranks and offices will influence the power attributed to an individual or group. This means that one cannot locate power in the throne of a king, in the chambers of state or in the safe boxes of capital, although one might identify the ways in which the throne, official positions or capital are used in the exercise of power. Thus, power can only be seen through its practice, focusing on the ways in which techniques are deployed and on the construction of social forces that give it existence.

These are the issues I work on in this chapter. In doing so, I have found Callon and Latour's 'translation model of power' useful, although some critical considerations will be made later. As Latour (1986: 264) describes it:
'It appears that power is not something one can possess - indeed it must be treated as a consequence rather than as a cause of action. In order to explore this paradox a diffusion model of power in which a successful command moves under an impetus given it from a central source is contrasted with a translation model in which a command, if it is successful, results from the actions of a chain of agents each of whom 'translates' it in accordance with his/her own projects. Since, in the translation model, power is composed here and now by enrolling many actors in a given political and social scheme, and is not something that can be stored up and given to the powerful by a pre-existing society, it follows that debates about the origins of society, the nature of its components, and their relationships become crucial data for the sociologist... The sociologist should, accordingly, seek to analyze the way in which people are associated together, and should, in particular, pay attention to the material and extrasomatic resources (including inscriptions) that offer ways of linking people that may last longer than a given interaction.'

Techniques of power

Foucault suggests a focus on techniques and tactics of domination arguing that the analysis of power should concentrate on:

'...how things work at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours etc. In other words, rather than ask ourselves how the sovereign appears to us in his lofty isolation, we should try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts, etc.' (1980a: 97).

In line with this argumentation, Callon (1986) proposes the useful notion of 'obligatory passage point' which he describes in relation to 'moments of translation' in the sociology of science. In the process of translation, an actor enrolls others by defining their roles and delineating the scenario, by rendering itself indispensable to others and forcing them to follow a specific itinerary, to enter its 'obligatory passage point'. Here an equivalence is posed between two
problems that requires those who wish to solve one to accept a proposed solution for the other (Callon, Law and Rip 1986: xvii).

Callon explains how a group of research biologists studying the decline in the population of scallops in St. Brieuc Bay produce and certify scientific knowledge. He focuses on the simultaneous production of knowledge and construction of a network of relationships in which social and natural entities mutually control who they are and what they want. The researchers attempt to impose themselves and their definition of the situation on others. They first define the nature and the problems of the other actors involved in the event and suggest that these could be solved if the actors negotiated the 'obligatory passage point' of the researchers’ programme of investigation. In this way they sought to become indispensable to other actors in the drama, who must engage in the programme to solve their problems. The other moments of translation include: 'intéressement, by which they 'lock the other actors into the roles that had been proposed for them in the programme'; enrolment, in which they 'define and interrelate the various roles they had allocated to others'; and mobilization, by which they ensure that 'supposed spokesmen for various relevant collectivities [are] properly able to represent those collectivities'. One of Callon’s main arguments is that:

'the capacity of certain actors to get other actors - whether they be human beings, institutions or natural entities - to comply with them depends upon a complex web of interrelations in which Society and Nature are intertwined' (1986: 201).

I will use Callon’s concept of 'obligatory passage point’ in describing how state strategies work to enrol women and other actors in the implementation of policies, how a 'web of interrelations’ emerge, and the ways in which power is constructed, exercised and restricted.

The UAIM as an obligatory passage point

The UAIMs were negotiated as an 'obligatory passage point’ for the women who were targets of their programme. The women had to be convinced that such organization was beneficial for them, they had to see themselves as women with potential to enter the world of production, they were expected to desire to free themselves in some ways from the 'slavery of the household’ and assimilate the UAIM as theirs.
In the end, the UAIMs would be enlisted as accomplishments of the state, proof as to the success of their policies. They must become numbers and figures to give the state legitimacy. There should be a large number of them established, but they must also be efficient, they must be productive. In this way, technologies needed to be enroled, as well as mechanisms for permanence, for institutionalization, such as legal documents, internal statutes and infrastructure.

Different actors were enroled in the creation of UAIMs: a manageable way to reach peasant women with a degree of control was through the ejido, a rural institution (whose members, the ejidatarios, were mostly male) already constituted in juridical terms with established forms of organization. If money was to be involved in the venture, the ejidatarios, who possessed land, could be held responsible as warranty. In Ayuquila, as we have seen in previous chapters, the women had not manifested any interest of their own in establishing a joint enterprise before the creation of the group and it was the head of the ejido who directly enroled them into constituting the UAIM. It was not in the ejidatarios’ interests to give up a piece of scarce land for women, but they were forced to comply with the law, and their relationships with state officers - with whom other interests were at stake - had to be considered.

In La Viesca, Coahuila (in the north of Mexico), it was also the leading group of the ejido who pushed the creation of the UAIM in 1980, entailing a small factory to produce denim trousers. The comisariado ejidal appointed his close friends and kin in the directive committee, designating his own wife as secretary. They recruited members among their friends and followers, and hence included a number of vecindadas (neighbours, non-ejidatarias) within the group, which was established with 47 members and eight hired male workers. In a similar way, a chicken farm was created in Mezquitan, Jalisco (also in the Autlán-El Grullo valley) in 1980. The salient feature here was that the comisariada was a woman, who included her daughter and other close friends in the group.

With the institution of the Voluntariado Social (voluntary social workers headed by the wives of important government officials: government ministers, directors and regional delegates) the organization of women acquired greater relevance. Many UAIMs were created under the advocacy of such an organism.

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1. I wish to thank Ana Isabel Gaytán for allowing me to use her insightful field notes concerning the UAIM of Mezquitán.
The UAIM of Las Paredes - also located in the Autlán-El Grullo valley - was one such group. The wife of the head of the irrigation district took personal interest in its creation and consolidation, and in 1976 the group was formally established with 16 women, which later increased to 20. Unlike most UAIMs, which were generally allotted rocky or hilly third-class agricultural land in their communities - this group was granted seven hectares of rich, irrigated soil, for which the members fought fiercely, with the aid of their political networks, including the wife of the head of the irrigation district. The plot had belonged to a widow who lived in the United States and had not tilled it herself, so the UAIM could legally claim access to it. Like most ejidatarios in Las Paredes, the women grew sugar cane and in 1981 they were awarded credit to install a bakery. Later they also acquired a vehicle for their enterprise.

In the case of El Charo - Michoacán - as described by de Barbieri (1988), the initiative to create an UAIM came from a top official of BANRURAL (born in the region and interested in benefitting his kin) who promoted the construction of a chicken farm. The farm started functioning in 1979 with 13 members of the group and five hired female workers. Later conflicts, which arose both in El Charo and Las Paredes, can partly be attributed to this heavy role played by government officials.

At times previously organized groups were changed into UAIMs or ‘taken over’ by government extension workers. Mantilla (1989) describes how, in Yucatán, women organized by the voluntariado social in what were known as Centros de Desarrollo Rural (Rural Centres for Development) - under a different government programme - were compelled to modify their formal ascription and internal statutes in order to become UAIMs. Such was the case of Hoctún, where a group of 35 women had been working together for four years baking cakes, weaving hammocks, doing embroidery and sewing as a Centre for Rural Development. They were requested to become an UAIM together with 32 other women who joined the group. However, when the loan for the establishment of a chicken farm arrived in 1981, only 29 women were still members of the group, all belonging to the original group of 35 (Mantilla 1989).

Once land and/or credit had been allotted, it became important for the ejidatarios not to let just any woman (or family, as many were convinced their men might take over) take charge. It must be some kind of institution, some

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2. I want to thank Dorien Brunt for providing information concerning this UAIM. Whilst I visited the group on several occasions and interviewed some of its members, Dorien kindly let me use her detailed field notes and we held interesting discussions concerning the group of women of Las Paredes.
kind of official representation where several families could be included. In some ejidos, the UAIM actually represented a 'legal' way in which a few families were guaranteed privileged access to land and resources. In this way the juridical figure of UAIM acquired relevance.

The supposed 'beneficiaries' - rural women - were frequently the most difficult to enrol. They had the alternative of opting out, of continuing their lives as before. In a way, they were the least compelled to enter such an 'obligatory passage point'. It was often the case that women's motivations stemmed from an effort to live up to the expectations of their networks within the village, as well as those of government officers, whom they did not want to let down. However, a number of women - often the ones who were already in touch with state programmes or involved in economic activities, such as the leading group of Las Paredes - found an opportunity to access resources and start an enterprise.

Some UAIMs were created under the initiative of other national or local organizations, such as Ejido Unions, non-government organizations or women's groups. In Orandino Michoacán, for example, several women activists of the National Peasant Confederation (CNC: linked to the ruling party) sought information concerning credit to establish a chicken farm. In 1976 they were granted a loan from BANRURAL, which they managed to acquire because of their political relations within the CNC. Later their group was registered as an official UAIM (Mantilla 1989).

In Ahuacatlán, Nayarit, the Unión Ejidal Lázaro Cárdenas (UELC), a regional peasant organization representing fourteen indigenous and ejido communities, promoted the creation of eleven UAIMs within its communities. The Union had been encouraging 'autonomous community development projects' and actively struggling for a better distribution of fertilizers and for an increase in the official prices of their agricultural products - particularly maize (Stephen 1993). To attain the latter, they organized road blocks, where, as one of the female promoters explains, peasant women were particularly active. The presence of women in assemblies and meetings was so great that male members of the Union recognized the importance of their participation and themselves suggested that women should have more space within the organization (Camarena, interview 9.10.93). The UELC had access to funding via the Interamerican Foundation as well as via other national agencies, but the groups needed formal juridical status. Three communities represented in the Union had already established UAIMs, and the model was found convenient for the other eleven groups to follow. Initially men supported wholeheartedly the creation of UAIMs, since this, they reasoned, would strengthen the Union with economic and human resources.
Once enlisted, the groups' identity as UAIMs became indispensable for acquiring land in the ejido, for receiving credit from the rural bank and other funding agencies, and for attaining legitimacy and a degree of permanence as an institution. However, having entered the obligatory passage point, having acquired the juridical status of UAIM, particular relations with the state were assumed and the state could validly include them among their adherents.

In general, the members of UAIMs assumed their responsibilities quickly. Paying off their debt became a compelling priority (see also Mantilla 1989: 62). Unlike many male groups who acquired credit, most of the UAIMs reported here paid their debts within the time scheduled by BANRURAL3).

Power and translation

For local government officials, the establishment of UAIMs was proof of their success in carrying out government policies. UAIMs were effective as numbers to be added into reports, and photographs were often taken and pasted on the walls of their offices to show visitors and colleagues how close to 'the people' their work was, how productively government money was being used - through that particular bureaucrat's intercession. Higher ranked officials were often taken to visit the 'successful' groups.

In order to mobilize support for itself and reinforce public acceptance, the state needed to 'translate' groups of organized women into UAIMs so that they could appear in charts, in pictures, and public discourses. This would render the state as strong: it would now be described as representing the women and their aspirations, as their spokesman. By entering the obligatory passage point of the UAIMs, the women would be considered as part of the state apparatus, thus furnishing it with a social body and authority.

In Nayarit, for example, the recently-appointed governor of the state had started the term with little grassroots support and heavy opposition. His wife found a good opportunity to legitimate her position by appearing publicly as linked to the UELC's (Union Ejidal Lázaro Cárdenas) UAIMs. She visited them, offered her support and headed a meeting, making sure the event was covered by the press. The beekeeping group of Ayuquila was also visited several times by higher rank state officers. Local government officials would

3. This behaviour is not at all uncommon among women's groups. Most of the groups I have visited in Latin America, as well as the ones I have worked with, give priority to paying the funding agencies, even when interest rates are very low or nonexistent. Generally this limits their possibilities of expanding their enterprises.
present the group as their accomplishment. Towards certain audiences they identified the group as 'theirs'; thus demonstrating that they had organized peasant women within their constituency.

On the other hand, translations are not for the exclusive use of the state. Obligatory points of passage, even though they might have been initiated by one of the actors to control others, can be used as a two-way street. Generally speaking, the women organized in UAIMs used their juridical status for their own purposes. They gave it their own meanings and constructed their own linkages, many of which the state had to comply with as well. The UAIM programme was subject to changes during different periods of time, since the practices which sustained it changed with the interaction between the members, implementors and audiences. The UAIMs of the UELC in Nayarit, for example, used the name of the governor's wife, her visits and her verbal support to legitimate their presence and rights to decision making within the Union. Although, within the Union, the fourteen UAIMs were only allowed to vote as one member - which the women strongly condemned, since they represented almost one thousand women - their legal status as UAIMs did provide formal space from which to demand recognition and make their voice heard.

In Ayuquila, the whole purpose of the UAIM was questioned in many ways. For one, they never grew as an enterprise. Although they accepted a new store and some credit for beehives, they never expanded into an efficient business, in part because this would take too much time away from household duties and other small commercial activities they were engaged in. A juicy offer made by the government bank consisting of a large loan, with very low interest rates, to expand their enterprise was turned down and substituted by a small loan from a local cooperative which the women could manage according to their experience and skills. They also established some of the terms of their relation with the state by accepting the statutes but not following them, by converting the meetings into social events where each one brought some food and refreshments, and, to top it off, by linking themselves as an UAIM (without breaking away from the state) to a non-governmental organization, which was in fact working to undermine the influence of the state and the ruling party.

However, the state does not need to master every aspect of women's lives, and control need not be uninterrupted. Through processes of translation, fragmented elements can be picked up, mobilized and organized in what can be interpreted by different actors as a significant system, as a whole. How these particles are organized, how they are classified and ranked is of great relevance for establishing practices and new set-ups. Associations and disassociations are made, not only in physical terms - through the creation of networks, or the involvement with bees and sewing machines - but in terms of linking or
delinking concepts, beliefs, symbols and emotions with particular people, objects, activities and relations.

Such associations, however, could not merely be introduced into a neutral milieu, or according to an ideal model spontaneously generated. The state was also constrained by women's ideas and expectations; it was 'subjugated' (see Lindstrom 1990) to existing discourses. The officers were compelled to live up to their image as 'benefactors' and mediators, and safeguard women's interests. They were expected to have knowledge and experience, and to be powerful enough to overcome the adversaries that the different groups encountered.

Defining who you are and what you want, and who we are and how we 'help' you: the point of view of 'the state'

Processes of translation entail negotiations over definitions. What is important, what is socially acceptable and what the future holds for the different actors, however, must be defined in such a way that it is approved as legitimate. Internal dialogues involving reference groups and entailing certain cultural understandings take place, and meanings are attributed which have implications for the dynamic social context. The state builds upon an interpretation of what its audiences consider to be the nature of women's problems and the ways to solve them, but it also pushes forward new connotations which must be 'sold' back to their audiences, to the women, to the ejidatarios and local officials.

Yet a precise state image of rural women is impossible to depict, since the state itself is not a consistent entity which acts according to uniform interpretations. Meanings change from one actor to the other and from one situation to the other. Personal pursuits and motivations lead to different interpretations and to specific associations and linkages. These, however, are constrained by shared understandings and by what will be accepted as legitimate by the others.

Public documents depict rural women basically as mothers, whose time is devoted almost entirely to their households. This view is strengthened by censuses of employment, for example, where women appear as largely unemployed. Thus, they are seen as excluded from production processes. Censuses do not generally include work such as small commercial activities, selling sweets and fruit outside schools for children, setting up tables in the street where neighbours come to eat special Mexican dishes, peddling homemade bread, perfumes and clothes from house to house, etc. And the women themselves do not provide such information for censuses, as these are generally spontaneous and discontinuous activities which are deemed unimportant.
According to Barbieri (1983: 6-7), in 1970 (the programme of UAIMs was created in 1971), the rural population\(^4\) was said to represent 41.3% of the Mexican population. Of these, 46.5% were women, of which 54% were described as illiterate, 15.2% below urban levels of illiteracy among women. Fecundity was also depicted as a major problem. The average number of children per family in that year was said to be 5.5, although it is described as decreasing due to state programmes and education.

It is common knowledge that censuses in Mexico are carried out in a hazardous way, that numbers are invented, etc., but the image of rural women as illiterate, working all day in the kitchen and concentrating on reproductive activities underlies much of public rhetoric. It is stressed that women represent half of the population, that they are often marginalized and that the economic crisis the country is passing through is shouldered in the end by them. However, they are described as lacking enough education and skills to participate in the process of production except in a subordinate way, and this is assumed to impede their development as women.

In the alternatives proposed by the state, 'peasant women' is a category in which female inhabitants of rural villages are placed, not only dismissing differentiations in terms of occupation, age, status, personal experience, hobbies, interests, etc., but also assuming that they are homogeneously distant from access to financial services, that they yearn for autonomy from male spheres and that their goal is to obtain an income independently from their spouses and families. The UAIM programme stresses that women should strengthen their economic roles and enhance their status in such a way that they constitute an active force in society. Furthermore, the 'world of production' is depicted as the world of progress, of development, of free enterprise that will provide a way out of poverty, and which of course is the domain of the 'experts', naturally from outside the rural scenario.

Mantilla (1989: 33) complains that the UAIM programme was more a matter of social charity than a programme of economic development. She claims that the quantity of money allotted to the enterprises was very small compared to that for male credit holders, and that the fact that initially the programme was managed by the voluntariado social speaks of a conception of the UAIMs' agenda as complementary to household tasks, as secondary activities in which the women can engage in their free time. Both in Hoctín and Orandino, she says, state strategies are working under the premise that:

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\(^4\) Here 'rural' was defined as communities consisting of less than 2,500 inhabitants, which would leave out Ayuquila and many other such communities!
'Peasant women lack experience, knowledge, dispositions, etc. to establish the criteria that regulate their economically productive activities. Building upon this assumption, the state takes upon itself, in practice, the responsibility for the total operation of the UAIM, from its conception to the implementation of its activities' (1989: 15).

On the other hand, the head of the programme of UAIMs in the state of Jalisco - a female lawyer from BANRURAL - at the time the present study took place, explains:

'The programme is part of the women’s struggle for their integration into the world of production, while at the same time recognizing them as apt to receive credit. It is a consequence of the struggle of peasant women, the fruit of a social movement.'

The social movement Silvia is referring to here is the Mexican Revolution which took place soon after the beginning of the century, after which the PRI - the ruling party to which she must adhere as a civil servant - took over. While describing the women as yearning to incorporate themselves into what had become known as the ‘men’s world’, she is also defining the nature of the state. She is eager to portray an image of the state bank - for whom she works - as an institution sensitive to social problems and responsive to them, and depicts the programme as belonging to Mexicans, a voice for people who struggled to acquire this right. Silvia comments:

'We have a multidisciplinary team in the bank, from geologists to sociologists and social workers. We want to develop the women as entrepreneurs, and for that, we have to assure ourselves that they will be able to make it. We always tell the people that we want to benefit them, not harm them with a programme that does not work out.'

Silvia believes that the women are motivated to participate in these programmes, mainly because they are now recognized as apt for credit, as entrepreneurs, claiming that they have always laboured in the fields but without remuneration. Her image of the programme, of its constraints and possibilities, is also framed by her own self image, and by her notion of rural women, of their problems and potential. She describes herself as a woman with experience concerning the needs and difficulties of the rural poor, and with possibilities of offering options to them. In the alternative model she proposes for rural women, entrepreneurship must be collective. Rural women are expected to work in
groups, where private interests can hinder group development. Their personal aspirations must be channelled into group endeavours, where organization is a key word:

'We can find real leaders in the groups, women who struggle to be recognized, but also many limitations, and those who are willing to organize themselves with other people in similar conditions are the ones that hold a chance of liberation.'

It is also important to keep the group as democratic as possible, and decisions must be taken within a transparent atmosphere, without affecting - of course - other public interests in their villages. She trusts that there is a possibility of arriving at 'collective' control of this organization with advice and proper training from the programme's extension workers.

This 'revolutionary' model relies heavily on the notion of participation, although participation is only conceived of within the boundaries of this largely pre-defined project, not in terms of what the women themselves might have considered their own projects. Moreover, the women are expected to acquire a 'strategic conception' of their own development as peasant women, that is, they should see themselves as an important social force, they should disregard small, trivial interests which hinder their progress. This implies a 'societal perspective' towards the use of their resources and profits, and will only be possible if they consolidate a set of practices that allow them to make the appropriate collective decisions. From Silvia’s point of view, this is not easy, and some obstacles have to be overcome:

'There is atavismo (ties to old, backward ideas), and machismo as well as inferiority complexes in the women, and they come out with things like "my husband doesn't allow me", "my brother does not want me to join the group". The problem is the different interests that exist between them, the different conceptions of life and development which do not allow people to see further. We are facing social atavisms and it is a matter of fighting them with appropriate education. If you manage to get two or three women together, you sing victory, because they can become small poles of development.'

Silvia's interpretation of the programme and its prospects is more or less shared by other government officials who, in one way or another, have influence on the women's groups. Her words are not uncommon in Mexican politics, since the PRI campaigns under the slogan: 'The party of the Mexican Revolution'.
Furthermore, it is no coincidence that Silvia and other civil servants express themselves in this way about women’s struggles and aim to convert them into entrepreneurs, since this has also constituted an important part of government rhetoric and slogans in previous years, although the implementation of these ideas is of course entangled within all sorts of political practice. While government rhetoric concerning women’s programmes called out for radical change, the creation of UAIMs was not aimed to threaten local authorities or land tenure patterns; neither was the intention to change the terms of gender organization in the household or in the fields.

A male officer from the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (SARH) in El Grullo (the municipality to which Ayuquila belongs in politico-geographical terms) gives us his view of the beekeepers. According to him, the women should:

‘...develop and integrate themselves, so that they do not see their actions as merely subsistence and hobby, but in terms of a managerial mentality; it is important that they [the women] understand that they can grow with the products they have. The group can export their products, and become a source of development for all the beekeepers in the region. Of course, they would first need an intensive technical training, in order that they are more prepared.’

The Ministry in which he works had been outside the scenario in the creation of the UAIM, but was interested in enrolling it in its programme of community organization, which had not managed to interest many relevant groups in the region. He had detected the group and perceived other potentials for it, conceiving of ways in which the beekeeping enterprise could fit in with his plans for the region, providing them with a large donation, plus a loan, to create a ‘real’ agro-industry, with a larger storehouse than the one they had constructed for themselves, and a good marketing programme (as I mentioned in Chapter 3). This coincided nicely with personal interests within the officer’s political career and his possibilities of attracting financial resources to his programme. He envisaged changed ‘gender roles’ for the beekeepers with regard to their becoming ‘entrepreneurs’, but this had implications for their roles within their households and vis-à-vis their different networks in the village. He stressed that the women would become a model for other peasant women and even for other men who were presently unwilling to organize and ‘develop’ themselves further.

Thus, the different actors within the state defined characteristics for their own and others’ identities, building upon shared values and points of consensus.
To initiate UAIMs, to get women to accept the institution as theirs, these women must see themselves as lacking participation in the production process, and as not being fully developed in their potential as women. To keep the UAIM going they must perceive themselves as entrepreneurs. To overcome obstacles such as cultural beliefs and male demands, they must understand that these belong to the past, to backward traditions that must be eliminated.

*Interessement* and enrolment

It was important for the state to get the women to accept these definitions of their identities, needs and interests, if it was to become indispensable for 'helping them out' by establishing UAIMs. To begin with, reaching the women was difficult, as many of them were formally unorganized and had no direct links with the state. Thus, in most cases, it was actually a bit of coercion directed towards the *ejidatarios* that did the trick. A decree was passed by which the women must be allotted land in the ejidos:

>'Clause 103. In each *ejido* that is established, a plot of land - equal in size to the unit granted for the individual *ejidatarios* - in the best soils surrounding the urban area, should be reserved for the installation of an agrarian farm and of rural industries exploited collectively by the women of the agrarian nucleus who are older than sixteen and are not *ejidatarias*.' (Diario Official, in Mantilla 1989).

This 'locked' the *ejidatarios* into committing themselves to the enterprise and incorporating their wives and female relatives into it. Of course, other measures were taken, such as official meetings with women in the villages, but even these were often set up by the *ejidatarios*. As I have mentioned, women’s motivations for joining the UAIMs were not so much out of the conviction that this was a real alternative for them, but more out of loyalty to the *ejidatarios* and their personal networks.

Aranda (1993: 205-6) informs us that, in 1988, 2,253 UAIMs were listed in the National Agrarian Registration Office (see Table 2). Based on statistics for the Official Register, only eight per cent of the total *ejidos* in the country included an UAIM in their organization, even though it was a legal requirement. Ninety two UAIMs are listed for the state of Jalisco, that is, 4% of the total in the country. However, at least two thirds of the total UAIMs in the country are not registered formally in this office, among them the UAIM of
Table 2: Mexico's states and regions, percentage of rural population and number of UAIMs registered according to the Ministry of Agrarian Reform (General Directory of Agrarian Organization) in 1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>RURAL POPULATION</th>
<th>UAIM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IN %</td>
<td>NUMBER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North western region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.C.N.</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.C.S.</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nayarit</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinaloa</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonora</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North central region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aguascalientes</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chihuahua</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durango</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.L.P.</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zacatecas</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North eastern region</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coahuila</td>
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<td>Nuevo León</td>
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<td>Veracruz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western region</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colima</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jalisco</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michoacán</td>
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<td>Bajio region</td>
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<td>Guanajuato</td>
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<td>Hidalgo</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>Querétaro</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southeastern region</td>
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<td>Campeche</td>
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<td>Chiapas</td>
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<td>Quintana Roo</td>
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<td>Yucatán</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southcentral region</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oaxaca</td>
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<td>Puebla</td>
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<td>Tlaxcala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central region</td>
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<td>Estado de México</td>
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<td>Morelos</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>2253</td>
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</table>

Source: Aranda 1993: 206-7
Ayuquila and several of those mentioned here. In fact, other sources, such as BANRURAL, list from six to eight thousand UAIMs. Still, this means that only 20% of the country’s ejidos have established UAIMs.

Generally speaking, the women did not contest state ideas concerning the possibilities of women venturing into the world of production because they were not against them. In some ways, this new discourse sounded interesting, it filled gaps in their own frustrations, and provided some space to consider their own work as relevant. In some cases, such as that of the UAIMs of the UELC and the UAIM of Orandino, the women had manifested interest and mobilized themselves with similar goals in mind. Also for Petra (B7), who as I have mentioned was a Jehovah’s Witness and President of the Ayuquila beekeeping group at the time the study took place, the project would provide some degree of economic independence. Referring to state officers, she commented:

'they help us, not only with the bees, but as women, to face life. It’s a bit of everything, we learn new things and are able to get out of the house for a while, and it fills us with the desire to know more.'

She considered that, with careful nurturing and financial management, the project would lead to increased profit. Her image of development and organization was imbued with a religious understanding and she combined a desire to develop a life beyond the domestic scene with a strong sense of enterprise (see Long and Villarreal 1989). Hence she, as well as many of the members of the UELC’s UAIMs and the UAIM of Orandino, were willing to accept the juridical model as a way of reaching their goals, which, in turn, represented a solution for government officials who could now include these women in their programmes.

However, not all the members of the UAIM groups were so enthusiastic, and it was in the actual implementation of the ideas that problems arose. In La Viesca, the administrative committee of the UAIM - who had apparently agreed with the aims of bank functionaries, attended them when they came to visit, and in general managed the relations with the state - was accused by the other members of the UAIM of adopting the authoritarian attitude of a capitalist entrepreneur. 'The committee became another boss who punishes and must be obeyed' (Barbieri 1981). A similar situation occurred in El Charo, where conflicts arose between adult and young members. The latter claimed that the older members used their authority to make the younger women work more whilst they hardly provided labour themselves (Barbieri 1981). These situations led many women to perceive their participation in the UAIMs as a salaried job, not as a joint enterprise.
Often women were interacting within other discourses concerning their roles and identities which clashed with government designs in the practicalities of everyday life. When they had to leave their children unattended, when their husband had not come home for lunch and they had to wait for him, when they quarrelled with their relatives over a piece of land, the images and roles of women came to be questioned. Again we cannot speak of the groups as being homogeneous, because each woman faced her situation in a different way.

At all stages of the programme, 'uninvited guests' were constantly interposing themselves in order to define the nature of women's problems and their identities. Members of the different UAIMs needed to be de-linked from certain cultural understandings about women's roles; they needed to separate themselves a bit from the household and from 'inefficient' forms of organization. This conforms to Callon's (1986a: 207-8) point that 'to impose and stabilize the identity of the other actors' as previously defined, a process of 'interessement' is necessary. To be interested, he explains:

'is to go in between (inter-esse), to be interposed. To interest other actors is to build devices which can be placed between them and all other entities who want to define their identities otherwise.'

In an effort to minimize such obstacles, the women were asked to sign under oath at the initial stages of the UAIMs agreeing to carry out work according to certain regulations and to respect the norms that were set up. Later, intervention by the state was often necessary in order to convince the women to keep going or to settle problems. In the case of Ayuquila, 'outsiders' often played significant roles. The head of the ejido, whose interests were at stake, was instrumental, as were relatives who were working elsewhere and who came for visits. The argument of 'progress' and 'development for women' was often used.

One of the greatest threats to the well-functioning of the UAIMs was the possibility of being taken over by one or two individuals. Measures were implemented to ward off this possibility, such as decreeing that there should be a collective enterprise, establishing a comité de vigilancia (vigilance committee) as well as an executive committee, and by the state defining itself as mediator, to whom women and other actors could appeal in the case of irregularities. However, such measures often created new problems. For example, in Las Paredes, where the group was divided into three - one keeping the bakery, another the vehicle and the rest the land - government officials were accused of taking sides and even initiating the conflicts. Extension workers from the local delegation of the Ministry of Water Resources argued in favour of one
party, whilst those of the Ministry of Agrarian Reform supported another. Paperwork came and went and the matter is still not solved to the satisfaction of any of the subgroups.

The state did not intend to control the complete process - this was impossible to do - but a degree of compliance and acceptance was indispensable: the women must be locked into roles defined by the state through a process of intéressement. The state attracted the women by interposing itself and its definitions between them and other possible interpretations of their roles and the meanings attributed to their activities. Enrolling the women was not easy, as it implied willingness on the part of the women members to concur; it involved breaking through resistances, building upon points of consensus and an internalization of different objectives and conceptions of their roles and capabilities. Enrolment, as Callon (1986) explains,

'designates the device by which a set of interrelated roles is defined and attributed to actors who accept them. Intéressement achieves enrolment if it is successful. To describe enrolment is thus to describe the group of multilateral negotiations, trials of strength and tricks that accompany the intéressements and enable them to succeed.'

Processes of enrolment were achieved, in practice, through women's commitment to projects and activities such as applying new technology, engaging in markets and fulfilling legal requirements, which involved a great deal of state intervention, and interacting with other groups who had similar enterprises. But, as we have seen in the case of the beekeepers, the limits the women set on their activities, and the frames within which their behaviour was adjusted, were in many ways shaped by their perceptions of themselves, and of their relation to land, to the enterprises, to group members and to the state. Hence, we cannot conclude that the 'new' discourse 'won' over the 'pre-existing' one. New ideas did transform some of their perceptions, but mostly they were accommodated; they filled gaps in terms of the women's projects, and were given different meanings by the women themselves. Their projects interlocked, impressing certain characteristics on each other, but this did not mean the state had won and the women had lost. It was not necessarily a battle against each other. Resistance was of a different nature. The actor-worlds of the women had different nuclei altogether.

The outcomes were, however, beneficial for the state, since the UAIMs were 'translated' as successes. In Callon's terms, the state could now validly claim that they were spokesmen for the women, that they could represent their
wills and aspirations. This encouraged political audiences to grant the state authority and legitimation.

Difficulties and drawbacks

However, the UAIMs had to be efficient if they were to be useful: bees, chickens, pigs and sewing machines must be dealt with adequately if they are to be productive. The enterprises had to be large enough to justify government investment and to deploy the amounts of money assigned for the UAIM programme. Technology was often a headache, as were accounting techniques, markets and organization practices. The women of Ayuquila had deliberately selected a 'light' activity, one that did not involve conflicts with other people or too much work. Thus they chose beekeeping. This decision had problems attached, especially since the arrival of the African bee, because their technology in dealing with bees had to be brought up to date. Furthermore, government officials were constantly pressing them to enlarge their enterprise, to include more infrastructure and modern appliances, and hence take on more credit from the BANRURAL.

The UAIMs of the UELC in Nayarit were mostly oriented towards food production. They included a turkey farm, bakeries, beehives, pig farms, and a small workshop for clothes making. They complain that their initial projects were completely changed by government officials, who had to adjust the plans to previously designed frameworks. The local organizers of the UELC, together with the women involved, had aimed to establish 'backyard enterprises' where a combination of economic activities would take place, including fruit orchards, chickens, pigs, bees, etc. They had only aspired to the construction of a simple, but large building in each community, where the women could meet to can and dry fruit, make sausages, etc. However, the programme was designed for single micro enterprises, and officials adapted the demands of the women to the projects they considered viable and adequate to the structure of the programme. Hence small enterprises were established, many of which were unsuccessful in financial terms.

Many cases have been reported where UAIMs have been dispossessed of their land, or where their industry has been taken over by males. A number of those that still function can also be considered failures in that they have achieved such low profits that they do not contribute significantly to the wellbeing of their members' families. At most, they provide conditions of sub-employment for their members (see also Mantilla 1989; Barbieri 1981; and Aranda 1992). The UAIM of La Viesca is probably an exception - obtaining the
highest income among the UAIMs reported here (Barbieri claims it represents 40% of the members' families' earnings, although the actual profits are low, which, as she asserts, only underlines the level of poverty in the region). The bakers of Las Paredes manage to earn a steady, albeit small, income, whilst in the UAIM of Ayuquila the beekeepers have even had to provide money out of their own pockets at times to keep their enterprise afloat!

Cases of corruption against and within UAIMs have been denounced: In 1991 government bank officials were accused of taking part in a fraud against 50 UAIMs in the north of the country. The UAIMs were organized as maquiladoras (sweat shops), producing garments for a private company. The company provided the material to the UAIMs - who acquired it through credit from the rural bank - then bought the finished garments from the women. However, the company failed to pay the UAIMs, and owed them large sums of money. Apparently government officers were involved, since the women were compelled by the bank to buy their material from this particular company.

In Ahuacatlán, Nayarit, the women's council of the UELC accused the male members of their organization of confiscating funds allocated to UAIMs. Most of their economic resources were acquired, not through BANRURAL as in the case of most UAIMs, but through the Interamerican Foundation, COPLADE (State Planning Committee for Development) and other government sources, and the Union was the intermediary in the receiving of finance. In Mezquitan, members of the UAIM accused the comisariada ejidal of stealing chickens and selling them for her own benefit. Conflicts were so great that someone disconnected the electricity of the farm and all the chickens died, after which the women 'rented out' the buildings and major implements (in lieu of their debts) to a local chicken farmer, who claims the women owe him so much money they would never be able to pay it back. In Las Paredes, the three women who kept the bakery justified themselves by arguing that the rest of the group had hardly worked and that they had paid the debt to the bank with their own labour (later they also rented out their bakery to a small entrepreneur). The largest group kept the land, from which they earned a steady, albeit modest income without much work, since they hired men to carry out most of the necessary tasks.

None of the chicken farms reported here have been economically very successful5. Problems of efficiency have led to increased costs; chickens ready for the market could not be sold or frozen because of lack of infrastructure and

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5. Although there have been some prosperous chicken farms controlled by UAIMs, for example, on the coast of Jalisco, where the farms sell their produce to tourist restaurants and hotels.
markets. Trousers made in La Viesca were of low quality, despite their high production costs, and markets were difficult to enter. In most of these cases the women relied on Bank extension workers to provide technology and search for markets, as their information concerning these matters, their links to market networks and their capacity to mobilize was very restricted.

The state needed to control aspects of women’s lives so that they could in turn control bees and make them produce honey, not in small amounts for their families to enjoy, but in quantities that could be presented as significant in accounts and tables. They needed to ensure that the chickens did not die of diseases and that they were marketed at the right time so as not to remain too long in the farm, which meant greater costs. In the case of the garment and other industries, officials exhorted the women to use particular technology. There were conditions to be met, multiple 'obligatory passage points' to be crossed in this process, over which the state often had no say. Other ‘uninvited’ actors came into the picture. In Latour and Callon’s model, if such actors or elements refuse to comply, the translation is then a failure.

However, this is too elementary a solution for our obstinate translators. Most of the UAIMs in Mexico work with financial accounts that are 'in the red', if they continue working at all, but in government statistics are presented as being successes. Some actors might be eliminated or replaced, the numbers are commonly altered a bit, but mostly the outcomes are reinterpreted. The audience is convinced that other very important processes, such as the 'revalorization of women', such as learning processes, are taking place. In reports, political documents and official meetings, UAIMs are present, even when they have no enterprise, even when they do not meet regularly; they have, that is, been converted into an institution which speaks for rural women, which represents them in other domains. From the point of view of the women, the institution might no longer exist but for bureaucratic purposes it can still play a useful role for the state. Our obligatory passage point can change its definition without a great deal of difficulty; that is, it relies upon other processes of translation to continue its existence.

**The construction of actor-networks**

Through the creation of UAIMs, specific types of associations were forged. Following Callon’s (1986b: 22) argument, an 'actor-world' of UAIMs was established. The notion of actor-world (or actor-network) describes a world in which its
'prime mover... puts forward a list of entities and a list of what they do, think, want and experience. These entities are not human alone, since catalysts, electrolytes and lead accumulators are included.'

Thus, in the actor-world of the UAIM of Ayuquila, state officers, policy documents, laws and statutes, ejidatarios, women, agricultural land, bees and 'appropriate technology' were some of the entities enlisted by the 'prime mover'. I will return later to the issue of actor-worlds and prime movers, but for the moment I want to point to the interrelations forged. Through links and associations, these entities developed what Callon calls 'actor-networks' constituting, in our case, each specific UAIM, which in turn formed part of the actor-network of the national UAIM programme. Whether large or small (pertaining to each particular UAIM or to the national programme), these networks were not just organized in an ad hoc manner, since certain desired outcomes were to be achieved through a specific pattern of organization. Thus, hierarchies were created or confirmed and modes of submission and compliance were tacitly validated.

Using legal devices and promises of benefits, rural women were formally recruited into institutions validated by the state. Their interaction with bureaucrats also brought them into contact with state networks and with political issues they had not been concerned with before. As a woman from the UAIM of Mezquítán put it:

'Although we had very little economic benefit from the chicken farm, in the group we did learn to overcome our shyness and defend our rights, we learned to fight! I learned where the office of the Ministry of Agrarian Reform was, I visited the National Federal Confederation and BANRURAL, all that because of our conflicts with the comisariada [who was imputed of wanting to control the enterprise]. I now know something about the law, and I can speak in public. I didn’t know how to hold the microphone, in fact I didn’t even know how to climb the stairs to a stage, I climbed the platform blindly and spoke.' (Gaytán, field notes 25/11/88).

Thus, being enlisted as an UAIM implied embracing an assortment of associations, where compliance to explicit and implicit norms, obligations and alliances were involved. Links were also generated to secure loyalties and

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6. He uses this in the context of the case of EDF (Electricité de France), which presented a plan for the VEL (Electric Vehicle).
commitments. As we have suggested, the women reinterpreted norms and regulations, they incorporated other networks and wove ties differently, but did not break the threads which linked them to the state. Women were still compelled to 'obey' the experts and comply with regulations. They had to submit themselves to state authority and legal procedures.

Furthermore, previous relations with *ejidatarios* were now incorporated into the UAIMs in a kind of paternalistic affiliation, as often the women were compelled to recognize that it was through them that the project was made possible. *Ejido* members considered the women liable to them in many ways. They were held accountable, for example, for making the land produce and for using their resources properly. They were also expected to recognize the 'authority' of the *ejido* institution (or of the *Ejido* Union, as in the case of the UELC), especially when bureaucratic procedures and important decisions concerning land were involved.

Their relationships with the 'natural world' also experienced change. The women now attached themselves to agricultural land in a new way. Since the law stipulated that only non-landowners could become members of an UAIM, none of them had possessed land before. Most of them had previously helped their husbands and fathers in agricultural tasks and some had worked as day-labourers in the fields, but now the land was theirs. It was capital registered in their names; it represented an asset, a resource which could be inherited by their descendants. In Ayuquila, being allotted land entailed taking it from the *ejidatarios*’ pasture sites, which created resentment, leading to the cutting off of relations among some men and women in the village.

Other associations forged their own patterns, limitations and restrictions. Boundaries were set, hierarchies were enacted and organization was sanctioned. I have mentioned, for example, how in La Viesca, the production and commercialization of trousers brought with it involvement in the garment industry. The UAIM became a *maquiladora*, subordinated to producing for much larger enterprises. Technology was in some ways imposed on them, and their lack of abilities and know-how in these processes led to increased dependence. In Ayuquila, the bees’ activities had to be subordinated to producing honey for the women: mating with African bees had to be controlled. Relating to the bees also brought with it links to technology, to various ways in which the bees needed to be dealt with and cared for if they were to produce honey. Technology had to be brought in from elsewhere, experts came and provided courses, the women read articles and watched videos, but it was not enough. They sought other beekeepers in the region to help them out, to answer questions and learn new skills from them.
In a similar way, commercialization of the honey contributed ties to market, to other beekeeping enterprises and to traders and consumers. The same kinds of processes took place in the UAIMs dealing with chicken farms and other economic enterprises. Thus, each actor-network was established through a complicated web of interrelations, many of which were critical for the continuation of the actor-worlds as such, although often the problems, understandings and agreements under which particular interconnections were made, were not visible to each of the entities interacting within the larger network of the UAIM programme. State officers did not know what was happening in the actor-worlds of the women's households, for example, although this had crucial implications for the actor-world of each particular UAIM. On the other hand, the women had little information concerning the political circles state officers were involved in. Callon (1986b: 28-9) explains that, by means of translation, the infinitely complex world of each of the entities is 'simplified'; it appears in summary form within the panorama:

'they conceal a hidden life whose anonymous destinies interact... [the actor-world] does not need to know more. This definition will remain realistic so long as the simplification on which it is based is maintained. In other words, such simplifications will be maintained so long as other entities do not appear which render the world more complex by rejecting the reality represented by these simplifications as an impoverished betrayal...'

According to this framework, the lifeworlds of the different entities involved are only partly included within the actor-network of the national UAIM programme. They constitute part of the background, of unquestioned 'trivia'. The village domains in which the women interacted in everyday life were only present in 'simplified' form; they were hidden from the view of other entities. In theory, they had nothing to do with their production of honey, chickens or garments or women's relations to the state. If they became present in a threatening way (for example, if village gossip put such pressure on the women that they were forced to hand the UAIM over to the men, or if the state bank ran out of money because of debts with other programmes) they betrayed the simplification and changed the configuration of the actor-network.

But such simplifications are in fact being challenged all the time! Village gossip presented itself often, as did the work the women had to do in their kitchens, or the interests of bureaucrats in procuring a post for themselves in municipal elections. Thus a consistent description of a specific actor-world can
only be made at a very restricted point in time because the entities that configure it and the networks they represent are constantly changing.

Methodological considerations

Latour and Callon provide valuable concepts for understanding the ways in which power is constructed, negotiated and constrained. The notion of translation, of the powers of association between natural and social elements, as well as enrolment, *interessement*, and obligatory passage points are useful theoretical tools for exploring power in social relations. The attractiveness of the notion of actor-networks is its depiction of how a web of interrelations constitutes actors within particular situations around specific issues. Hence networks are not seen as following the determinations of a pre-identified structure.

These networks entail similar kinds of features to those I described in Chapter 4. The way in which 'missing links' in social relations are 'filled in' by the people involved, for example, is relevant to the notion of actor-networks. If we take the national UAIM programme as a network, we do not necessarily find links between the local UAIMs. Relations between the groups were often encouraged by state officials, but were hardly ever consolidated within state domains. For the actor-network of the national UAIM programme, relations between the groups was not indispensable, so long as they were associated to the central programme. This does not of course mean that all ties not directly linked to the state were unimportant. Indeed I have described the relevance of such linkages established by each UAIM to local institutions, to technology and to markets, and how, in the process of translation, linkages become simplified.

If we constructed a tree diagram to map out the patterns of relations that form the national UAIM programme (such as that portrayed in Figure 15 in Chapter 4), the local UAIMs would probably appear as having similar sets of relations vis-à-vis the national programme, linked to each other via a common apex. If we wanted to map out the relations of the diverse groups with the state, however, we would have to consider the linkages each group established with particular officials and, of course, would find innumerable differences, since officials themselves are dissimilar in their interests, resources and social persona, not to mention the multiplexity of ties they establish with UAIM

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7. However, other non-government organizations and independent groups in Mexico have promoted associations of UAIMs with a degree of success. The coalition of UAIMs in Nayarit, for example, was established by the members of the UELC.
members. Here again, a simplification is made by treating the state as an actor-network, as a whole (a black box, as Latour rightly describes it).

History, or the previous relations that came to form part of an actor-network, the transposition of elements from different domains that come into play, the alliances, loyalties and coalitions that are intrinsically tied to each of the entities that constitute it, and the emerging patterns of associations, are also simplified; they are restricted to interaction within strict boundaries.

Callon and Latour’s approach is streamlined to a single strand of relations, characterized by the interests of the prime-mover and therefore evolving within a single actor-world. The disadvantage of this is that when analyzing such a web of relations, we may miss out on the density of the network and the multiplexity of particular ties. As we have detailed in Chapter 4 and described above for the cases of the particular UAIMs, there are multiple transactions that overlap and shape each other and these are left out of the picture in Callon and Latour’s theoretical schema.

In the case we are analyzing, to define the programme (or a state officer) as the prime-mover is to look into only one of the triggering factors. A ‘system’ can be identified by tracing the steps of the initial impulse by the ‘prime mover’, and one could even describe different ‘systems’ operating at different points in time. But critical mechanisms of change are overlooked. The history of each of the groups does not start with the establishment of the UAIM since they are each constituted through previous relations and emerging associations which cannot be de-linked to the lifeworlds of each of the participating actors. These can be summarized, simplified, but not without losing important insights into processes of change.

Focusing on the interactions taking place between the different ‘strands’, however, implies a theoretical approach wherein action becomes the starting point for exploring the intricacies of manifold associations by means of detailed ethnographic observation. An actor-oriented and interface perspective allows for such a possibility, since it starts by recognizing that one is dealing with ‘multiple realities’, with potentially conflicting social and normative interests and diverse and fragmented bodies of knowledge (see Long 1992: 273-5).

The entry-point of an actor-oriented analysis is the social situation in its complexity, the diachronic interpenetration of life-worlds that take place in their everyday environment (including their pre-existing experiences, and present encounters which give way to different interpretations of what the future holds for them), and, to use Callon’s terminology, their interaction within and between different actor-worlds. Thus, as Long suggests:
'Interface analysis should not focus exclusively on the detailed study of patterns of social interaction that take place between actors directly involved in interface situations. It should also provide the means of identifying those groups, individuals and social categories excluded from particular interface negotiations ... the question of non-involvement should not be interpreted to imply that non-participants have no influence on the constitution and outcomes of interface encounters. On the contrary, they can, as 'backstage' actors, have a decisive influence on strategies and scenarios' (Long 1989: 240).

In this way, the 'simplifications' Callon alludes to are themselves objects of analysis. Opening up such 'black boxes' reveals, for example, not only how women are enroled into participating with the state, but the nature of such participation. It will focus on the tying together of different projects, understandings and life circumstances, and how these feed back into the state itself, into the processes of creation and transformation of meaning at their dynamic points of intersection and joint construction.

This perspective is especially useful when analyzing relations of gender and power. It highlights the ways in which the women themselves articulate new conceptualizations of their identities and roles in relation to their own everyday life experiences, and the ways in which their loyalties, emotions, commitments and restrictions are constantly entering into play. The intricacies of gender relations can be simplified away if one overlooks such critical issues.

Furthermore, an actor-oriented approach will bring into the picture crucial aspects of power relations that are often disregarded, such as vulnerable sites, lacunae and openings in which power permeates. A focus on life-worlds, social encounters and the interconnecting of actor-worlds can expose weak spots that emerge in the interaction, gaps that are 'filled' in the actors' endeavours to create space for themselves and their projects. In exploring power relations, one cannot underestimate these aspects; the ways in which they make the social construction of power necessary. Power is a desired outcome at the same time that it is restricted and repelled. This points to the fluid characteristics of power.

The secrets of power

Within specific arenas of interaction, the state was granted authority to speak on behalf of a great number of women. It was able to count thousands of local groups as embodied within it through the constitution of UAIMs. This suggests
that rural women empowered the state by entering its obligatory passage point - the UAIMs - and accepting roles for themselves within it. They allowed themselves to be enrolled by assuming definitions of their interests, of their identities and of their future, as well as definitions of the roles and nature of the state. Networks of power were established linking social and extra-somatic elements. By constituting itself as a voice for such elements, by creating a juridical model through which certain ties were 'fixed' and defining the meanings of these linkages, a degree of irreversibility was imprinted upon the associations that allowed the state to use them as a kind of 'enduring strength'.

And here - say Callon and Latour - lie the secrets of power. According to them, networks of power are constituted by enlisting bodies and durable materials. Strength is acquired by associating a large number of elements and dissociating as speedily as possible elements enrolled by other actors. 'Strength thus resides in the power to break off and to bind together', in the ability to:

'stabilize a particular state of power relations by associating the largest number of irreversibly linked elements. What do we mean by 'associate'? ... Two actors can only be made indissociable if they are one. For this their wills must become equivalent. He or she who holds the equivalences holds the secret of power. Through the interplay of equivalences, hitherto scattered elements can be incorporated into a whole, and thus help to stabilize other elements' (1981: 293).

The secrets of power, in this case, would lie in the ability to interesse and enrol people, objects and interpretations into irreversible linkages, and power would be measured by the number of such linkages. However, as we have seen throughout the previous chapters, power entails the reworking of symbolic associations, discourses, resources and emotions - to mention but a few of the elements entailed. A state official might try to convince a local UAIM into slighting the authority of the ejido, but will not succeed by the number of translations he or she uses, but rather by choosing the most relevant one, the one which is attributed weight according to the UAIM's priorities and immediate needs.

To recognize an actor as a power wielder, the weight attributed to a value, a linkage or an element and the circumstances under which the attribution of power takes place are crucial, and, although the number is not inconsequential, it does not necessarily define the degree of power. It is not only important to define how many associations can be made to justify power, but also to specify to which elements or relations it is associated. Moreover, in the process of translation, hierarchical patterns of organization, forms of association and
subordination are redefined and sanctioned. Hence the kinds irreversibly linked elements and enduring linkages must be analyzed. To discuss this issue further, let us review the arguments we have presented so far concerning the nature of power, its organization, localization and reproduction.
Chapter 7

WIELDING AND YIELDING: MATTERS OF THEORY AND METHOD

In our observations of social life in Ayuquila and of the new conditions generated by the introduction of the UAIM programme, we encounter a multiplicity of manifestations of power. Often, however, these are fragmented and erratic, and actors recurrently control only fleeting moments or bits of information in an attempt to 'gain edge'. Just as soon as one points a finger at power in specific situations, so one sees its reification, its messiness and its fluctuations. What, then, is the nature of power?

In this chapter, I review the arguments presented so far, comparing my findings with various theoretical approaches to power. I cannot hope to present here a conclusive picture of the notion, its character, its underpinnings and constitution. Power is one of the most debated concepts in social science, and agreement has not been reached as to its definition, bases, forms and nature.

The nature of power

Power is often conceptualized in terms of A getting B to do something B would not otherwise do, in which case A has power over B. It is also taken to include the possibility of attaining certain ends. That is, A has power to achieve his/her will and strategic intentions. This sounds alright, but as soon as we introduce people instead of A’s and B’s, we face problems.

In the previous chapters, multiple occasions were described where an individual or a group of actors coerced, persuaded or manipulated others in order to achieve certain ends. For example, the state passed a law whereby the ejidos were formally required to give up a piece of agricultural land for the UAIM initiatives whether they liked it or not; ejido authorities in different Mexican villages screened membership of UAIM groups; the group
of beekeepers found itself complying with the construction of the agroindustry and taking on specific roles for themselves; and Juana’s husband prohibited her from arriving home late (see Chapter 1). However, can we measure power in terms of the reaction to its exercise, to the significance of its effects? Can one determine the power of the state by measuring the degree to which such a law was obeyed, or the power of Juana’s husband by investigating whether she was ever late again? How can one judge the relevance of certain effects in order to identify a particular form of power? Maria (see Chapter 1), for example, was not invited to the beekeeping group. Can her exclusion be explained as the effects of the power wielded by the ejidatarios who only invited those close to their networks into the group? Or could one say that it was a manifestation of the power of the state that defined the UAIM projects as linked to ejido groups in order to control them more easily?

The effects are clear. Maria and many other people in her condition were excluded access to a project which was supposedly intended to benefit marginalized women! Not only were they not invited to the beekeeping group, but if they had made any effort to be included, they would probably have been rejected or at least made to feel completely out of place. This can be seen as an unintended and unforeseen consequence of social positioning, whereby a group or social class systematically enjoys a privileged position, and whether they deliberately oppress or affect others, or do it unconsciously, is quite irrelevant. The power of this social group is such that it can restrict and govern in some ways the desires of those in inferior positions.

Here the notions of dominant ideology and hegemony come to the fore. The very thoughts of those in subordinate positions are said to be shaped by the ideology of a dominant class, which determines their wants and prevents them from thwarting the control exercised by those in command. Gaventa, who studied quiescence and rebellion in the Appalachian Valley in the United States, argues that power:

'... influences, shapes or determines conceptions of the necessities, possibilities and strategies of challenge in situations of latent conflict... myths, language and symbols are shaped and manipulated in the power processes...' (1980: 15) and that 'in situations of inequality, the political response of the deprived group or class may be seen as a function of power relationships, such that power serves for the development and maintenance of the quiescence of the non-elite' (1980: 4).
Wielding and yielding

One is, however, inevitably brought back to the issue of intentions, which we have discussed briefly in the previous chapter. Intentions, as we have argued, cannot be categorically imputed. We could not really know whether state officials intended to convert women into entrepreneurs as they said, or if their only intention was to add more numbers to their reports. Furthermore, state officers did not seem to mind whether *avecindadas* like Maria were included or excluded from the UAIMs, and many UAIMs actually incorporated *avecindadas* into their groups. We are also faced with the difficult decision of defining what the 'real' wants and interests of A and B or of a subordinate class really are. As Barbalet (1987: 8, quoted in Clegg 1989: 102) beautifully expresses it:

'It if to be subject to power is to have one’s real interests contravened, and if real interests can be identified only outside of a subordination to power, then it is impossible ever to determine whether one is subjected to power, except when it ceases to matter.'

As we discussed in the previous chapter, interests are not necessarily the propelling force behind power, but are fixed and defined in the process. With their engagement in the beekeeping project, the women’s interests were defined differently in the different situations. Interests were not the 'prime movers' of their activities, rather the activities themselves imposed a definition of their interests. It was in the fulfilment of legal requirements to start the UAIM and acquire credit, in the application of new technology and in their involvement in markets that they became beekeepers, peasant women and - to a degree - women entrepreneurs with specific needs and subject to new obligations. Power relations were present in the process, not only in the form of direct coercion, but in the ways in which sets of interests were negotiated and articulated, in the ways in which identities were defined. Whilst state officers defined the identity and capacities of the beekeepers in accordance with their programme, the beekeepers also influenced the state and had a voice in defining its identity. They incorporated the UAIM into their own worlds, changed its meanings and constructed their own associations, to which the state had, to some extent, to comply with.

Exploring the social construction of meaning, then, reveals the messiness of power processes. A power wielder - be it a collective or individual actor - is also influenced by myths, language and symbols. Even high ranking officers cannot change the agendas entirely or avoid them completely. They can manoeuvre actions and manipulate particular discourses to influence understandings, but these discourses constrain the actions of the power
wielder him/herself. They subjugate officers, institutions, managers and social networks to a specific range of interpretations; they set agendas and formulate people's desires, wills and expectations.

Hence the issue of power cannot simply be conceptualized as one group, class or individual having 'won' over the other. We are speaking of complicated processes where the struggles are rarely simply between one actor who tries to carry out his or her will and others who are victims. Multiple negotiations are taking place, negotiations which entail at the same time much more and much less than carrying out a specific will.

They imply much more because the 'contenders' are doing and producing more than addressing each other in their struggles. Although they might find themselves in opposing or subordinate/dominant positions, these might well be unfortunate (or lucky) outcomes, side effects or unintended consequences of a particular articulation of interests, the result of multiple struggles oriented towards attaining diverse social spaces and to carrying out negotiations within different spheres. Thus the intention to frustrate or to enable might not exist, although in practice it has these effects. Hence, new orders that one identifies as being produced by power are not necessarily the result of carrying out a specific will.

On the other hand, the negotiations taking place involve less than their own wills because, as we have seen, wills are changed to adapt to the expectations of other actors and to the possibilities available within particular situations. Juana's husband was in a way complying with the identity she wanted him to adopt as a respectable husband and father of her children, and, in accordance with local values, a respectable man must not let himself be slighted by his wife. In the case of the state - which as a government organism was expected to establish policies in favour of the development of the poor and 'disadvantaged' - the passing of a law requiring that women's groups be allotted land could be seen as a recognition of the wills of the 'marginalized', however much it affected the ejidatarios. Hence, 'carrying out one's will' often includes the wills of other actors. This implies that the wants of the power wielder can be influenced and shaped by those in 'subordinate positions'. Power cannot be seen as one-sided. It is, as we have argued, of a fluid nature.

In this sense, our findings in Ayuquila are to a degree in tune with Foucault's idea of power which, as he explains, is to be seen in

'the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations,
transorms, strengthens or reverses them, as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them one from another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies’ (1980b: 92-93).

Building upon Foucault’s insights, power can be conceptualized as multidirectional relations within fields of force, as processes, linkages, disjunctions and strategies. This allows us to see its diverse faces as well as the compromises, negotiations and struggles. Power relations are recreated in the interaction and not totally imposed from one side. Power is not inherent to a position, a space or a person; it is not possessed by any of the actors, and it is not a zero-sum process whereby its exercise by one of the actors leaves the others lacking.

However, Foucault’s description of power still leaves many questions in the air. How are these 'forces' organized? How are patterns of domination reproduced? If, as Foucault suggests, force relations find support in each other, does this mean that they have some kind of agency? Are some forces larger, stronger or more influential than others? I will discuss these questions in the ensuing sections, drawing upon the analyses I have presented in the previous chapters concerning social relations involving the state, the UAIM programme and the people of Ayuquila.

The organization and localization of power relations

Foucault’s metaphor of chains and disjunctions that form new patterns of organization is pertinent. There is a sense in which one could say that power relations do support and reproduce each other; they do shape disjunctions and contradictions in order to build up strength and reverse the force of other relations, and in so doing they form patterns and chains which acquire diverse degrees of continuity, establishing what many social scientists refer to as systems of domination and social hegemonies.

However, I find the notions of 'hegemonies' and 'systems' problematic. Analytically hegemonies and systems become black boxes; they are often taken as explanations of the patterns social relations assume, of the power relations taking place, whilst at the same time they could be the outcomes of these processes - their outward manifestation - and as such cannot therefore
be taken to be the cause or underlying driving force of power relations. Social analysts often remain simply at the stage of identifying the structures that are said to explain power. In this way, structures are taken as the ultimate walls, the determining factors in power relations, and consequently the final point in analysis.

Throughout the previous chapters I have pointed to diverse patterns of relations that have constraining effects on social action in Ayuquila and the actions of members of the beekeeping project. I have described how kin networks, for example, shape the beekeeping group and contribute to the processes of strengthening some relations and isolating others. I have also described asymmetries in the village in terms of access to resources, to relevant networks and to work. It is here that power relations are embodied and shaped, but, as I have argued, social configurations, networks, and patterns of organization are flexible, and, as soon as they are fixed, they once again become the object of negotiation and struggle. Hence, it becomes important to analyze the ways in which power relations interlock, and how they are transformed and channelled.

In Chapter 2 I described how, in Ayuquila, social life takes place within domains of interaction. In specific domains, 'rules of the game' are negotiated and defined, authorities are recognized, and relations with institutions, other villagers and the environment are 'fixed'. Interaction within a domain entails distinct organizing practices, criteria with which to evaluate and shape others' behaviour and ways of securing resources. One finds a degree of homogeneity within domains due to similarities, for example, in the material conditions in which people live, their relations to the environment, their links to institutions and relevant outsiders, their associations with specific locales, their access to resources, or their beliefs. In the specific alliances that are forged and the strategies devised, we can see the activity of power relations 'immanent in the sphere in which they operate', to use Foucault's terms.

In certain respects, my use of the notion of domain is analogous to Bourdieu's concept of fields. Fields, he says, are historically constituted areas of activity, relatively autonomous spaces with their own specific institutions and laws of functioning. Interests are at once a condition of the functioning of a field (in so far as it is what gets people moving, what makes them get together, compete and struggle with each other) and a product of the way the field functions (Bourdieu 1990: 87-91).

'The perpetual motion which runs through the field does not stem from some motionless prime mover but from the struggle itself,
wielding and yielding

which is produced by the structures of the field and in turn reproduces its structures, i.e. its hierarchies' (Bourdieu 1981: 307).

However, Bourdieu uses fields in a very broad sense. He speaks of economic, political and religious fields, the scientific field, the intellectual field and the field of power. The notion of domain, as I see it, is more concrete. It implies a quite precise location in time and space, it entails linkages to institutions, and it involves specific actors who engage in particular struggles. Furthermore, Bourdieu describes a field as having a different degree of autonomy according to its capability to impose 'its own norms on both the production and the consumption of its [cultural or symbolic] products' (Bourdieu 1984: 3). Hence, the scientific field has, for example, more autonomy than the legal field.

Interaction within a domain, on the other hand, entails specific links to institutions, resources, relevant outsiders, and to diverse projects. It is within these areas of social life that power networks are created and strategies are repressed, channelled or isolated. Within domains of interaction practices of control and authority are given form and legitimated and normative frames are transformed in accordance with shared understandings. But because we are speaking of interaction, of the negotiation and struggle between different 'forces', domains are not isolated from other domains. They must not be seen as autonomous fields of social action. Actors pull with them codes and interpretations pertaining to other domains relative to their lifeworlds and revalorize them within a specific domain.

Within the domain of the beekeeping project, the women linked themselves to the state in a unique way. Global policies and interpretations concerning a series of issues such as the roles of women, the workings of market and the very definition of the state were situated, localized and reinterpreted within the domain of the project. State officials were allowed an important say as long as they kept to certain 'local' (but often revalorized) rules of the game. Although there were great differences among the women themselves, respect for crucial values was enforced. Certain alliances were allowed - the group listened to the advice of the head of the ejido, but would contest the views of Rosa's husband, for example. Others were discouraged - Mercedes and Rosa were finally excluded from the group. Forms of authority were recognized within this domain - e.g. the influence of Petra to decide on the strategies the group was to follow - which would be unacknowledged in other domains: thus Sara would not take Petra's advice at home. Adapting to new technology influenced internal leadership
and relations with BANRURAL and the local cooperative introduced new ideas and new forms of organization and leadership.

To take another example, in the Martínez family domain, linkages to outside networks were coloured by relations established with the political networks of García Barragán. It was not that all of the linkages they established were associated with this General, maybe not even the most important ones, but their history as a family was registered as including such linkages, and thus marked their identity vis-à-vis specific audiences. Members of the family who participated in the ejido formed solidarity clusters with each other vis-à-vis the Gomez-Romero and other family clusters. Older male members of the family were considered knowledgeable on political issues and were often consulted by the Martínez beekeepers. Land ownership, as we have seen, held the family together in many ways. Plots of land belonging to the family incorporated histories, specific meanings for family members, who related them to special events such as the way Sara’s father was killed whilst irrigating. Conflicts involving one of the members, as we have seen, often consolidated the links between them.

I have described how the life experiences of the different actors entered into the beekeeping group and shaped its development, how village networks crossed the group, and how the relations of the beekeepers with the state did not originate within the domain of the project, but were built upon previous bonds and experiences of the women, their husbands and their kin. The history of struggle for land (and the links this entailed with the state) was present, although it was reinterpreted in different ways in the various moments of encounter.

Mechanisms of exclusion and neglect of other people and social groups are also justified and legitimated within a domain. The beekeepers hardly recognized the existence of Maria: associating with her jeopardized their personal projects and interfered with loyalties to kin and friends. It is in relation to these kinds of issues that the cross-cutting of domains is evident, where kin and friendship solidarity networks influence the actions of the group. Maria did not fit into the beekeeping group and she did not even conceive of the idea of entering it. In the same way as Rosa, her involvement in day labouring for the tomato companies restrained her possibility to do so - on the one hand, because she did not have time left to engage in an enterprise that did not provide immediate profits, and on the other, because this activity reinforced her lower class status, which she confirmed defiantly by accepting the identity as a dispossessed person and classifying the beekeepers as señoronas with whom she would not even
consider socializing. Such social positioning also restricted her access to information concerning her legal rights and limited her aspirations.

Hence the predominance of certain interpretations, routines and regimes of control is couched in norms and values accepted and reproduced within specific domains. Voices are muffled, subjects disqualified and identities fixed in order to guarantee the continuity of such regimes, routines and interpretations. The processes by which this takes place entail the actions of ‘gatekeepers’ within domains and specific links to material resources which I will discuss in further sections of this chapter. They also entail shared understandings and ways in which criteria to judge behaviour, rank and disqualify particular people and fix identities are framed. Let us now turn to this issue.

Reproduction of power relations and domination

There is considerable theoretical debate as to the ways in which social processes take place in the reproduction of power relations and formation of patterns of domination. Habermas, for example, argues the importance of culture as a stock of knowledge that colonizes the lifeworld, whilst Bourdieu acknowledges the action of agents in the process, but explains that these are structured by their habitus. Foucault, in turn, speaks of disciplinary practices which regulate the mind and order emotions. Let me now discuss these three theoretical perspectives in the light of my empirical findings.

In Chapter 1, I described how Carola, Juana and Maria adapt their behaviour in many ways to specific 'scripts'. They accept male dominance discursively and conform to particular representations of their nature as females. In Chapter 2, we saw how women in Ayuquila, although participating in economic activities in a positive way, often would not recognize the income they generated as important. We also showed how they 'put themselves down' and confirmed generalized views on men as bread winners and power wielders. In Chapter 3, I described how the use of labels such as libertinas and mandilones monitored the behaviour of men and women and restrained the scope of their activities to what was considered good 'respectable' conduct. The boundaries they set on their projects and activities were thus constrained by others’ perceptions of their roles as women and of how they stood vis-à-vis others. Labelling was used in the establishment of categories, classifications and ranks and in the legitimation of authorities which grounded and shaped power.
That knowledge was inextricably linked to power processes is clear, but how are knowledge frames and processes reproduced? Let us first consider what Habermas has to say.

**The colonization of the lifeworld**

According to Habermas, social action and consciousness are set within the 'context-forming horizon' of a 'storage of knowledge that is passed from one generation to the next' (Pusey 1987: 58-9). This stock of knowledge is constituted by culture, from which 'participants in communication supply themselves with interpretations as they come to an understanding of something in the world'. These participants in communication regulate their memberships in social groups through legitimate orders of society thereby securing solidarity. The subject is capable of speaking and acting through his/her personality, through 'competences... that put him in a position to take part in processes of reaching understanding and thereby to assert his own identity' (Habermas 1987: 138).

Thus, action is constrained within the lifeworld, the 'horizon within which communicative actions are always already moving', the 'background consensus of everyday life' (Habermas 1987: 119).

'As we grub our way down through the conscious layers of the lifeworld our every effort at self-understanding sooner or later comes up against its unyielding structural constraints that coordinate many of our social actions without our knowledge and 'behind our backs' from within those reaches of the lifeworld that lie beyond the threshold of consciousness' (Pusey 1987: 58-9 on Habermas' theory).

Habermas, then, views the lifeworld as a cultural backdrop, a scenery which contextualizes and determines everyday life. How people make civilization, how they eat, talk, live, have fun and fight, how they create differences, relate to each other and set boundaries is perceived as governed by cultural values and social norms. The lifeworld has been colonized by this background consensus, by systems which lie beyond people's reach:

'When stripped of their ideological veils, the imperatives of autonomous subsystems make their way into the lifeworld from the outside - like colonial masters coming into a tribal society - and force a process of assimilation upon it. The diffused perspectives of
the local culture cannot be sufficiently coordinated to permit the play of the metropolis and the world market to be grasped from the periphery' (Habermas 1987: 355).

Hence, following Habermas, one can conclude that the beekeepers' identity as women, their activities and roles, were determined in many ways by the stock of knowledge which they accepted without realizing it. However, the issue is more complicated. Shared values and moral claims certainly limit a person's actions; an underlying nexus of social meanings and organization influence and constrain everyday activities 'behind our backs', and taking on (or imposing) an identity involves an acceptance of a series of values and ratings which situate the person with respect to others and the environment. The use of notions such as libertina, mandilon, abejera, 'respectable' woman and housewife, contributed to shape social relations. But we have seen how cultural values, norms and interpretations are not only in the background; they are constructed by people, forged through specific practices. Notions such as libertina and abejera were reconceptualized and shaped through social relations. Indeed the validity of such categories and classifications is itself constantly negotiated. Culture is not there as a stock from which to draw, but is constantly recreated through overlapping and conflicting discourses.

The notion of colonization of the lifeworld hides the very processes that make for the reproduction of such 'colonizers'. It also misplaces power, by attributing it to an imaginary force which lies outside the lifeworld.

_Habitus_

These problems are more appropriately approached by Bourdieu, who speaks of creative, active subjects with inventive capacity, social agents in their roles as 'practical operators of the construction of objects' (1990: 13). The actions of agents are, however, structured by their habitus, which he describes as:

'the systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures... objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends... collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor.... enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations..' (1977: 72).
These systems of dispositions are acquired through a relationship to a certain field. It is within fields that different kinds of common sense and commonplace ideas are constructed. Fields are, according to Bourdieu, structures which are in turn structured by the

'actions and reactions of agents who, short of opting out of the game and falling into oblivion, have no choice but to struggle to keep up or improve their position in the field, i.e. to conserve or increase the specific capital which is only created within the field. In so doing, each one helps to subject all the others to the often intolerable constraints arising from the competition. In short, no one can take advantage of the game, not even those who dominate it without being taken up and taken in by it.'

'Thus, a 'state' which has become the symbol of absolutism and which, in the eyes of the absolute monarch himself who has most interest in this representation, offers the appearance of an apparatus, in fact conceals a field of struggles in which the holder of 'absolute power' must himself participate, at least sufficiently to maintain the divisions and tensions, i.e. the field itself, and to mobilize the energy generated by the balance of tensions.' (Bourdieu 1981: 307-8).

In this way, fields are the sites where meanings and interpretations are debated and defined through *habitus*, which functions, on the practical level, as 'categories of perception and assessment'. It includes 'classificatory principles as well as being the organizing principles of action' (Bourdieu 1990: 13). Bourdieu uses the concepts of doxa, orthodoxy and heterodoxy to explain the active interrelation between structuring processes and the actions of agents. Orthodoxy discours depicts the official way of speaking and thinking about the world, imposing the 'proper' opinion, the 'right' beliefs which are contested by heterodox discourse - that is, opposing views, the 'blasphemies'. The doxa is the universe of the undiscussed, the undisputed silent tradition. It is 'what goes without saying because it comes without saying' and what 'cannot be said'. Heterodoxy is constrained by doxa because of its unquestioned nature (Bourdieu 1977: 167-170; Risseeuw 1988: 176-178). In order to acquire prominence, heterodoxy would need to accumulate symbolic capital and reinterpret the 'frozen, objectified past' which is manifested in people's positions within the different fields.
Bourdieu’s approach is an interesting one because it allows for an understanding of structure as embodied in the everyday activities of agents. Hence, dispositions which have been socially constructed also generate social action. However, we are left with the need to explore how discourses are made official, and how matters are kept silent. I find the notion of accumulation of symbolic capital unsuitable because of its reference to a storage of knowledge and possession. The differentiation between types of discourses is also problematic. As we have seen in our analysis of everyday life in Ayuquila, discourses are appropriated and resignified by actors within concrete situations, and ‘official discourses’ are adapted and changed. Furthermore, there are undiscussed and silent matters in one domain that can be openly discussed in another. Let us turn to Foucault’s views on the matter.

**Discursive practices**

Foucault rightly points out that:

‘There is not, on the one side, a discourse of power, and opposite it another discourse that runs counter to it. Discourses are tactical elements of blocks operating in the field of force relations; there can run different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy; they can, on the contrary, circulate without changing their form from one strategy to another, opposing strategy’ (Foucault 1980b: 101-2).

Hence, discourses are not coherent units of speech, behaviour or norms; they cross each other, containing incongruities and discrepancies. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, discourse is constituted through social interaction, through processes of interlocking and segregation of voices, where meanings and interpretations are attributed and disowned, infractions are defined and negotiated, and standards are reconciled.

Discourse is central to Foucault’s approach to power. He argues that particular understandings of the way in which the world is organized and should be organized, images of self and other, of people’s roles and capacities, and associations with the environment help reproduce and maintain power relations and fix asymmetries. This takes place, according to him, in the:
'... production of effective instruments for the formation and accumulation of knowledge - methods of observation, techniques of registration, procedures for investigation and research, apparatuses of control. All this means that power, when it is exercised through these subtle mechanisms, cannot but evolve, organize and put into circulation a knowledge, or rather apparatuses of knowledge, which are not ideological constructs' (1980a: 102).

Hence Foucault directs our attention to the disciplinary forms of power, to the discursive practices through which individuals are defined, assessed and supervised. As I have mentioned above, power, in Foucault’s view, entails a multiplicity of force relations, the processes through which they are transformed, the support which such relations find in each other, and the strategies in which they take effect. Hence, power is not localized in institutions or sovereigns, but takes form through the use of strategies, tactics and techniques. This points to power in its 'capillary' forms of existence, to the ways in which it regulates the mind and orders emotions.

'This reign of opinion... represents a mode of operation through which power will be exercised by virtue of the mere fact of things being known and people seen in a sort of immediate, collective and anonymous gaze... an inspecting gaze, a gaze in which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself' (Foucault 1980a: 154-155).

Discursive practices entail regulations, specific codings which rank and stratify. They describe gender relations in particular ways. They are embedded in social relations and activities but are largely taken for granted. Roles, obligations and capacities are defined and identities confirmed or changed.

Discursive practices, then, embody representations of the past and the present as well as anticipations of the future. We have seen the importance of such interpretations of history in our accounts of Ayuquila: rights to land were legitimated through demarcation of who had suffered in struggles for it, and evaluations of the adequacy of particular policies were measured against accounts of what these had been in the past. Within particular domains 'the correct' interpretation of history was negotiated in order to evaluate present experiences and future expectations. Hence, definitions of what the future
Wielding and yielding

held in store for the actors and institutions were crucial pieces of knowledge to be used in the establishment or continuation of forms of domination.

But in avoiding a focus on sovereigns and institutions, Foucault appears to give life and attribute agency to force relations, which 'organize and support each other, forming systems and chains' and which, furthermore, constitute the individuals. As he puts it,

'The individual, that is, is not the vis-à-vis of power; it is, I believe, one of its prime effects. The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle' (Foucault 1980a: 98).

Viewing individuals or in this case 'subjects', as effects of power relations is interesting because it points to the social construction of the very category of a person, who does not exist as such independently of social relations. Unfortunately, in Foucault's conceptualization, social relations are portrayed as systems and chains and actors appear to be subsumed within them. The scope of the individual (or collective) actor to think and act is limited to the action of forces which impinge upon and - I cannot avoid here a reference to Habermas' notions - colonize their lifeworlds.

Agency and the creation and mobilization of power relations

In Chapter 3, I showed how the predominance of 'official' interpretations is not to be taken for granted. Morally-correct behaviour, accepted roles or 'proper' identities cannot have impact unless internalized and reworked by the actors. Discourses were drawn upon in the forging of the project to encourage or block certain modes of women's action, but the beekeepers amended and rectified labels and struggled to protect and sustain their own definitions of 'reality', of their interests and of their moral standards.

In Chapter 5, I described the dynamic ways in which the ejidatarios and the beekeepers defined and defended their specific interests within a particular social encounter. Power brokers, I suggested, drew upon shared ideas, emotions and alliances to win the struggles over definitions and to enrol others in their strategies. Whilst operating as 'linkage people' between domains, they often acted as 'keepers' within them. To carry out their strategies successfully, they needed to take into account others' points of view, sentiments and beliefs; they needed to 'manage' these perceptions to
enrol them, if possible, in their strategies. Thus they reproduced and legitimated discourses and associations whilst introducing elements of change. Interpretations of the agrarian law and of official statements were negotiated in the process, as was the identity of the group of women and of the state itself. We are here speaking of the reworking of social relations by actors who 'deal, organizationally and cognitively, with problematic situations and accommodate themselves to others' interests and designs for living' (Long 1989: 222).

This points to the importance of agency in social life, and to how force relations do not have a life of their own but are propelled by actors, who have different ways of dealing with and accommodating to diverse scenarios. Giddens argues that the formation of social structures which constrain and enable behaviour cannot be comprehended without acknowledging human agency:

'In following the routines of my day-to-day life I help reproduce social institutions that I played no part in bringing into being. They are more than merely the environment of my action since... they enter constitutively into what it is I do as an agent. Similarly, my actions constitute and reconstitute the institutional conditions of actions of others, just as their actions do mine... My activities are thus embedded within, and are constitutive elements of, structured properties of institutions stretching well beyond myself in time and space' (Giddens 1987: 11).

Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* also helps to elucidate the dynamic interrelation between people's actions and the constraints of their social world, pointing out how, in competition and struggles to maintain social positions within a field, people create rules of the game and subject each other to them. However, in analyzing the ways in which 'actions constitute and reconstitute institutional conditions of actions of others' and in which people subject each other to rules of the game, it is important to conceptualize agency as socially constructed. Let me explain.

In Chapter 5, I described my participation in the *ejido* assembly. My presence influenced the positions the different *ejidatarios* manifested in favour of giving another plot of land to the beekeepers for the construction of their agroindustry, whilst my intention was to appear neutral. In fact, I privately thought it might not be such a good idea to construct such a big and costly building! I clearly had no intention of exercising power; in fact, my aims were quite the opposite. However, the meanings attributed to my roles
and capacities and the other social worlds I was representing in the eyes of ejidatarios encouraged them to place me in a system of social classification in which my opinion was of importance to them. Some of the ejidatarios did not want to appear as 'backward' or against the women in front of me, and hence they accommodated their statements to what they considered to be my position. As I mentioned, I was credited with power and people reacted to such an endowment and to assumptions as to my position.

Through similar processes, agency and power are attributed to social categories based on class, ethnic status or gender; to resources such as capital or land and to institutions such as the state. In Chapter 6, I suggested that the power of the state is socially constructed. We credit this abstract constituency we call the state with power and respond accordingly. This might have little to do with the actual intelligence, knowledgeability or capacity to act of the particular subject of agency, but it is important in delimiting the effects it can have on others. Clegg, for example, mentions the agency exercised by the complex, highly coupled, computer decision-making systems introduced by the Securities Industry Automation Corporation to Wall Street trading, and how some analysts regard these as a contributory factor to the stock market crash of 1987 (Clegg 1989: 200).

Strategies and force relations are treated as agents in Foucault's analysis in the same way that inflation in economic models is credited with being capable of making a difference to social and economic life and a religious object is seen as inflicting consequences on the behaviour of believers. Banks, corporations, kings and priests are attributed qualities that 'bounce back' on the actions of people. Although I would hesitate to conceptualize them 'a priori' as actors (indeed I object to identifying force relations as actors within social situations), it is clear that there is some kind of socially attributed agency attached. However, this 'mode' of agency is different from that of the power brokers I have described above, which refers to the acts of individuals in dealing with the world around them.

These two modes of agency often entail each other; they are not mutually exclusive. Nonetheless, for the purpose of my analysis, it is convenient to single them out, pointing to the differences between the acts of individuals and the capacity to act which others grant them. Both modes can manifest themselves in diverse ways: Inden (1990: 23), for example, establishes the difference between agents and 'patients'. Agency, he says, is the:

'realized capacity of people to act effectively upon their world and not only to know about or give personal or intersubjective
significance to it. That capacity is the power of people to act purposively and reflectively, in more or less complex interrelationships with one another, to iterate and remake the world in which they live, in circumstances where they may consider different courses of action possible and desirable, though not necessarily from the same point of view.'

But he also argues that:

'People do not act only as agents. They also have the capacity to act as 'instruments' of other agents, and to be 'patients', to be the recipients of the acts of others' (1990: 23).

Both the notion of agents and that of patients entail socially attributed agency. However, patients do not act, or trigger action, but can nonetheless have effects on others, often due to their attributed value, their social positions, statuses and ranks. Ideas of 'personhood', as Strathern explains for the case of human actors, influence the ways in which people react towards one another.

'The very way in which rank, sexuality or prestige are attached to persons simultaneously speaks to their effects on other persons... Symbolism is involved in the manner in which assets, attributes and properties of all kinds are construed to be attached to individuals and thus make them persons 'with' power' (Strathern 1985: 77).

This points to negotiations over social identities, to definitions of roles and attributes, as I described in Chapter 3. But one can extend the argument to explore how agency can be bestowed on categories, objects, people and institutions. Strathern points out that:

'An agent not only defines a goal but its context, and being able to convince another of the context in which interaction is taking place is tantamount to a structuring of value or power' (1985: 64).

Hence, the agency of an actor can be 'stretched' out to incorporate the agentive or patientive actions of others. This argument is important in coming to grips with broader processes of power, namely those identified as pertaining to the macro sphere.
Power that controls nations and power that controls the most hidden thoughts and desires

In exploring power in social relations one encounters differences in scope, levels and degrees. Certainly the degree of power I could wield during the *ejido* assembly could not compare with the power of the state, or the power of the *ejido* itself taken as an institution which could more or less decide on issues as crucial as land tenure. We have shown that a differentiation of levels by resorting to structural differences is inadequate, because it overlooks the dynamic transformations and struggles that constitute organizations, patterns of interaction and knowledge frames. We have rejected Foucault's version of subjectless strategies and systems, although we have agreed that power points us to the mobilization and enactment of 'force relations' that reach the very grain of individuals and shape desires, thoughts and aspirations. But can one speak of different degrees of power embedded in such forces? How can one differentiate between power that controls nations and power that only affects individual actions?

This leads us to the issue of micro and macro levels of power. In Chapter 6, I drew upon Callon and Latour's translation model to point to the ways in which macro processes are constructed and intertwined with micro-processes. Although, as I stressed, there are methodological problems entailed in focusing on a single strand or chain of social relations, their translation model provides useful tools for analyzing dissimilar levels in power relations without assuming beforehand a pre-eminence of one of the actors and without attributing a different nature to the diverse power relations entailed.

Callon and Latour use the concept of 'macro-actors' to identify actors who have successfully translated others' wills into a single will for which they speak. This is achieved, according to their view, through processes of *intéressement* and enrolment, whereby not only other actors, but more 'durable' materials are enlisted in networks. Hence, actors can best be considered as networks. An actor, they explain,

'bends space around itself, makes other elements dependent upon itself and translates their will into a language of its own. An actor makes changes in the set of elements and concepts habitually used to describe the social and the natural worlds. By stating what belongs to the past, and of what the future consists, by defining what comes before and what comes after, by building up balance sheets, by drawing chronologies, it imposes its own space and time. It defines
space and its organization, sizes and their measures, values and standards, the stakes and rules of the game - the very existence of the game itself. Or else it allows another, more powerful than itself, to lay them down’ (1981: 286).

The process of translation refers us to the ways in which agents can act upon the world around them, extending or 'stamping' his/her agency on other people, objects or symbols by enrolling them in networks of power (Clegg 1989: 204). These networks entail a degree of control by an actor or a group of actors, who associate and dissociate elements into the actor-network. The notion of networks of power is a strong one. It allows for both large and small scope in terms of the impact of specific actions, depending upon the number of elements that can be enlisted and the processes that are triggered. Discourses and interpretations can thus become 'dominant' when they are enroled in a specific strategy and are instrumental in constraining or defining the behaviour of a large number of people or social groups. Hence force relations are strengthened by multiple translations.

Callon and Latour's model of translation also implies the 'socially ascribed' mode of agency, that is, that which is attributed to an object, a person or a category and to which others react in specific ways. Here power wielders' control is not to be taken for granted, because, as Latour suggests:

'No matter how much power one appears to accumulate, it is always necessary to obtain it from the others who are doing the action...’

Hence the need for enrolment, where actors define other's identities - identities which entail features such as rank, status and authority vis-à-vis their own. But, as I have stressed above, any single actor can only en-à-vis elements of discourses and representations. There are many processes of translation and enrolment that constantly cross-cut and influence each other.

In Chapter 4 we saw how networks provide coordinating mechanisms for the allocation of resources and for the circulation of meaning but are not all-encompassing. Whilst they entail some kind of governing coalitions that regulate behaviour, as such they do not control. Actors draw upon networks and rework them in response to their immediate needs, resignifying them through personal experiences, and using them whenever possible to achieve control. Networks, as we have seen, have no life but through the organizing practices of the lifeworlds of their members.
Throughout the chapters, I have made reference to several 'collective actors' that can be seen as actor-networks. The *ejido*, the beekeeping group, the Gomez-Romero family, the state, and the UAIM programme, for example, constitute tightly knit networks which enrol, enlist, define and exclude other persona, interpretations and behaviour. Within particular social situations, they can be conceptualized as actors. I have, however, portrayed them mostly as domains because this highlights the nature of their social ties, and the struggles over definitions and interpretations that take place within them. It also brings out the interlocking of projects which glues actors together, and shows how they are enroled within other networks, how others' representations of them allow or restrict their space for action. Domains can wield power within a macro perspective, but they themselves are shifting terrains for power because of the social relations acting within them. The processes through which such power relations are mediated, transformed and channelled, the unintended but also socially constructed situations and conditions which fashion and inhibit its production and propagation, need to be taken into account in the analysis.

In sociological analysis, where - as Callon and Latour also acknowledge - actors and identities are defined as well, we often simplify the sets of struggles and relations which forge and disintegrate domains (or actor-networks). Although such simplification is impossible to avoid in social theory - especially when coming to grips with phenomena we identify as macro - and is common practice in everyday life, our analysis can be seriously flawed if a more complex portrayal of such social constructions is not considered. This points to the principal weakness of Callon and Latour's approach, which, as I have pointed out, focuses on a single strand or chain of social relations.

The quality of certain power relations as 'macro' then can only be seen as an effect, and not as a cause. This leaves us with a more 'vulnerable' version of macro relations, albeit a more dynamic one.

**Wielding and yielding: an actor-oriented approach**

In the present study, I have explored different aspects of an actor-oriented methodology to reach an understanding of power and social action. This has entailed an analysis of the organizing practices and lifeworlds of actors, their interpretations and the social constraints they encounter. A central concern has been to come to grips with the complex world of everyday life whereby
'external' forces do not determine social action, but are created, internalized and transformed within interactive situations.

Methodological tools entailed in an actor-oriented perspective include the study of life histories, genealogies and networks which provide a systematic way of exploring the livelihoods of actors, their social relations and their patterns of organization. They afford frameworks for understanding and ordering the often chaotic information one is exposed to. Moreover, these techniques also push the researcher into taking account of the cross-cutting of relations and patterns, and of the frequently puzzling associations that are forged in interaction. These aspects are also highlighted by situational analysis and by focusing on interface situations which reveal critical sites of social action, showing how actions are shaped in communication with others, and highlighting the essentially dynamic and transformative nature of social encounters.

An actor-oriented approach, on the other hand, cannot be reduced to methods and techniques. It also entails the elucidation and identification of crucial analytical concepts. The notion of lifeworld, central to this approach, is conceptualized as actively created and transformed, not as a background resource as it is often envisaged by many social scientists. The same is true for networks and identity which are socially constructed and constantly changing. These concepts, as we have seen, are of significance in the analysis of power. Agency and interface are also fundamental concepts in an actor-oriented perspective. They encourage the examination of discontinuities, transformations, changing patterns and diversity in social action.

One of the advantages of an actor-oriented approach, I found, is that because the focus is on social actors, their lifeworlds and their interpretations, the contribution of informants’ understandings permeate the research process. The story of the beekeepers, as I have portrayed it, contains many of the interpretations of the actors themselves. For example, the negotiations taking place between the people of Ayuquila and myself as ethnographer are quite clear in the survey I carried out. As a researcher, I was interested in acquiring a more global perspective of the village, in delineating the influence of the group and the relations that were forged in a broader perspective. I wanted to know how many households there were, how they were organized, how resources were allocated and what their sources of income were. These would provide indications of the taken-for-granted aspects of their lifeworlds, of their more external constraints. However, the people contributed their own meanings to such information and coloured my own interpretation of it.
In the interface between researcher and 'informants' power, control and authority are also present, and as de Vries (1992) rightly points out, multiple negotiations take place wherein enrolment is a mutual process. Nevertheless, the final text is a reworking of ideas by the researcher which might not be recognized by the actors entailed. Latour and Callon (1981) describe this process as the construction of a network by the sociologist, who enrols and enlists elements to his or her own ends.

Having made this methodological and theoretical choice, my analysis of power was weighted towards a dynamic conception of its nature and operation. Hence, I portrayed power as of a fluid quality, as embedded in social relations, in strategies, discourses and forms of organization. Power is not inherent to institutions, actors or social positions, but is socially constructed. It is wielded through complex processes which involve diverse forms of agency, whether we are speaking of power as being wielded or as a capacity to wield.

However, my methodological and theoretical choice was biased by my concern within the field of development. It is not power per se that became my focus of interest, but subordination to it and, of course, the possibilities of undermining and resisting such subordination. The implications of my theoretical, methodological and empirical arguments about development issues are dealt with more fully in the ensuing chapter, but first let me clarify a few points with respect to subordination, resistance and the wielding of power.

I have defined power as force relations and strategies that entail processes of enrolment and intentional or unintentional associations and dissociations. The power wielder has to rely on the actions of others who acknowledge its existence. These actions generally entail subordination, compliance or resistance. Subordination, compliance and resistance are often intertwined and do not exclude each other, but they constitute the actions that sustain power relations.

Let me first discuss the issue of resistance. When speaking of force relations, we are not identifying power as residing in one of the parties involved. Rather the notion invokes images of negotiation and confrontation, of forces in different directions whether they be top-down, horizontal or bottom-up. The concept of resistance, however, already implies an identification of a weaker force which is counteracting a stronger one and is unwilling to yield to it. Resistance is the reason for the existence of power, as Foucault (1980a) explains. There is no need to exercise power if there is not a resisting force to be overcome by it. But we have argued that power wielders should not be defined a priori, and hence resistance cannot be
identified as such beforehand. Workers’ unions, for example, are commonly described as involved in resistance to bosses or managers, whilst in concrete situations they can actually be conceived of as power wielders who control and impose conditions on their own employers.

Compliance generally entails an acceptance to become the vehicle of others’ agency, thus strengthening the network of power. But one can be an unknowing vehicle of power by forming part of such a network without resisting or subordinating, or by agreeing to certain representations which are enroled in its exercise, thus granting credibility and effectiveness to the associations which constitute it. Compliance contributes crucial support to power networks and is often indirectly provided.

Compliance, as well as subordination, not only sustains the wielding of power, but also the capacity to wield power. Such capacity is not a storage of power as social scientists frequently describe it, but is underpinned by a social recognition of ranks, authority and superiority, where the action falls on those who acknowledge an actor as 'powerful’ or who are willing (or obliged by the social circumstances, the intersection of domains, etc.) to submit to what they consider are its designs. Hence, the yielding of power here resides in the social acknowledgement of it; it does not necessarily entail subordination and can be independent of the will or intentions of the potential wielder.

Subordination, on the one hand, indicates the action of ‘patients’, of being the vehicle of others’ agency. It allows power to be wielded by yielding, by acceding to the wishes of the other, thus relinquishing a possible social capacity or status to acknowledge a stronger, better or more appropriate bearer. On the other hand, such yielding can emanate, not from the wishes of others, but from the 'subordinate’ actors’ own agency. It nevertheless speaks of a social positioning whereby the strength of a force relation is recognized and assumed, though, as we mentioned in Chapter 1, subordination can constitute a strategic stance in social relations. Subordination, then, does not imply a zero-sum process whereby those who yield are necessarily left powerless. If power is fluid and constantly negotiated, those wielding power also need to subordinate themselves to discourses, social beliefs and the wills of others. Thus, subordination cannot be exclusively attributed to the lower strata of society, to marginalized groups, or to the 'losers’. In a word, power relations also necessitate the yielding of power by the power wielder.
Chapter 8

POWER MISCONSTRUED: A PROBLEM IN DEVELOPMENT THINKING AND PRACTICE

To conclude, I return to the issues raised in the Introduction concerning the practice of development intervention. As I pointed out, the theoretical underpinnings of such practice are often poor and simplistic and there is a need to revise many of the concepts informing development undertakings - not least of which is power. Power is entailed in struggles to increase the claim-making capacity of people (in our case rural women), in the constitution of political organizations that strive to counter some sort of domination, in the development of economic enterprises and in attempts to stimulate local self-help processes. And it is not absent in the process of intervention and research itself. But how do we analyze these processes in our work as development workers, planners and researchers? What notions of power do we draw upon to deal with gender issues in the field?

Recent trends in rural development studies concerned with practice espouse 'empowerment' as a central orientating concept. I was introduced to this notion upon my arrival in Europe in 1989. To me, it conjured up an image of injecting power into local 'powerless' populations. I could find no translation for this word in Spanish. In the Latin American development scenario we use concepts such as \textit{poder popular} (‘power of the people’) to address the ways in which those considered marginal can strengthen their organization and increase their claim-making capacity, or \textit{potenciar} (potentiate, boosting their ability to act) when speaking of the ways in which ‘outsiders’ help locals to reinforce their own processes of development.

I later realized that the notion of empowerment is not meant to entail that the subjects of development are completely ‘powerless’ - although this idea is frequently conveyed - but, like our Latin American conceptualization, stresses how groups or individuals can acquire a capacity to exercise power via external help, thus enabling them to act upon their own circumstances. Furthermore, an ‘empowerment’ perspective constitutes a
great stride as compared with other approaches to development - which view aid as a transfer of resources, knowledge and institutional arrangements. It promotes a self-help perspective whereby the intervenor is only a catalyst who triggers processes of change; and emphasises the need to 'listen to the people' and encourage their participation in the process of change (Salmen 1987; Chambers 1983). Hence, an empowerment perspective addresses the gap between development professionals and beneficiaries, pointing to the inadequate understanding of local processes by project staff and researchers. Within this perspective, rural appraisals, research and training are carried out in a 'participatory' way.

However, the concept of empowerment is not without problems, especially where gender is concerned. Many issues remain unresolved, such as what is precisely understood by 'participation', how the interests of the beneficiaries can be defined in order to assist them in helping themselves, and who 'the object of empowerment' is as compared to who it is intended to be. Guijt (1994: 50) for example, makes the following comments with respect to training in Participatory Rural Appraisal:

'For PRA training which focuses on rural development and agriculture, Phase I commonly deals with concepts such as livelihoods, farming systems, sustainability and participation. Yet rarely is the question of whose livelihood, whose farming system, whose perception of sustainability, and who participates, discussed sufficiently. Many trainers mention once or twice that "of course it is important to remember that not all people think the same". But the issue of social differences based on gender is rarely explored with rigor throughout the training process.'

In formulating the question of who participates, she explains that those who attend training sessions and PRA meetings often are those who expect to gain most from the assistance of 'outsiders'. In the same way, questions can be extended to ask who is empowered. As we argued in Chapter 6, the state can be empowered by the participation of women - as can PRA trainers - and this issue is not tackled in the development literature. All this implies that the unintended consequences brought about by 'expert' intervention are often overlooked (see Arce 1993 and Villarreal 1992), as I discuss below.

Although the notion of power is most certainly contained in the concept of empowerment, information about its workings in rural scenarios and the ways in which it is dealt with by 'empowering agents' is meagre. Frequently 'dominant groups' or 'dominant ideology' are mentioned in passing, thus
summarizing complete sets of processes and defining power as an already existing feature, not a relational aspect that is created and transformed. This is not only due to the fact that 'the outsider' tries not to impose his or her views, but also to the lack of theoretical tools for identifying the workings of power in everyday situations.

But, as I say, power is central to the empowerment approach, and although it is not often made explicit, practitioners encounter and deal with it in their everyday work. Empowerment is differentially interpreted within different contexts, but generally entails the undermining of dominant patterns of power relations by strengthening resistance to them, the need to disengage from power networks by stimulating autonomy, and/or the creation of self-help groups where participation is a key word. In what follows, I explore the notions of resistance, autonomy and participation from an empowerment perspective in development practice drawing upon discussions in previous chapters.

Resistance

Resistance, as I pointed out in Chapter 7, entails actions that counter an identified form of power. Struggles to defy the imposition of specific regulations, to challenge 'male authority', to protest against repression or to create a women's union, are generally contemplated as resistance. In using the notion of resistance, we often refer interchangeably to defensive as well as offensive actions.

Empowerment to bolster actions of defiance, protest, uprising and the organization of groups implies supporting the claim-making capacity of people and can entail a diversity of practices which range from study groups and discussions to economic support for the creation of small enterprises. In terms of our previous discussions, we can say that empowerment here entails the strengthening of domains (or actors, or actor-networks) by enrolling definitions of group or individual identities and delinking them from previous interpretations. The creation of women's organizations, for example, involves a re-valorization of female identity and work, challenging other interpretations of their identity, rejecting norms and regulations which tie women to specific roles, and struggling to occupy spaces previously reserved for men.

However, the notion of resistance seems to have faded a bit from the development literature. In past decades, where the constitution of strong countervailing organizations and the support of movements of protest were
major aims, resistance featured in a prominent way. It is not that in recent years these objectives have changed drastically, but a degree of disenchantment with large organizations where new leaders have taken the place of old ones, where power is once again centralized, and where many people's voices are still muffled, has invited caution. Discouraging experiences abound wherein those who were previously 'powerless' have become converted into the 'powerful' - and follow very similar patterns of behaviour as did their predecessors - and wherein new positions of command are created within the groups. Furthermore, development workers often find themselves becoming leaders and power wielders.

These experiences strengthen our argument that power and resistance should not be taken as static, all-encompassing or unidirectional. Rather, social situations entail the action of a multiplicity of power relations, flowing in multiple directions. A group can be wielding power and resisting at the same time, and so the concrete conditions within which such processes take place must be analyzed carefully. This encourages more thorough analyses of everyday forms of resistance, but also of power, be it in struggles for space, in the efforts to increase the claim-making capacities of social groups, or in the constitution of local organization.

**Autonomy**

Autonomy as an guiding concept for development practice has been stimulated by the negative experiences we have described above for the case of resistance. As Schrijvers (1985: 233-237) argues, the notion of autonomy is especially appealing to women and representatives of women's movements in the Third World, who, through their own experiences, know the dangers of domination and oppression only too well. The aim, it is argued, is not to substitute one form of power for another, but to enhance self-determination and organization. Thus, although the notion of autonomy conveys the image of breaking off previous relationships, the enunciated goal does not entail cutting off all existing ties. Rather the aim is that 'marginalized' men and women exercise a degree of control over their social relations in such a way that the integrity of the person or social group is not jeopardized. The objective, therefore, is not to fight for power, although successful resistance is necessary in the struggle for social space and self-determination. This implies an emphasis on achieving *power to* reach certain ends more than to attain *power over* men or other social groups.
However, the notion of autonomy presupposes an ideal state of equality, and presumes the existence of dependency ties and subordination that are judged detrimental to women's (or men's) possibilities of acquiring and maintaining space for manoeuvre. Yet women's problems cannot simply be reduced to a choice between autonomy and dependence. As we have seen in Chapter 1, subordination means different things for different women and cannot be pre-judged as negative. Strategies entailed in the wielding of power often imply yielding it. Hence, the concept of autonomy entails both an over-acknowledgement and an under-acknowledgement of power.

I speak of over-acknowledgement because the ways in which the 'powerless' also exercise a degree of control and the ways in which power is only possible in its social construction - often entailing subordination to achieve power - are overlooked. And I speak of under-acknowledgement because of the lack of recognition of the myriad ways in which power is intrinsically tied to social relations, not only in its repressive manifestations, but in its capacity to produce justice, satisfaction, a sense of belongingness and pleasure.

Participation and appropriation

Chambers argues that 'outsiders' or intervenors have too often played the role of dispensers of packages of technology, providing 'scientific' knowledge and prefabricated alternatives to locals who are presumed to be ignorant. Their role, he suggests, should be that of conveners, catalysts, supporters and consultants. They should empower farmers and rural women by providing principles, methods and a basket of choices for the 'insiders' to experiment, discuss and analyze. This entails the use of specific participatory techniques by which an intervenor aids farmers' own analysis and supports their own experiments, manages 'innovator' workshops and communicates with farmers face-to-face (Chambers 1989: 182,183,190). In a similar vein, an increasing volume of literature has been produced whereby participatory techniques are suggested, and professionals are encouraged to 'keep in touch' with rural people, to carry out experiments with farmers and maintain an ongoing learning process in the field.

The practice of participatory methodologies, however, is full of problems and contradictions which development workers, planners, project officials and local actors solve in different ways. The first problem we encounter is the definition of participation. Whose participation are we talking about? Ideally, it is development workers who should 'participate' in
the projects of the local population, since the aim is to 'support the experiments of farmers' and 'aid their own analysis'. But, in fact, the purpose of participatory techniques is to enrol the local population in the use of innovations, in the installation of latrines, in family planning and nutrition programmes, economic activities, and literacy lessons; hence the notion of participation is always applied to address the participation of locals within rural appraisals, training sessions and projects.

Which locals participate? This is a question that now arises in practitioners’ reports and critical comments. Farmers, women and children cannot be taken to be homogeneous categories. Pre-existing power relations in the villages often inhibit locals from speaking out in meetings or even attending. Although the aim of participatory techniques is to give them 'a voice, a chance to be heard', not all voices are equally heard, as Guijt (quoted above) points out and Mosse furthers:

'I want to suggest that PRA [participatory rural appraisal], far from providing a neutral vehicle for local knowledge, actually creates a context in which the selective presentation of opinion is likely to be exaggerated, and where minority or deviant views are likely to be suppressed' (1993: 11).

Mosse argues that one of the problems is the differential understanding of the context in which participatory methodologies are implemented and the meanings the different actors attribute to each other's participation:

'While from the point of view of 'outsider' development workers an organized PRA is an informal event, in social terms the PRA is often highly formal and public: PRAs are group or collective activities; they involve important and influential outsiders (even foreigners); they take place in public spaces (schools, temples, etc); they involve the community representing itself to outsiders; and information is discussed publicly, recorded and preserved for use in planning. Such activities are far from informal everyday life. It seems highly probable that this social formality imposes a selectivity on the kind of information which is presented and recorded in PRAs' (1993: 11).

Hence, power relations do not only take place within the scenario of local actors, but include the outsiders, who, however neutral they would like to be, are enroled in village conflicts and attributed with social positions. That
the 'facilitators' bear knowledge which must be passed on, however participatively, also makes them authorities (see Chapter 5). This is enhanced by the kinds of activities that are carried out, which often imply strong inputs of information and know-how from the intervenors, especially since these must lead to what the intervenors judge to be sustainable projects.

In this way, within participatory approaches, the trainer, facilitator or conductor of participatory appraisals must not only learn from local people, but must negotiate; a consensus must be reached by which common goals and interests are defined and identities reappraised. A process of enrolment - such as that described in Chapter 6 - takes place whereby facilitators try to enlist a local population into specific forms of association, whereby analysis is focused on the identification of 'the root causes' of people's problems and the formulation of 'alternatives for development' as conceived by the facilitator. The aim of 'weaning the villagers away' from a 'dependency syndrome' to one of 'voluntary participation where they come up with their own solutions', already speaks of a process of interressement, of insulating groups and individuals from unwanted interpretations. Although in these negotiations local participants have voice, negotiation is not power-free. Hence, as Srivastava - herself an active participant in conducting participatory research in India - suggests,

'Often processes that seemed to have been followed in a participatory manner turn out to reveal the perspectives of the facilitators, imposed upon the people' (1994: 35-36).

However, full participation should - at least in theory - include appropriation. In the learning process, facilitators should have appropriated the interests, motivations and interpretations of the local population and made them their own. And the local population should have appropriated the project - which, again in theory, they constructed jointly with the development worker in favour of their own real interests.

But the problem with the definition of interests, as we have mentioned in previous chapters, is not an easy one. Project staff have, as Gnäi explains in his article on a beekeeping project in Mali, to give priority to schedules, budgets and operational plans of the institutions that pay them. Moreover, he describes how

'when participatory study methods triggered the initiative of the beekeepers to reflect, discuss and act on their own, the project staff
perceived this as pressure put on them and did not like it as such' (1994: 17).

Local populations, on the other hand, also appropriate development projects according to their priorities and specific interests. In the case of the beekeepers of Mali, Gnäi explains that rivalry between local experts in the trade made horizontal technology transfer unappealing and so each beekeeper appropriated what could be obtained from the project to his own ends. He comments:

'During the two days of our final workshop, the beekeepers had systematically probed what they could possibly get from the project. The priorities they finally defined quite transparently reflected the appropriation strategy they had agreed upon. They had used the participatory setting to manoeuvre themselves into good appropriation positions for the things to come.... Maybe it was only myself who had not understood that participation is the name of the appropriation game' (1994: 18).

But the 'appropriation game', where 'outsiders' as well as 'insiders' are involved, is quite well understood by local populations, as Mosse (1993: 7) describes for the case of western India, where he undertook fieldwork using PRA methods.

'The experience of generations of tribals in the area is that outsiders expressing concern with their affairs do so in order to pursue their own specific interests. These interests, moreover, are usually expressed in terms of meeting the tribals' own need for 'development'... The participatory approach contradicts experience and usually prompts local inquiry and conjecture as to the project's 'real' motives. The question uppermost in villagers' minds, and to which project staff have had to offer a satisfactory answer, is, "who are you, and what is your interest in us?"'

However, in the development literature, the activities and practices of intervenors are often only conceptualized in normative terms that detail the procedures that should be followed, the attitudes to be assumed, and the targets to be tackled. Hence, 'practice' is still regarded as one would view a game of chess, where the player is keen to make the best moves - which, in this case, would entail encouraging the pieces to move on their own towards
an 'agreed upon' goal. The 'outsider' is hardly ever observed as an actor in
him/herself (as a piece in the game), struggling to project particular images,
to set boundaries which are constantly being challenged by the 'beneficiary
population' or by colleagues and employers, and developing strategies to
acquire leverage, even within the context of 'participatory' development
approaches. Essential power processes and relations are left out of the
picture.

Development workers as keepers and power brokers

Having argued the importance of power relations taking place within the
development scenario, it is pertinent to make one final remark about the
nature of such power relations and the roles often played by development
workers.

In previous chapters, I have pointed out how the creation and
reproduction of networks and domains entail the actions of keepers and
power brokers. The new associations formed through projects, participatory
training sessions and other activities oriented towards the empowerment of a
local population constitute domains of interaction which also require the
action of keepers and brokers to sustain them, to expand them through
processes of enrolment, and to avoid diversion from the set goals.

There is a need for mediators between project superiors and a local
population, people who understand schedules and plans, who have
organizational awareness, strategic visions, a drive to persuade and motivate
others, a sense of enterprise, and the urge to analyze problems that arise. At
times local leaders assume the role of mediators once they have appropriated
the project - or at least parts of it - as theirs or converted it into their own
domain. But often it is development workers themselves who act as brokers
between local project domains and the official programme. This role implies
processes of translation and the creation of new sets of power relations.
Mediators are power brokers who 'represent' the project authorities in the
eyes of locals and 'represent' the local population vis-à-vis project superiors.

Because of their vested interest in maintaining or changing the
representation of a domain in a certain form, power brokers often become
keepers within domains. Keepers encourage specific interpretations of the
identity of the domain and the actors engaged in it; they struggle to support
certain associations with the environment, with symbols, objects and other
social groups and to disengage from associations which divert from the
perceived goal. Keepers are not fixed and one can identify different keepers within domains, depending on the perspective under focus.

From the perspective of the project as portrayed through documents and plans, it is almost inevitable that the 'facilitator' is him/herself a keeper — unless the appropriation by the local population is so complete that their interests and aims correspond to those of the project. These latter will rarely coincide with formal documents and plans because local actors are also involved in village domains which cross cut the project, such that their strategic conception of its aims will often clash with that of officials. Development workers' lack of involvement in other village domains, on the other hand, will deter them from being pulled by other local 'forces'.

This points to some of the problems encountered in efforts to 'empower' rural women and shape gender relations in an 'alternative' way through development projects. In the introduction to this study I told of my own experience with a group of women who obtained drinking water for their village and how, when it was decided that men should take over, this was seen by me as a natural decision. I had been living in the village for more than a year and was incorporated into local domains where other priorities 'pulled' me into accepting that this was 'the normal' thing to do.

Women in many ways resist impositions and strive to increase their claim-making capacity, but this process is intertwined with short term interests, emotions and loyalties. As keepers of a gender-oriented development endeavour, facilitators often try to delink women from such conceptions of their interests and loyalties. These keepers' own conception of alternatives for women is frequently simplistic, stemming from questions such as who owns the land, who spends the cash and who makes the relevant decisions. As Rocheleau (1994: 71) points out

'in a region where women are supposed to be more identified with subsistence, women were asking for a cash crop development. After I pointed out that what I had been told was different from what they were telling me, they explained that they wanted viable commercial enterprises to attract the men back to the farm, where they could also help women with other domestic/subsistence work and maintain household and village infrastructure. When I asked why they wanted cash earnings when men control the cash and make all purchases, they explained that women usually make the shopping list!'

To the degree that the development worker picks up the interests, feelings and motivations of these women and appropriates their projects, he or she
will experience the complexity of the situation. However, such appropriation often conflicts with project interests, budgets, and programs, as does the consolidation of local keepers who might take the project in other directions. It depends on whether empowerment implies injecting aid and the 'proper interpretations' into a 'powerless' population, or whether it entails boosting the capacity (potenciar) of agents who wield power but also yield, and on whether the aim is to empower rural women or project staff.

But an analysis of ‘development’ endeavours cannot avoid an examination of the complex power processes and battles over images, definitions of interests and interpretations that take place at the interface between ‘outsiders’ and ‘local groups’ in the arenas of intervention. Thus, as Long (1989) suggests, it becomes highly pertinent to discuss how intervention is continuously being modified by the negotiations and strategies that emerge between the various parties involved.

**Ayuquila 1994: an epilogue**

Let us conclude this chapter on intervention with a brief return to Ayuquila. My latest visit to the beekeeping group was in January 1994. The economic situation was harsh, as it was all over the country. Economic policies seemed to push producers into huge debts. The country was importing grains and other products even before the NAFTA (North American Trade Agreement) treaty was supposed to start functioning, and prices of maize were incredibly low. *Ejidalarios* were wondering what to do next. They complained that they sowed that year only out of lack of alternatives, knowing that, if luck was on their side, the best they could hope for was to be able to acquire enough money to pay for the inputs they invested in their crops. People were complaining of the difficult times, and a few of the more desperate had joined a regional peasant movement to demand attention and a change of policies from the federal government. A group of about 10 *ejidalarios* from Ayuquila, among them Carola, participated in a road block of an important highway linking Guadalajara, the state capital, to its airport. The movement was risky as the participants received many threats from the government and politicians. Ayuquila's *ejidalarios* were not known to oppose the government easily, but they were desperate.

Carola was already arranging to leave the village for the United States. Most tomato companies were bankrupt, and unemployment was high. Juana left the shoe business to her sister-in-law, as sales had declined so much that there was no work for both of them. In fact, her sister-in-law only opened
the store for short periods and not every day of the week. The two had also started a small snack-bar which was closed for lack of clients.

However, I found an optimistic beekeeping group of 10 women, ready to face new challenges. They had not yet been able to gain profit from their honey enterprise, but they had paid their debts, and that gave them encouragement. In fact, from their last harvest, having finished paying their debts, they had expected to earn enough money to distribute amongst themselves, but, unfortunately, the yields were lower than ever, partly because of the African bee, but mostly because of the lack of flowering in the fields. They had, however, given each member a total of 38,000 pesos (approximately 12 U.S. dollars), a product of that month's sale of chicken, which they continued carrying out. It was through such activity, as well as the sale of dinners, that they had been able to pay their debts to the local cooperative. The sales of chicken had increased because people could no longer afford to buy other kinds of meat. However, with the introduction of meat from the United States, prices of chicken had declined, and with it, their sales.

But the group was not discouraged. They had found more togetherness in the group ventures, and were hopeful that they might gain some profit from the next honey harvests. At least they would not have to repay any debts. The group was also happy because they now owned a vehicle. If they obtained no other reward from their organization, they claim, at least they have the small lorry.

They say their lorry was gained because of their organization, and it was in a way. In fact, it was a donation from a Dutch Catholic group, and was indirectly, the profit from my research. After my fieldwork in Ayuquila, I encouraged two Dutch students to carry out their practical fieldwork periods in El Cacalote, a settlement neighbouring Ayuquila. They lived in Ayuquila for a short period. The parents of one of them belong to a Catholic organization which collects funds to aid people in the Third World. They asked me whether I knew of a group that needed financial support and I suggested the beekeeping group. The beekeepers had already expressed on several occasions their need for a vehicle after they had been forced to take their beehives to distant places with the arrival of the African bee, and they had written letters to several organizations in search of support. The vehicle could motivate them to continue with their enterprise and not despair with the low profits they were receiving.

I informed the beekeepers but insisted that they should try to make as much profit as was possible from the lorry, transporting crops for local farmers, or whatever, not just assign it to beekeeping. They finally acquired
a rather old but useful vehicle. One of the younger members of the group knew how to drive and Magda, the new President, was eager to learn, so they soon put it to use. They did in fact carry out a few trips for villagers, such as taking women to see the virgin on her saint’s day and transporting the football players to other towns for games, from which they gained small profits, but what was more important, and what makes them so happy to have a vehicle, they say, is that they can leave their unsightly beekeeping garments in the lorry and change into them inside it when in the field, instead of having to show themselves in such attire in the village or on the road. Hence they had appropriated the lorry, not so much for the economic purposes I had in mind, but in view of their own (small?) interests.

Another issue that they happily informed me about concerned a visit from the wife of the new mayor. She sought out the group and offered to finance another economic enterprise for them. They could decide what they wanted as long as they received the support of the ejido, requested a plot on which to establish the enterprise, and expanded their group to at least 15 women from the village. I must say I was a bit shocked, especially since the discussions were almost identical to those they had held at the initiation of the beekeeping project. I heard the story repeat itself and Luisa’s comments were very similar to those of Socorro a few years before:

’goats? no, they get into ejidatario’s plots and cause trouble.
Sewing? no it is too much commitment and the prices of material are too high. Bees? God no! We don’t get any profit from them!’

The women wondered whether the ejidatarios would agree to granting them another plot, but the difference was that now they considered that they were entitled to it. Furthermore, they now saw themselves as able to carry through an economic enterprise. In fact, they were pondering on the possibility of starting a chicken farm. They argued that although prices of slaughtered chicken were decreasing, it was not an unprofitable activity, and however hard they tried, they could not think of another suitable enterprise.

After my initial shock, I reflected that many UAIMs in Mexico were indeed created on top of previously organized groups such as the development centres promoted by the voluntary services, and I knew that the recently established programme of Solidaridad¹ was incorporating many UAIMs throughout Mexico.

¹. A government initiative providing social compensation for those adversely hit by the new neo-liberal policies.
After all, this is not only a story of a group of women, it is also a story of development endeavours, state institutions, and power relations, and of how these are reproduced and become transformed.
APPENDIX

COMPUTERIZED VERSIONS OF THE NETWORK DIAGRAMS WHICH DEPICT SPECIFIC TYPES OF TRANSACTIONS AND COMMITMENTS AMONGST THE MEMBERS OF THE BEEKEEPING GROUP

INPUT MATRICES

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valued as very close = 3, close = 2, distant = 1

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Density at cell value 1 is 0.2667

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Density at cell value 1 is 0.1208
Compadrazgo: Input Matrix 6

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3 (B13) & & & & & & & & & & & & & & 1 \\
4 (C11) & 1 & 1 & & & & & & & & & & & & & \\
5 (C9) & & & & & & & & & & & & & & 1 \\
6 (C1) & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & \\
7 (C3) & & & & & & & & & & & & & & 1 \\
8 (C5) & 1 & & & & & & & & & & & & & & \\
9 (C13) & & & & & & & & & & & & & & 1 \\
10 (B16) & & & & & & & & & & & & & & 1 \\
11 (B18) & & & & & & & & & & & & & & 1 \\
12 (A3) & 1 & & & & & & & & & & & & & & \\
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14 (C14) & & & & & & & & & & & & & & 1 \\
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16 (B5) & & & & & & & & & & & & & & 1 \\
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Density at cell value 1 is 0.0750

REARRANGED MATRICES

Rearranged Matrix 2: Friendship

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4 (C11) & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & & & & & & & & & & & & \\
3 (B13) & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & & & & & & & & & & & & \\
10 (B16) & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & \\
11 (B18) & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & \\
6 (C1) & 1 & 1 & & & & & & & & & & & & & & \\
7 (C3) & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & \\
16 (B5) & & & & & & & & & & & & & & 1 & 1 \\
8 (C5) & & & & & & & & & & & & & & 1 & \\
9 (C13) & & & & & & & & & & & & & & 1 & \\
15 (C15) & & & & & & & & & & & & & & 1 & \\
12 (A3) & & & & & & & & & & & & & & 1 & \\
13 (B20) & & & & & & & & & & & & & & 1 & \\
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**Rearranged Matrix 3: Work relations within the group**

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**Rearranged Matrix 4: Other economic ties**

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## Rearranged Matrix 5: Leisure

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## Rearranged Matrix 6: Compadrazgo

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Clustan Plot written to Netclus
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Diagonal pair used for correlations
All rows have entries in them
All columns have entries in them
Converged after 7 iterations

Partitioning of rows and columns simultaneously at step 1
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Partitioning of rows and columns simultaneously at step 2
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Partitioning of rows and columns simultaneously at step 3
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Partitioning of rows and columns simultaneously at step 4
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Partitioning of rows and columns simultaneously at step 5
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Partitioning completed. (See Figure 15 for output as dendogram).
Glossary of Words, Expressions and Acronyms in Spanish

abejera del carrito: the beekeeper with the car.

abejeras: this term is used instead of apicultoras which is the technical word for female beekeepers. One can make a parallel between this labelling in Ayuquila and the commonly used zapatero remendon, instead of the normal zapatero, which literally differentiates a shoemaker from a shoe ‘patcher’ thus stressing the differences between experts and laymen within this trade.

Acción Católica Mexicana: Mexican Catholic organization formed by lay members of the Church who promote study and discussion groups as well as religious and fund raising activities.

agua fresca: homemade lemonade which can be prepared with different kinds of fruits.

al otro lado: on the other side of the frontier, meaning in the United States.

Ama de casa: housewife.

amor a la tierrita: love and appreciation for the soil, usually applied to agricultural land.

ampliación: extension; in the Mexican rural scenario, this term is used to designate an extension of the ejido land, generally allotted to groups not included in the original ejido census.

atavismo: ties to old, backward ideas.

aveclndados: neighbours; label given to citizens of rural villages who are newcomers or who are not ejidatarios, comuneros or their relatives.

BANRURAL: Banco Nacional de Crédito Rural; National Rural Credit Bank.

bodega: store and workshop.

caba: female foreman.

caciques: commonly applied to strong men in rural scenarios. Caciques are power brokers at local or regional level who accrue power by controlling rewards, such as access to information concerning legislation, and to political networks which open up possibilities of approaching important officers to deal with bureaucratic issues. These caciques at the same time use the force of peasant organization to restrain or enable the will of
state representatives and work as gatekeepers for the groups themselves in their relations with politicians and government officers. Their association with one party provides the means, authority and force to attain power from the other.

*Caja Popular*: cooperative bank.

*campesina*: country woman.

*cantinas*: saloons, bar rooms.

*casa ejidal*: ejido house; the building where *ejidatarios* hold their meetings.

*casino*: what people of Ayuquila label 'casino' (or sometimes refer to as the club) is actually a large building in the village where parties, dances, and other events are held.

*cenadurías*: improvised 'restaurants' in the village often consisting of tables that are set in the streets in the evenings.

*censo básico*: the original census, here referring to the list of *ejidatarios* to whom the first allocation of land was granted. This list appears in the *Resolución Presidencial*, an official document signed by the President of Mexico. This census is later up-dated (*depuración censal*) to exclude members who have died or who have lost their rights and to include new members. However, up-dated censuses are often negotiated and disputed, and members who are listed in the original census (and have not been excluded in later censuses) are considered as having the more legitimate rights.

*Centros de Desarrollo Rural*: Centres for Rural Development commonly organized by state officials, often wives of functionaries.

*chivera*: female who looks after goats.

*chútaros*: disdainful label used for sugarcane cutters.

*coamileros*: farmers - often *avecindados* - who borrow *coamiles* from the *ejido* and as a way of payment leave the maize stalks for the *ejidatarios*’ cattle. Sometimes they also pay a small amount in maize.

*coamiles*: plot of land on the hillside, generally consisting of poor soil, where maize is sown using 'slash and burn' techniques. In Ayuquila, the *coamiles* are located in the part of the *ejido* that is owned collectively and used for cattle grazing.

*comadre*: co-mother; quasi-kin status attained through Catholic rituals, generally implying godmother (in baptism, confirmation, marriage or other celebrations) of the co-mother or co-father’s son or daughter.

*comisariada*: female head of the *ejido*.

*comisariado*: male head of the *ejido*.

*comisariado ejidal*: head of the *ejido*. 
**comité de vigilancia:** vigilance committee of the *ejido*, named to verify that the *comisariado* and other *ejido* authorities are acting according to law. The losing party in elections for *comisariado ejidal* is commonly appointed as *comité de vigilancia*.

**compadrazgo:** ritual kinship.

**compadre:** co-father; ritual kinsman, see *comadre*.

**compañeras (a sus compañeras):** towards her peers or colleagues in the group.

**comuneros:** peasants organized under the legal status of indigenous communities, in arrangements similar to those of *ejidos*.

**comunidades indígenas:** in this case we are not referring to the ethnic status of communities (although this often coincides), but to the legal status of peasant groups who were able to prove ancestral collective ownership to land before the colonization by Spaniards, when they were dispossessed. These groups are thus entitled to land according to the Mexican Law of Agrarian Reform.

**COPLADE:** State Planning Committee for Development.

**cuadrilla:** work group organized to labour in tomato, corn, sugarcane or other fields.

**cultura cherry:** cherry culture (after the cherry tomato); term used by tomato workers to differentiate their life style and views vis-à-vis others.

**dañeras:** destructive.

**dependencias:** government institutions.

**desquehaceradas:** with no household obligations, hence implying that they lack respect for their husbands and families.

**edades sociológicas:** sociological ages.

**ejidataria:** female member of the *ejido*.

**ejidatarios:** the term *ejidatario* is used for those who possess land rights to specific plots and who are listed formally as members of the *ejido*.

**ejido:** the *ejido* is a socio-legal entity concerned with the administration of land and other collective properties. *Ejidos* were established under the 1920’s land reform law that followed the Mexican Revolution. The *ejido* of Ayuquila consists of individual household plots divided among *ejidatarios* and a communal grazing area. The term *ejido* is commonly used to designate the geographical site where its agricultural plots are found as well as the organization of members.

**espinita (la espinita):** literally small thorn or bristle; here meaning the urge, or motivation to learn or inquire about something.

**fiestas:** parties; community celebrations generally corresponding to a saint’s day.
Glossary

flojera (la flojera): laziness.
fracasaba: a form of the verb 'to fail'.
fracasadas: women who have failed, or blundered, here meaning became pregnant.
galleros: cock fighting men.
gente maciza: solid person.
gente refinada: refined people.
guamuchil: type of acacia tree that produces a fruit in the form of a string-bean, but with a sweet flavour.
hacendados: owners of haciendas.
hacienda: colonial agricultural enterprise, often including tied peasant labour, sharecroppers and wage labourers. Haciendas were officially banned by the Land Reform after the Mexican Revolution, but some survived a few decades later.
haciendo la lumbrita, sí vamos a cosechar más: by getting the fire started, we will harvest more.
hijos del general: sons of the general, referring here to followers of the General García Barragán.
hojeros: people who commercialize maize leaves to be used in the fabrication of tamales, a traditional Mexican dish.
huaraches: sandals, generally considered a cheap alternative for shoes.
huevonas: contemptuous word for idle women.
libertina: loose, licentious woman.
libertinaje: looseness, too much license.
machetes: knives used for cutting down weeds.
machismo: macho attitudes and behaviour.
macho: literally male mule, also used for male animals. A negative connotation is implied when using it to men, describing a haughty, often despotic, attitude towards women.
madrina: godmother.
malbaratado: squandered; sold for a very low price.
mandilones: men who wear aprons, who let their wives boss them around.
maquiladora: in-bond plant; enterprise that carries out work for a larger, often transnational, company.
mezcal: alcoholic drink produced from cacti.
mole: paste fabricated for the preparation of mole, a traditional Mexican dish made up of ground chilies, chocolate, spices and crushed seeds, including sesame.
mujer campesina: peasant woman.
mujeres empresarias: women entrepreneurs.
**Glossary**

**mujeres pata rajada:** women with cracked feet (see *pata-rajada*, below).

**municipio:** municipality.

**muy dura:** very hard; strict.

**nixtamal:** cooked maize.

**nopales:** cacti used as food.

**Nuevos Centros de Población Ejidal:** New Ejido Population Centres, commonly known as *ejidos*.

**padrino:** godfather.

**pata rajada:** commonly used in this region to describe a hard working, uncultured but tough person who can work in the fields barefooted, thereby getting cracked soles. Fissures on the soles are the result of walking barefoot on the hot earth, or wearing typical *huaraches* (cheap sandals), but it is something local people refer to as a trait or characteristic of a lower category of people, in contrast to *la gente refinada* (refined people), who wear shoes and therefore do not suffer from cracked soles.

**peón:** day labourer. In Ayuquila, a difference is often made between day labourers who work *al jornal* (for a day’s wage) and those who work *en lo que hay* (‘in what they can find’). Actually *al jornal* generally implies working for the tomato companies, whilst *en lo que hay* or as *peones* (day labourers) entails working for other *ejidatarios* or local producers. *Peones* often receive better pay than those who work *al jornal*, have less work hours, and commit themselves to shorter terms.

**peones acomodados:** labourers who work steadily for the same person.

**pequeños propietarios:** small owners, here referring to private land owners, who, despite the label of ‘small’, can own more than a hundred hectares.

**perdía de ganar:** did not profit.

**pichoacas:** knives used for cutting down weeds.

**poder popular:** ‘power of the people’; often used in the context of struggles against large landowners, the state, or those in higher echelons of society.

**potenciar:** potentiate; here meaning to boost people’s ability to act.

**porque me traen de un lado para otro:** because they carry me from one side to the other; referring to how the group expects Petra to visit government offices, attend the beekeepers’ association meetings, buy the necessary implements and search for markets.

**pozole:** special Mexican dish consisting of a soup of cooked maize with pork or sometimes duck or chicken.

**preparadas:** prepared or equipped; women who have studied.
potrero: agricultural plot or pasture-land; the field where a producer has his/her cultivation.
pueblo: town.
Punto Rojo: red point; a popular musical band which has been very successful in the region.
que esperanzas: what hope for it; used to imply that no prospects are envisaged.
ranchos: small settlements often lacking facilities such as drinking water, schools, etc. The difference between a rancho and a pueblo (proper village) is often stressed in rural Mexico. The word rancho has a connotation of underdevelopment about it.
recuerdito: reminder, here meaning a written record of an agreed decision.
Resolución Presidencial: a formal document signed by the President of Mexico, which constitutes a landownership title for the ejido.
Santa María de Guadalupe: Holy Mary of Guadalupe; here the name of the savings cooperative.
Santo Niño de Atoche: the holy child of Atoche.
SARH: Secretaría de Agricultura y Recursos Hidráulicos; the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources.
señoronas: big women, meaning pompous and high class women.
solidaridad: solidarity; also a government initiative providing social compensation for those adversely hit by the new neo-liberal policies.
sombreros: hats.
son las que tienen que fregarse mas: are those who carry the burden, who have to carry out more work.
taco: a tortilla with some food in it.
tamales: a traditional Mexican dish consisting of maize dough cooked within maize leaves often also containing meat, vegetables, beans and special spices or mixed with sugar and maybe raisins or other fruits.
tener orden en el trabajo: maintain discipline in the work.
tequila: an alcoholic drink produced by the fermentation of maguey cacti juices.
tortillas: staple made from maize dough, similar to pancakes and used in the same way that other cultures use bread.
tortillería: shop where tortillas are made.
trabajadores de confianza: workers who hold positions of trust, in this case working close to the boss in his home or as overseers.
tu: you (familiar form).
**(Glossary)**

**UAIM:** *(Unidad Agrícola e Industrial de la Mujer Campesina)* Agrarian and Industrial Unit of Peasant Women; government-sponsored women's group entailing a small unit of production. The initiative was endorsed by the Federal Law of Agrarian Reform, which stipulated that groups of women should be encouraged to participate in economic activities by allotting them plots of agricultural land and supporting them with credit from official institutions to set up small enterprises. It was expected that the organization of women would thus be stimulated and that they would be incorporated into the 'production process'. In some cases, government rhetoric went on to suggest that this would eventually lead to the reduction of gender inequalities.

**Unión Ejidal:** ejido union, consisting of an association of ejidos (often including comunidades indígenas as well) united to form a common front and negotiate better credits, the resolution of agrarian problems, etc.

**usted:** a more respectful form of 'you' instead of the common 'tu'.

**vida alegre (la vida alegre):** the happy life; mostly applied to a woman, implying she has had many lovers, usually as a way of earning a living.

**Virreinatos:** viceroyships of the colonial period.

**Voluntariado Social:** voluntary social workers headed by the wives of important government officials such as ministers, directors and regional delegates.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


SUMMARY

Three lines of inquiry can be found in the present study. The first is of an empirical nature. It is a story of a group of women and a development project, based upon field research I carried out in 1987-88 concerning a group of female beekeepers who were organized as an UAIM (*Unidad Agrícola e Industrial de la Mujer Campesina*, Agrarian and Industrial Unit of Peasant Women) in Ayuquila, a small rural community in western Mexico. The initiative was backed by the Federal Law of Agrarian Reform, which stipulated that groups of women should be encouraged to participate in economic activities by allotting them plots of agricultural land and supporting them with credit from official institutions to set up small enterprises. It was expected that the organization of women would thus be stimulated and that they would be incorporated into the 'production process'. In some cases, government rhetoric went on to suggest that this would eventually lead to the reduction of gender inequalities.

Second, it is an exploration into issues of power: How does power work? Can one point to secret mechanisms by which it is triggered and held, resolutely oppressing, permeating the most hidden niches of society, controlling actions, thoughts and desires? How is it constituted, identified and recreated or crushed, transformed and channelled? How do changes in power come about? How can we come to grips with the ways in which power is constructed in everyday situations? How can we understand it in its relation to more macro phenomena? I explore these issues through my ethnographic material, discussing theoretical approaches to power such as those advanced by Foucault, Latour, Callon, and Barnes and drawing upon more general theoretical insights proposed by Long, Giddens, Strathern, Moore, Habermas, Bourdieu and other social scientists. The aim is to arrive at the construction of theory through the analysis of field data. Hence, I examine theoretical perspectives throughout the chapters in terms of their usefulness for addressing the issues I encounter and the questions I want to deal with.

Third, it is a methodological venture in which I use diverse techniques to explore theoretical and empirical concerns from an actor-oriented perspective. Thus, I draw upon a survey of the village, discourse analysis, situational analysis, network analysis and actor-network analysis (or the sociology of translation) to highlight the ways in which actors construct their lifeworlds and
deal with constraints in their everyday lives. From this perspective, propelling agents are not outside forces but actors and their interpretations. Actions are not predefined in terms of their functional significance to self-regulating systems, but are constantly redefined and given meaning in dynamic interrelations between people and the natural and social environment.

My challenge is to reach a better understanding of the processes of change taking place in the 'development interface', that is, in the spaces opened up by the interaction between different social groups engaged in development practices where discontinuities in terms of power are recreated and transformed. Grounded upon critical observation and analysis of detailed ethnographic data, I hope to contribute to a sounder theoretical perspective on issues of power and social difference.

Analyzing my empirical material, it became clear that subordination was central to an understanding of power, and so relations of subordination constitute the main issue explored throughout the chapters. These are the elements that give life to power, that make it possible. The wielding of power presupposes the exercise of yielding to it, of recognizing the other as powerful. Furthermore, power must often be yielded in order to wield it. Hence, to open the discussion on power, I take as a starting point, not a blatant description of domination or a striking set of statistics to prove its strength, but the trivial everyday manifestations of power, which lives to the degree to which it is exercised upon others, and hence to the degree that there are countervailing forces which must be controlled. Otherwise it would be fruitless to conceive of such a notion. In fact, it is impossible to envisage power without an image of those affected by it, without notions of subservience, inferiority, subjugation and control, but also without some kinds of counter forces, of negotiation, resistance, conflict and opposition.

However, what one might identify as points of resistance, of defiance and challenge, are intertwined with elements that may be described as compliance, conformity and submission. Hence, when speaking of subordination, one implies both an action imposed from 'outside' and a self-inflicted condition. It is this interweaving of processes that I explore, specifically with respect to gender relations.

To this endeavour, I start, in Chapter 1, by introducing the reader to Ayuquila with brief descriptions of three women and the ways in which they deal with subordination in their everyday lives. The three women are involved in different kinds of enterprise and dissimilar relations and attitudes towards 'capital' and entrepreneurs, and hence work under distinct perspectives and motivations to access specific networks, to build diverse relations with men, with authorities and with other women. However, subordination and self-
subordination is a common theme, whether imposed or assumed, used to soften blows, to create personal space or to consolidate power.

Ayuquila is a small town of 161 households located within an important irrigation district along the main road linking the Municipal capital of El Grullo to the State capital of Guadalajara, in Jalisco, western Mexico. Village economic life is built basically upon agriculture and the commercialization of agricultural products. In describing the world of Ayuquila as it was presented to me in 1988, the webs of relations which include bonds to different environments, organizational forms embedded in the villagers' use of land and their work procedures, their economic strategies, household patterns and solidarity networks - which I document in Chapter 2 - I came to realize the significance of specific domains or interaction for understanding how social asymmetries are reproduced, how linkages to wider social and economic scenarios are created and resignified, and how the project is woven into village life.

Such domains do not only entail undertakings pertaining to distinct levels of articulation of power, nor do they demarcate specific fields of social analysis - such as the economic, political or family-kinship. Activities within domains involve a heterogeneity of relationships - that could be labelled political, economic, religious or emotional - and they intertwine power relations that draw upon diverse normative frames. In specific domains, 'rules of the game' are negotiated and defined, authorities are recognized, and relations to institutions, to other villagers and with the environment, are 'fixed'. Interaction within a domain entails distinct organizing practices, criteria with which to evaluate and shape others' behaviour and ways of securing resources.

The beekeeping project came to constitute a specific domain of interaction. In Chapter 3 I provide a brief history of the project as it was described by the different actors involved. This enables me to discuss the ways in which the women saw themselves and the ways in which they were labelled and how this shaped the project and its perspectives. The identities adopted by the women at different stages of the project were very much coloured by social expectations, by images of hierarchies and by the identification of boundaries for action. I thus examine the boundaries the women set to their undertakings and ambitions, as well as the struggles they have to undergo in the defense of their own space when interacting with the state, but also with the ejido - commonly regarded a 'men's world' in the village, exploring critical social interface situations where members of the group are exposed to encounters with people from 'the outside' and to definitions, ideas, representations and interpretations. I analyze the ways in which discursive practices reproduce and change, exploring the intertwining of actions, strategies, understandings and self-perceptions where knowledge and
power are created, negotiated and transformed. I highlight the significance that labelling had in terms of their activities and their relations to others, and how the names which the women attributed to themselves became modified. This pointed to the relevance of knowledge in the process by which social relations are constructed.

The domain of the family is described in Chapter 4, where I map out the kin networks and social webs that shape the interactions taking place. I examine how the beekeepers were clustered into particular networks - often linked to other village domains - where issues were discussed, commitments and non-verbalized agreements shouldered and emotions, loyalties and opinions shared. In this chapter, four kinds of network configurations are presented and contrasted: 1) a genealogical map of the network of kin and affinal ties encompassing the members of the women’s group; 2) a series of net diagrams representing specific types of transactions and commitments among the members; 3) an aggregated net diagram depicting the multiplexity and density of ties; and 4) a tree diagram which contrasts the patterns formed by the various sub-group clusters and illustrates their social distance vis-à-vis other members of the beekeeping group. I describe the ways in which kin networks feature within the beekeeping group, showing how they are not motionless, nor present as an external structure, but are brought to life and resignified by the different actors in their interrelations within specific networks. This also entails an analysis of the fissures within the group, and of how these were dealt with, or supplanted by other linkages. As it is, these splits and the beekeepers’ attempts to fill the gaps between them, provided valuable information about the process of ‘gluing together’.

The ways in which different ties are combined and resignified, however, is largely defined through the lifeworlds of the different women, or rather through the intersection of lifeworlds that takes place within the project. This is evident in the three profiles of women beekeepers which I also describe in this chapter. I have chosen three beekeepers, drawn from different social clusters in the group, to explore aspects of their everyday lives, and their experiences, motivations and interests within the project. I highlight the significance of the group, its encounters and activities, for shaping the lifeworlds of these women. The individual women used the project and its sense of ‘belongingness’ to reconceptualize their own life circumstances and expectations, and to sustain them in their efforts to change their social relationships and strategies. They thus create space for themselves and reconstruct their lifeworlds.

The women’s commitment to specific networks shapes their practices and influences their views on the UAIM and its perspectives. But networks also
open up spaces for them, that is, they put people in touch with different sets of relations. Whilst networks provide coordinating mechanisms for the allocation of resources and the circulation of meaning, they are not totalizing systems, and whilst they entail some kind of governing coalitions that regulate behaviour, as such they do not control. Actors draw upon networks and rework them in response to their immediate needs, resignifying them through personal experiences, and using them whenever possible to achieve control. Hence, networks have no life but through the organizing practices of the lifeworlds of their members.

This points to the crucial importance of agency within social relations, and to the action of keepers and power brokers within networks and domains. Through the analysis of a social situation - a meeting in which the women as a group interact face-to-face with a 'dominant' group in the village, typically considered a male organization - Chapter 5 delves into the intricacies and subtleties of authority and command in the everyday wielding of power. During the meeting, experiences, views and discursive elements were transposed from the domain of the state to the domain of the *ejido*, from the *ejido* to the project, etc. The interaction between the group of beekeepers and the *ejidatarios* shows how agency works to bring such elements to the fore. We can also see how, in a particular moment in time and space, boundaries pertaining to 'formal maps of power' are differentially interpreted and negotiated, how expectations are forged and issues veiled. Power is constructed with respect to access to resources, to the identification and defense of particular interests and the control of means of action. In the struggle for access to resources and control, power brokers emerge and authorities are redefined.

These processes also entail maps of knowledge, negotiation of interests, loyalties and formal identification of powers, as well as particular skills and techniques of control. Although not physically present in the event, the state wields power through the interpretations of the different actors, who surrender to what they consider are its designs.

The state is typically a 'power wielder', that is, it is commonly recognized as a powerful actor. In Chapter 6 I describe how this 'macro power' is constructed, and identify the mechanisms by which it is recognized as such in the case of the UAIM projects in Mexico. I discuss the vicissitudes of different UAIMs in various parts of the country, focusing on the ways in which the state manages to snare different actors into its own network of interests, thus providing opportunities for women to engage in economic enterprises, but by so doing, sets frameworks that regulate aspects of women’s lives. I concentrate on the UAIM itself as a juridical model and a form of control, exploring how people, emotions, beliefs, money, technology, gender images, legal forms,
documents, and social networks are associated and dissociated - physically and symbolically - to generate power or inhibit its development. I discuss Callon and Latour's (1981, 1986) approach to the analysis of power, which I believe to have made great strides in its conceptualization and study. However, as our case shows, their analyses leave out critical aspects which can be tackled more adequately through an actor-oriented approach. An important premise is that power is not a pre-determined attribute which is possessed or not, but a fluid resource which is negotiated and used at all levels.

Chapter 7 draws the threads together and compares my findings with current theories on power. I discuss how conceptualizing power as embedded in multi-directional relations, in processes, linkages, disjunctions and strategies, allows us to see its diverse faces as well as the compromises, negotiations and struggles. Power relations are recreated in the interaction and not totally imposed from one side. Power is not inherent to a position, a space or a person; it is not possessed by any of the actors, and it is not a zero-sum process whereby its exercise by one of the actors leaves the others lacking. Interests are not necessarily the propelling force behind power, but are fixed and defined in the process.

It is necessary to explore the social construction of meaning, which then reveals the messiness of power processes. A power wielder - be it a collective or individual actor - is also influenced by myths, language and symbols. Hence, those wielding power carry out at the same time more and less than their own wills. Less, because they must negotiate with the wills of others; they must allow others' wills to be carried out if they are to succeed - so discretion is limited by the force of those in subordinate positions. And more, because power is more than getting one's own will across. Generally speaking, those considered powerful incline dispositions and influence processes which are in no way part of their strategies. It would therefore be too simple to regard power as an unidirectional process whereby defined objectives are in the end reached. The complexity of power relations resides in its largely unintended consequences, in the web of routines which are triggered or channelled in specific directions, not only by the power wielder, but by the social constituency that attributes identities and roles to him/her and responds to these very same attributions by locating themselves in a somewhat inferior plane, in a subordinate condition.

In this way, we often attribute agency and power to social categories such as class, ethnicity and gender; to resources such as capital and land and to institutions like the state. Thus, we credit this abstract constituency we call the state with power and respond accordingly. This might have little to do with the actual intelligence, knowledgeability or capacity to act of the particular subject
of agency, but it is important in delimiting the effects it can have on others. Banks, corporations, kings and priests are attributed qualities that 'bounce back' on the actions of people. This speaks of a mode of socially attributed agency, a capacity to act which is granted by others, in contrast to the agency of individuals in dealing with the world around them. Hence, the agency of an actor can be 'stretched' out to incorporate the agentive or patientive actions of others, enrolling people, objects or symbols into networks or domains. Domains can wield power within a macro perspective, but they themselves will be shifting terrains for power because of the social relations acting within them. Discourses and interpretations can thus become 'dominant' when they are enroled in a specific strategy and are instrumental in constraining or defining the behaviour of a large number of people or social groups. Hence power relations are strengthened by multiple translations. The quality of certain power relations as 'macro' then, can only be seen as an effect, and not as a cause. This leaves us with a more 'vulnerable' version of macro relations, albeit a more dynamic one.

The power wielder has to rely on the actions of others who acknowledge its power. These actions generally entail subordination, compliance or resistance. The concept of resistance, however, already implies an identification of a weaker force which is counteracting a stronger one and which is unwilling to yield. But I argue that power wielders should not be defined as such in a priori terms, and hence resistance cannot be identified as such beforehand. Compliance generally entails an acceptance to become the vehicle of others' agency, thus strengthening the network of power, but one can, of course, be an unknowing vehicle of power by forming part of such a network without resisting or subordinating, or by agreeing to certain representations which are enroled in its exercise, thus granting credibility and effectiveness to the associations which constitute it. Compliance contributes crucial support for power networks and is often indirectly provided.

Compliance, as well as subordination, not only sustains the wielding of power, but also the capacity to wield power. Such capacity is not a storage of power as social scientists frequently describe it, but is underpinned by a social recognition of ranks, authority and superiority, where the action falls on those who acknowledge an actor as 'powerful' or who are willing (or obliged by the social circumstances, the intersection of domains, etc.) to submit to what they consider are its designs. Hence, the yielding of power resides in the social acknowledgement of it; it does not necessarily entail subordination and can be independent of the will or intentions of the potential wielder.

Subordination, on the one hand, indicates the action of 'patients', of being the vehicle of others' agency. It allows power to be wielded by yielding, by
acceding to the wishes of the other, relinquishing a possible social capacity or status to acknowledge a stronger, better or more appropriate bearer. On the other hand, such yielding can emanate, not from the wishes of others, but from the 'subordinate' actors' own agency. Subordination, then, does not imply a zero-sum process whereby those who yield are necessarily left powerless. If power is fluid and constantly negotiated, those wielding power also need to subordinate themselves to discourses, social beliefs and wills of others. Thus, subordination cannot be exclusively attributed to the lower strata of society, to marginalized groups, or to the 'losers'. Power relations also necessitate the yielding of power by the power wielder.

In the final chapter I discuss the notions of power and empowerment underpinning development thinking and practice. I suggest that power is often misconstrued and that many issues remain unresolved in the notions of empowerment and participation, especially where gender is concerned. Thus, there is a need to question ourselves what is understood by participation, how to define the interests of the beneficiaries in order to assist them in helping themselves, and who 'the object of empowerment' is as compared to who it is intended to be. The new associations formed through projects, participatory training sessions and other activities oriented towards the empowerment of local population constitute domains of interaction which also require the action of keepers and brokers to sustain them, people who understand schedules and plans, who have organizational awareness, strategic visions, a drive to persuade and motivate others, a sense of enterprise, and the urge to analyze problems that arise in order to expand their 'project' through processes of enrolment, and to avoid diversion from set goals. This often ends up in the empowerment of the development agency itself.

Women are in many ways resisting impositions and striving to increase their claim-making capacity, but this is intertwined with short-term interests, emotions and loyalties. As keepers of a gender-oriented development endeavour, facilitators often try to delink women from such conceptions of their interests and loyalties. Their own conception of alternatives for women is frequently simplistic, stemming from questions such as who owns the land, who spends the cash and who makes the relevant decisions. But an analysis of 'development' endeavours cannot avoid an examination of the complex power processes and battles over images, definition of interests and interpretations that take place at the interface between 'outsiders' and 'local groups'. These interface struggles shape the arena of intervention situations where power is wielded and yielded.
SAMENVATTING

In deze studie zijn drie onderzoekslijnen te onderkennen. De eerste is van empirische aard. Het is de geschiedenis van een groep vrouwen en een ontwikkelingsproject, gebaseerd op veldonderzoek dat ik verrichtte in 1987-1988 bij een groep vrouwelijke bijenhouders, die georganiseerd waren in een verbond (Unidad Agrícola e Industrial de la Mujer Campesina, UAIM) in Ayuquila, een kleine plattelandsgemeenschap in west Mexico. Het initiatief hiertoe was een gevolg van de Federale wet op agrarische hervorming, die bepaalde dat groepen vrouwen moesten worden aangemoedigd deel te nemen aan economische activiteiten, door hen stukken land toe te wijzen en hen met kredieten van officiële instanties te helpen bij het opzetten van kleine ondernemingen. Men verwachtte dat vrouwen zodoende zouden worden gestimuleerd om zich te organiseren, en dat zij zouden worden opgenomen in het produktieproces. Soms ging de retoriek van de overheid zover, dat men suggereerde dat een en ander zou leiden tot een reductie van de sekseongelijkheid.

In de tweede plaats is het een onderzoek naar het probleem van macht: Hoe werkt macht? Is het mogelijk verborgen mechanismen aan te wijzen waardoor macht ontstaat en stand houdt, onderdrukt, doordringt tot in de meest verborgen uithoeken van de samenleving en handelingen, gedachten en verlangens reguleert? Hoe wordt macht gevestigd, geïdentificeerd, gecreëerd of ook gebroken, getransformeerd en gekanaliseerd? Hoe ontstaan veranderingen in macht? Hoe kunnen we zicht krijgen op de wijze waarop macht tot stand komt in alledaagse situaties? Hoe kunnen we macht begrijpen in relatie tot macroproblemen? Ik onderzoek deze punten met behulp van mijn etnografisch materiaal en ik bediscussieer theoretische benaderingen van macht zoals die naar voren zijn gebracht door Foucault, Latour, Callon en Barnes, en ik maak gebruik van meer algemene theoretische inzichten van Long, Giddens, Strathern, Moore, Habermas, Bourdieu en andere sociale wetenschapsbeoefenaars. Mijn doel is om door een analyse van de gegevens van het veldonderzoek te komen tot theorievorming. Daartoe onderzoek ik theoretische perspectieven op hun nut voor de aanpak van de kwesties die ik tegenkom en de vraagstukken die ik wil behandelen.

In de derde plaats is deze studie van methodologische betekenis, waarbij ik verschillende technieken gebruik om theoretische en empirische onderwerpen
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te bezien vanuit een actor-georiënteerd perspectief. Ik maak daartoe gebruik van een survey van het dorp, een analyse van de gesprekken die ik gevoerd heb, een situationele analyse, een netwerk-analyse en een actor-netwerk-analyse (of de sociologie van 'vertalen'), teneinde de manieren te belichten waarop actoren hun leefwerelden organiseren en omgaan met de beperkingen in het leven van alledag. Vanuit dit perspectief komen stuwende krachten niet van buitenaf, maar worden ze gevormd door actoren en hun interpretaties zelf. Handelingen worden niet van tevoren bepaald in termen van hun functioneel belang voor zelf-regulerende systemen, maar ze worden voortdurend geherdefinieerd en hen wordt voortdurend opnieuw betekenis gegeven in dynamische onderlinge relaties tussen mensen en de natuurlijke en sociale omgeving.

Ik heb mij tot taak gesteld te komen tot een beter begrip van veranderingsprocessen, die plaats grijpen op het ontwikkelingsraakvlak, dat wil zeggen in de contactvelden die ontstaan door de interactie tussen de verschillende sociale groepen, die betrokken zijn bij ontwikkelingsactiviteiten, waarbij wordt ingespeeld op veranderingen in termen van macht. Mij baserend op een kritische bestudering en analyse van gedetailleerde etnografische gegevens, hoop ik te kunnen bijdragen aan een overtuigend theoretisch perspectief met betrekking tot macht en sociale ongelijkheid.

Bij de analyse van mijn empirisch materiaal werd het duidelijk dat ondergeschikting centraal staat bij het begrijpen van macht, en dus lopen die afhankelijkheidsrelaties als een rode draad door de hoofdstukken. Deze relaties zijn het die macht mogelijk maken. Het uitoefenen van macht vooronderstelt de ervaring van het zwichten voor macht, van het erkennen van de macht van de ander. Bovendien moet men zich vaak eerst aan macht onderwerpen alvorens macht te kunnen uitoefenen. Om de discussie over macht te openen, begin ik niet met een opvallende beschrijving van dominantie of een aantal indrukwekkende statistische gegevens om de kracht ervan aan te tonen, maar met de triviale, alledaagse manifestaties van macht. Macht bestaat alleen voor zover zij kan worden uitgeoefend over anderen en dus in de mate waarin tegenkrachten onder controle moeten worden gekregen. Anders zou het zinloos zijn zich zo'n concept te gebruiken. In feite is het onmogelijk zich een beeld te scheppen van macht zonder een beeld te hebben van degenen die aan die macht onderworpen zijn, zonder een begrip van ondergeschiktheid, inferioriteit en onderwerping. Evenzeer is het noodzakelijk inzicht te hebben in tegenkrachten, onderhandelingen, verzet, conflicten en oppositie.

Evenwel, wat gezien kan worden als punten van verzet, van uitdaging en tarting, is verweven met elementen van meegaandheid, conformisme en onderworpenheid. Ondergeschiktheid is dus zowel een handeling die van buitenaf wordt afgedwongen als ook een toestand die men zich zelf doet
ondergaan. De verwevenheid van deze processen, speciaal met betrekking tot de relatie tussen de seksen, is het onderwerp van mijn studie.

In Hoofdstuk 1 begin ik met een korte beschrijving van drie vrouwen en de manier waarop zij met ondervloekheid omgaan in hun dagelijks leven in Ayuquila. De drie vrouwen zijn betrokken bij verschillende soorten activiteiten en hebben ook verschillende relaties met en opvattingen ten opzichte van 'kapitaal' en ondernemers, en werken daardoor met verschillende perspectieven en motivaties om zich in bepaalde netwerken te begeven en relaties op te bouwen met mannen, autoriteiten en andere vrouwen. Wat de drie vrouwen evenwel gemeen hebben is subordinatie en zelf-subordinatie, of die nu opgelegd is of zelf gekozen, wordt gebruikt om slagen te verzachten, persoonlijke ruimte te creëren of om macht te consolideren.

Ayuquila is een dorp van 161 huishoudens in een belangrijk irrigatiegebied langs de hoofdweg van El Grullo naar Guadalajara in Jalisco, westelijk Mexico. Het economische leven in Ayuquila steunt voornamelijk op landbouw en de handel in landbouwprodukten. In Hoofdstuk 2 geef ik een korte beschrijving van het leven in Ayuquila zoals ik dat in 1988 heb waargenomen. Mijn waarnemingen betrokken een netwerk van relaties die vorm krijgen door banden met verschillende omgevingen, organisatievormen in het gebruik van land door de dorpelingen en hun werk-afspraken, economische strategieën, patronen van huishoudens en solidariteits-netwerken. Hierdoor realiseerde ik mij het belang van specifieke domeinen van interactie voor het begrijpen van de reproduktie van sociale asymmetriën, hoe betrekkingen met de brede sociale en economische scenario's worden aangeknoopt en geherinterpreteerd en hoe het project is verweven met het dorpsleven.

Zulke domeinen beperken zich niet tot activiteiten die te maken hebben met duidelijk afgelopenen machtverhoudingen en evenmin demarkeren ze specifieke velden van sociale analyse, zoals de economie, de politiek of familie-verwant-

schap. Activiteiten binnen de domeinen impliceren ongelijksoortige relaties - die men kan zien als politiek, economisch, religieus of emotioneel - en zij verweven machtsrelaties die steunen op diverse normatieve kaders. In bepaalde domeinen worden de 'spelregels' door onderhandelingen en overleg vastgesteld, worden autoriteiten als zodanig erkend en worden de relaties met instanties, andere dorpsbewoners en de omgeving bepaald. Interactie binnen een domein gaat gepaard met duidelijke organisatorische activiteiten, criteria voor het evalueren en beïnvloeden van anderen en manieren om hulpbronnen veilig te stellen.

Het bijenhoudersproject werd een specifiek domein van interactie. In Hoofdstuk 3 geef ik een kort historisch overzicht van het project zoals het door de verschillende betrokken actoren werd beschreven. Hierdoor ben ik in staat te bediscussiëren hoe de vrouwen zichzelf zagen, hoe ze werden gekwalificeerd
en hoe dit het project en de perspectieven ervan vormde. De identiteiten van de
vrouwen in de verschillende stadia van het project werden in hoge mate
gekleurd door sociale verwachtingen, door voorstellingen die men had van
hiërarchische structuren, en door het erkennen van beperkingen. Ik onderzoek
de grenzen die de vrouwen stellen aan hun initiatieven en ambities en de strijd
die ze moeten voeren ter verdediging van hun eigen speelruimte in hun
interactie met de staat, maar ook met de ejido, die in het dorp algemeen wordt
opgevat als een mannenwereld. Ik bestudeer de kritische sociale raakvlakken,
waar leden van de groep worden blootgesteld aan contacten met 'mensen van
buiten' en aan definities, ideeën, voorstellingen en interpretaties. Ik analyseren
de wijze waarop discursieve praktijken zich reproduceren en veranderen en ik
onderzoek de verstregeling van handelingen, strategieën, opvattingen en
zelfbeelden waarbinnen kennis en macht worden gecreëerd, tot onderwerp van
onderhandeling worden gemaakt en worden getransformeerd. Ik benadruk hoe
belangrijk het is dat hun activiteiten en hun relaties tot anderen werden
gekwalificeerd en hoe de kwalificaties die de vrouwen zichzelf gaven zich
wijzigden. Dit verwijst naar de relevantie van kennis in het proces waarbij
sociale relaties tot stand gebracht worden.

Het domein van de familie wordt besproken in Hoofdstuk 4, waarin ik de
familie- en sociale-netwerken in kaart breng die de interacties modelleren. Ik ga
na hoe de bijenhoudsters werden gegroepeerd in bepaalde netwerken - vaak met
verbindingslijnen naar andere domeinen binnen het dorp - waar problemen
werden besproken, verplichtingen en stilzwijgende afspraken werden aangegaan,
en emoties, loyaliteiten en meningen werden gedeeld. In dit hoofdstuk worden
vier soorten netwerken geïntroduceerd en gecontrasteerd: 1) een genealogisch
overzicht van het netwerk van banden van verwantschap en aansluiting
waartoe de vrouwen van de groep behoren; 2) een reeks net-diagrammen, die
specifieke typen van onderlinge transacties en verplichtingen weergeven; 3) een
samengesteld net-diagram dat de veelvoudigheid en dichtheid van die banden
aangeeft; 4) een boom-diagram dat de patronen die door de verschillende
subgroepen worden gevormd contrasteert en de sociale afstand tot andere leden
van de groep illustreert. Ik beschrijf hoe familie-netwerken functioneren in de
groep en toon aan dat ze niet statisch zijn en ook geen externe structuur
vormen, maar worden gecreëerd en van betekenis voorzien door de verschillende
actoren in hun interrelaties met bepaalde netwerken. Dit brengt een analyse
met zich mee van splitsingen binnen de groep, hoe men daarmee omging, of
hoe ze werden vervangen door andere relaties. Deze onenigheden en de
pogingen van de vrouwen om de kloven te overbruggen leverden waardevolle
informatie over het proces van samenwerking.
De manieren waarop de verschillende banden worden gecombineerd en er zin aan wordt gegeven, worden grotendeels bepaald door de leefwerelden van de vrouwen, of liever, door de ontmoeting van de leefwerelden die in het project plaats vindt. Dit is duidelijk in de drie profielen van de vrouwelijke bijenhouders, die ik ook schets in dit hoofdstuk. Ik heb drie bijenhoudsters gekozen uit verschillende sociale clusters binnen de groep om aspecten van hun dagelijks leven en hun ervaringen, motivaties en belangen in het project te bestuderen. Ik benadruk het belang van de groep, de ontmoetingen, de activiteiten voor de vormgeving van de leefwerelden van deze vrouwen. Individueel gebruikten de vrouwen het project en het gevoel van erbij te horen om hun eigen verwachtingen opnieuw te conceptualiseren, en om overeind te kunnen blijven bij hun pogingen om hun sociale relaties en strategieën te veranderen. Op die manier scheppen ze ruimte voor zichzelf en reconstrueren ze hun leefwereld.

De betrokkenheid van de vrouwen bij de verschillende netwerken geeft vorm aan hun activiteiten en beïnvloedt hun kijk op de UAIM en zijn perspectieven. Maar netwerken openen ook ruimten, dat wil zeggen, ze brengen mensen in aanraking met andere relatie-netwerken. Netwerken leveren coördinerende mechanismen voor de toewijzing van middelen, maar toch zijn het geen totaliserende systemen; hoewel ze een soort gedrag-bepalende functie hebben, oefenen ze als zodanig geen macht uit. Actoren maken gebruik van netwerken en passen ze aan aan hun onmiddellijke behoeften, geven er betekenis aan op grond van persoonlijke ervaringen en gebruiken ze waar mogelijk om invloed uit te oefenen. Vandaar dat netwerken alleen bestaan dank zij de regulerende activiteiten van de leden.

Dit toont het cruciale belang aan van ‘agency’ in sociale relaties en van de handelingen en gedragingen van bezitters en bemiddelaars op het punt van macht in netwerken en domeinen. Met de analyse van een sociale situatie - een bijeenkomst waarin de vrouwen als groep in direct contact staan met een dominante groep in het dorp, typisch een organisatie van mannen - wordt in Hoofdstuk 5 ingegaan op de complexiteit en subtiliteit van autoriteit en gezag in de dagelijkse uitoefening van macht. Tijdens de vergadering werden ervaringen, meningen en redeneringen overgeheveld van het domein van de staat naar het domein van de ejido, van de ejido naar het project, enzovoort. De interactie tussen de groep bijenhoudsters en de ejidatarios laat zien hoe ‘agency’ werkt in het naar voren brengen van dergelijke elementen. We zien ook hoe op een bepaald moment en op een bepaalde plaats de grenzen aan de machtsverhoudingen verschillend worden geïnterpreteerd, hoe verwachtingen worden vertekend en zaken verhuld. Macht heeft te maken met de beschikking over middelen, met de identificatie en verdediging van bepaalde belangen en de
beschikking over middelen om actie te voeren. In de strijd om toegang tot middelen en macht, komen 'power brokers' naar voren en worden gezagsverhoudingen opnieuw bepaald.

Deze processen impliceren 'maps of knowledge', onderhandelingen over belangen, loyaltiten en formele identificatie van macht, alsook bepaalde vaardigheden en technieken van machtssuitoefening. Hoewel niet fysiek aanwezig in de situatie, oefent de staat toch macht uit door middel van de interpretaties van de verschillende actoren, die zich neerleggen bij wat zij beschouwen als zijnde zijn bedoelingen.

De staat is typisch een macht, dat wil zeggen de staat wordt algemeen erkend als een machtige actor. In Hoofdstuk 6 geef ik aan hoe die macro-macht is opgebouwd en laat ik zien wat de mechanismen zijn waardoor zij als zodanig wordt erkend in het geval van de UAIM projecten in Mexico. Ik bespreek de lotgevallen van de verschillende UAIM's in bepaalde delen van het land en ik richt mij met name op de manier waarop de staat actoren in zijn eigen belangen-netwerk weet te verstrikken en zo voor vrouwen de gelegenheid schept om zich in economische activiteiten te begeven. Tegelijkertijd evenwel worden daardoor bepaalde aspecten van de levens van vrouwen ingekaderd. Ik concentreer mij op de UAIM zelf als een juridisch model en een vorm van macht en ik ga na hoe mensen, emoties, geld, technologie, beeldvorming van de seksen, juridische systemen en documenten geassocieerd en gedissocieerd worden met sociale netwerken - fysiek en symbolisch - om macht te creëren of de ontwikkeling ervan tegen te gaan. Ik bespreek de benadering van Callon (1981) en Latour (1986) van de analyse van macht, die naar mijn idee in hoge mate heeft bijgedragen tot de conceptualisatie en bestudering ervan. Evenwel, hun analyses laten essentiële aspecten buiten beschouwing, die beter kunnen worden benaderd vanuit een actor-georiënteerde benadering. Een belangrijke premisse is dat macht niet een tevoren vaststaand attribuut is dat men heeft of niet, maar een flexibel middel dat op alle niveaus wordt gebruikt en aan onderhandelingen onderhavig is.

Hoofdstuk 7 weeft de draden samen en vergelijkt mijn bevindingen met geldende machtstheorieën. Ik geef aan hoe het conceptualiseren van macht zoals verankerd in uiteenlopende relaties, in processen, verbindingen, scheidingen en strategieën, ons de verschillende gezichten van macht laten zien alsmede de compromissen, onderhandelingen en inspanningen. Machtsverhoudingen ontstaan in wisselwerking en worden niet eenzijdig opgelegd. Macht is niet inherent aan een positie, plaats of persoon; geen enkele actor bezit de macht en het is geen nulsom, waarbij de een alles heeft en de ander niets. Belangen zijn niet noodzakelijkerwijs de stuwende kracht achter macht, maar ze worden bepaald en vastgelegd tijdens het proces.
Samenvatting

Het is noodzakelijk om de sociale constructie van zingeving te onderzoe-
ken, waardoor duidelijker wordt hoe gecompliceerd machtspatronen zijn. Een
machthebber - of het nu een collectieve of een individuele actor is - wordt ook
beïnvloed door mythen, taal en symbolen. Vandaar dat machthebbers tegelijkert-
tijd meer en minder doen dan hun eigen wil. Minder omdat ze rekening moeten
houden met wat anderen willen; als ze hun zin willen krijgen moeten ze toestaan
dat ook de wensen van anderen aan bod komen. Dus wordt hun vrijheid van
handelen beperkt door de macht van hen die in ondergeschikte posities
verkeren. En meer, omdat macht meer is dan je eigen zin krijgen. In het
algemeen kan men zeggen dat degenen die als machtig worden gezien,
beslissingen nemen en processen beïnvloeden die eigenlijk helemaal geen deel
uitmaken van hun strategieën. Het zou daarom te eenvoudig zijn om macht te
zien als een eenzijdig proces, waarbij gestelde doelen uiteindelijk bereikt
worden. De complexiteit van machtsrelaties schuilt in de grotendeels onbedoelde
consequenties, in het complex van vaste patronen die gestuurd of gekanaliseerd
worden in bepaalde richtingen en dat niet alleen door de machthebber, maar ook
door de sociale achterban die identiteiten en rollen toebedeelt en daar vervolgens
weer op reageert door zich op een enigszins lager plan te stellen, in een
ondergeschikte positie.

Zo schrijven we vaak ‘agency’ en macht toe aan sociale categorieën zoals
klasse, etniciteit en geslacht, aan middelen zoals kapitaal en land en aan
instituties als de staat. Zo verlenen wij macht aan die abstracte grootheid die we
staat noemen en wij gedragen ons dienovereenkomstig. Dit mag dan weinig van
doen hebben met de feitelijke intelligentie, kennis of handelingsbekwaamheid
van het subject van ‘agency’, het is wel van belang voor het beperken van
mogelijke effecten op anderen. Banken, coöperaties, koningen en priesters
krijgen kwaliteiten toegeschreven die afstralen op het handelen van mensen. Dit
getuigt van een wijze van sociaal toegeschreven ‘agency’, een vermogen tot
handelen, die door anderen wordt toegestaan, in tegenstelling tot de ‘agency’
van individuen in hun omgaan met de wereld rondom hen. Vandaar dat de
‘agency’ van een actor kan worden ‘uitgerekt’ om de actieve of passieve
handelingen van anderen te incorporeren, waarbij mensen, objecten of symbolen
worden opgenomen in netwerken of domeinen. Domeinen kunnen macht
uitoefenen binnen een macro-perspectief, maar ze zullen zelf aan machtsver-
schuivingen onderhevig zijn door de interne sociale relaties. Discoursen en
interpretaties kunnen ‘dominant’ worden als ze opgenomen worden in een
speciale strategie en instrumenteel worden bij het beperken of bepalen van het
gedrag van veel mensen of sociale groeperingen. De kwaliteit van bepaalde
machtsrelaties op macro-niveau kan alleen gezien worden als een gevolg van en
niet als oorzaak. Dit geeft ons een meer 'kwetsbare' versie van macro-relaties, zij het dat het wel een meer dynamische is.

De machthebber moet zich verlaten op de handelingen van anderen, die zijn macht erkennen. Deze handelingen houden doorgaans onderwerping, gehoorzaamheid of verzet in. Het begrip verzet, evenwel, impliceert al een identificatie van een zwakkere kracht die een sterkere weerstreeft en niet wil wijken. Maar ik betoog dat machthebbers niet bij voorbaat als zodanig moeten worden gekenschetst. Inschikkelijkheid brengt over het algemeen met zich mee dat men accepteert dat men het voertuig wordt van andermans belangen, waardoor het machtsnetwerk wordt versterkt. Men kan natuurlijk ook zonder het te weten het voertuig zijn van macht door deel uit te maken van zo'n netwerk zonder verzet of onderwerping, of door in te stemmen met bepaalde representaties die ermee gepaard gaan en zo geloofwaardigheid en effectiviteit te verlenen aan de associaties die de macht vormen. Inschikkelijkheid verleent zeer belangrijke steun aan machtsnetwerken en deze bijdrage wordt vaak indirect gegeven.

Inschikkelijkheid, evenals ondergeschiktheid, houden niet alleen de machtsuitoefening in stand, maar ook het vermogen om macht uit te oefenen. Dit vermogen is niet een opeenhoping van macht zoals sociologen vaak beweren; het wordt geschraagd door een sociale erkenning van rangen, gezag en superioriteit, waar de handeling diegenen treft die een actor als machtig erkennen of die bereid zijn (of gedwongen door sociale omstandigheden, de kruisingen van de domeinen etc) om zich te onderwerpen aan wat zij zien als de bedoelingen ervan. Dit hoeft niet noodzakelijk een eindigheid tot gevolg te hebben en kan onafhankelijkheid zijn van de wil of intenties van de mogelijke machthebber.

Ondergeschiktheid wijst aan de ene kant op lijdzaamheid, op het voertuig zijn van andermans 'agency'. Zij staat toe dat macht wordt verkregen door er voor te zwichten, door toe te geven aan de wensen van de ander, waardoor een eventuele sociale positie of status wordt opgegeven om een sterkere, betere, of meer geschikte machthebber te erkennen. Aan de andere kant behoeft dit wijken voor macht niet direct voort te komen uit de wensen van anderen, maar kan dit resulteren uit de 'agency' van de 'ondergeschikte' actoren zelf. Ondergeschiktheid is dan niet een nulsom, waarbij degenen die toegeven noodzakelijkerwijs machteloos zijn. Als macht beweeglijk is en constant onderhandeld wordt, dan moeten zij die macht uitoefenen zich ook onderwerpen aan discoursen, sociale veronderstellingen en wensen van anderen. Daarom kan ondergeschiktheid niet uitsluitend worden toegeschreven aan de lagere strata van de samenleving, aan marginale groeperingen of aan de 'verliezers'. Machtsrelaties maken het noodzakelijk voor machthebbers zelf ook weer te zwichten voor macht.
In het laatste hoofdstuk bespreek ik de concepten macht en machtstoekenning die ten grondslag liggen aan ontwikkelingsdenken en praktijk. Ik stel dat macht veelal verkeerd wordt geïnterpreteerd en dat in de begrippen machtstoekenning en participatie veel kwesties niet aan de orde komen, zeker waar het de relaties tussen sekens betreft. Dus moeten we ons afvragen wat moet worden verstaan onder participatie, wat de belangen van de begunstigden zijn, zodat ze kunnen worden geholpen zichzelf te helpen, en wie het object van machtstoekenning is en wie het zou moeten zijn. De nieuwe verbanden die ontstaan door projecten, groepstrainingen en andere activiteiten gericht op de machtstoekenning aan de lokale bevolking vormen domeinen van interactie, wat ook de actie van 'keepers' en 'brokers' vereist om ze te ondersteunen, van mensen die schema's en plannen begrijpen, die verstand hebben van organiseren, strategische visies hebben, er op uit zijn anderen te overtuigen en te motiveren, managementtalenten hebben en de behoefte om voorkomende problemen te analyseren, teneinde hun "project" uit te breiden door anderen erbij te betrekken, en te voorkomen dat van gestelde doelen wordt afgeweken.

Vrouwen verzetten zich op velerlei manieren tegen bemoeienis van buitenaf en trachten meer voor zichzelf op te komen, maar dit is vervlochten met kortetermijn belangen, emoties en loyaliteiten. Als begeleiders van gender-georiënteerde ontwikkelingsprojecten proberen de initiatiefnemers vaak vrouwen af te brengen van zulke ideeën over hun belangen en loyaliteiten. Hun eigen ideeën over alternatieven voor vrouwen zijn vaak simpel en komen voort uit vragen als van wie het land is, wie het geld uitgeeft en wie de relevante beslissingen neemt. Maar een analyse van ontwikkelingsinitiatieven kan niet voorbij gaan aan een bestudering van de complexe machtspatronen en strijd over beelden, belangenanalyses en interpretaties die plaats vinden op het raakvlak van "buitenstaanders" en "lokale groeperingen". Deze confrontaties op de contactvelden tussen sociale actoren geven gestalte aan de arena van interventie-situaties, waar macht wordt genomen en gegeven.
CURRICULUM VITAE

Marfa Magdalena Villarreal was born in Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico, on May 29, 1954. She is married and has two children, Ana, who is 15 and Sara, 14. Her professional studies include two years of Communication Sciences in the Technological Institute of Advanced Studies of Monterrey, a B.A. in History in the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and the M.Sc. in the Management of Agricultural Knowledge Systems in the Wageningen Agricultural University of the Netherlands, for which she was awarded a distinction.

Her professional activities have mainly been linked to development work, research and teaching. She lived in rural areas of the west coast of Mexico, responsible for the programming, organization and implementation of income-generating activities for peasant men and women's groups for 12 years, first in collaboration with a national Non-Government Organization (Maya, A.C.) and later with a local one (Educación y Desarrollo de Occidente, A.C.). Her work comprised a combination of promotion, extension, and action research following a participative methodology, where popular education was a central feature. She joined in the struggle of peasant groups and communities with respect to issues of land tenure, production, commercialization of their products and access to services such as drinking water and medical aid, encouraging the formation of men’s and women’s groups for the advancement of their demands.

She has acted as a counsellor for Centres of Basic and Intensive Education for drop-out children from the official education system, in the suburban area of Guadalajara; has been director of the project 'Grassroots Participant Education' undertaken by EDOC, A.C. and also President of this latter institution, as well as a counsellor in the linkage institution PRAXIS, A.C., within the programme concerning the 'Formation of Rural Promoters'. She has also carried out consultancies for Mexican and Dutch Non-Government Organizations working in Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras (1986, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992).
Her academic activities have included:

- Researcher within the group of Technical Council of the Scientific and Humanistic Coordination of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) in the programme of 'Strategies of Investment in the Rural Sector', carrying out research in the southern part of Nayarit, Mexico.
- Researcher in the Project 'Meat and Milk for Sugar Cane', coordinated by CONACYT (Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología) covering the south-east region of Mexico.
- Participation in a research-for-practice project: 'The Collective Organization for Rural Production in the Irrigation District Number 93 of Tomatlán'.
- Researcher in the elaboration of the 'Agricultural Diagnosis of the Southern and Coastal Regions of the State of Jalisco', undertaken by the Institute of Studies for Rural Development, Maya, A.C.
- Researcher in the project 'Peasant Education and Organization' undertaken by Educación y Desarrollo de Occidente, A.C. in coordination with the Centre of Agrarian Studies in the Southern region of Jalisco.
- Researcher for the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO), in a study carried out in the north of Lake Chapala.
- Lecturer in Rural Sociology, in the Department of Sociology of the University of Guadalajara.
- Researcher in the joint research programme of the Colegio de Jalisco with the University of Wageningen, Department of Sociology of Rural Development, where the focus of the study consisted in analyzing the different strategies peasants, women and other actors devised within interface situations produced by state intervention.
- Part-time Research Associate, Department of Sociology of Rural Development, Wageningen Agricultural University.

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PUBLICATIONS

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