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THE ROLES AND ATTITUDES OF MODERN URBAN MEXICAN MIDDLE-CLASS WOMEN

The Ohio State University

Ph.D. 1983

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THE ROLES AND ATTITUDES OF MODERN URBAN MEXICAN MIDDLE-CLASS WOMEN

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Roberta H. Miller, O.P., B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1983

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this first chapter, the research problem is presented and described within its historic-cultural context and in relation to modernization. A literature review relates the question first to the broader topic of the changing roles of women in the face of world-wide development and then to Mexico within the context of its societal evolution.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This is a study of role modifications among urban middle-class women in Mexico as precipitated by the processes of industrialization and modernization. An updated profile of their roles is warranted by reason of the socio-economic changes being wrought by government-stimulated industrialization since 1940. Studies have been made of its effects upon rural pueblos and urban barrios as well as on the role adaptations of the women in these communities. However, little has been written about its effects upon urban middle-class women. Yet it is known that their roles have diversified and that opportunities for their participation in the economic, social, and political fabric of industrialized nations have increased. Also, since middle-class women usually provide role models for economically upward-bound women (CIDHAL 1980b), a better projection of the participation of women in Mexico's development
can be acquired through obtaining a current role profile of Mexican ur-
ban, middle-class women.

The particular focus of this research, however, is on discerning
what influence, if any, the historic-cultural tradition of Mexico has
had on the type of role changes for middle-class women which occur in
the processes of industrialization and modernization. That is, how will
the role of these women as the center of home and family be modified as
a result of increased corporate and international economic interests in
Mexico? How will technological advances in household appliances, commu-
ications, and industry alter their perspectives? Their country has
been undergoing these processes for the past forty years. More women of
this social class than of the laboring or even the elite classes are
likely to have career or professional training. Consequently, it is to
be expected that their role perceptions and expectations have been al-
tered by the demands of a modernizing society for a technological and
professional labor force.

Traditional roles

Traditionally, the roles of the middle-class Mexican woman have been
defined in terms of male-female complementarity. The woman was expected
to fulfill the basic roles of wife and mother while the man was to be her
protector and provider (Elu de Lenero 1980, Lavrin 1978, Lomnitz and Liz-
aur n.d.). Family ties claimed primary loyalties and marriages were more
or less arranged to further the extended family interests. However, un-
til now, subordination has been the ideal for the woman in her relation-
ship to men (Stevens 1973b, Meyer 1977). The man, whether as husband,
father, employer, or lover, was to be the dominant, aggressive, and pro-
tective figure. In turn, the woman has been expected to be passive,
patient, self-sacrificing, and obedient (Royer 1949, Meyer 1977, Piñon 1982). Marriage has been the goal for most Mexican women, with employment only a transitory prior stage (Meyer 1977).

**Industrialization and education**

Since 1940 the Mexican government has expanded education to train teachers and technicians for the country's economic development. Education has been an important factor in the generation of role changes for middle-class women in the industrialized nations (Boulding 1980, Kreps 1976). As economies diversified and job opportunities requiring technical and/or professional expertise increased, middle-class women utilized expanded facilities to become qualified professionals and technicians. In many industrialized nations, moreover, as women pursued careers for themselves to the postponement or exclusion of marriage, they have valued independence, personal fulfillment, and assertiveness. In the United States, equality in their personal relationships with men, concomitant with respect in the occupational arena, has become the goal for many women (Kreps 1976).

At least two generations of urban Mexican middle-class women have now been educated during the nation's ongoing industrialization and modernization. One can now ask, what are the effects of their educational and life experiences upon their present and future role perceptions, expectations, and ambitions for themselves. If middle-class women provide a role model for working-class women, a shift toward role diversification or the combination of career and marriage becomes an important factor in any analysis of socio-cultural change in Mexico.

In some industrialized countries such as France or Japan (Silver 1977, Lebra 1976), women of the middle class have not undergone role
differentiation to any significant degree. Nor, apparently, have the values of independence and individualism become prominent among them. Some studies concerning women in various countries suggest that the history and depth of cultural traditions of a particular people exert a modifying influence by which social changes being wrought by a new economic system become congruent with existing roles and values (Giele and Smock 1977, Lebra 1976).

**Significance and hypotheses**

The significance of this study lies in the investigation of the connection between the modifying influence of a nation's culture in relation to female roles and industrial-induced role changes. As Boserup (in Wellesley 1977) has stated, few systematic studies have been undertaken of the interrelationship between technological, demographic, and cultural changes affecting women. This study of Mexican middle-class women provides more information for such an undertaking.

Because of the duration of industrialization in Mexico and the role alterations among women found in other industrialized nations, it was expected that similar changes would now be evident among Mexico's urban middle-class women. Discovered role shifts could lead to an estimation of the strength of forces encouraging independence and individualism. We asked: were the women in this socio-economic group generally changing in their expectations of what roles they could fill in society? Were they moving toward role diversification? Or, despite the role differentiation the processes of government-induced industrialization and modernization might have been expected to produce, were these women keeping within the traditional cultural framework which dictated motherhood and wifehood?

Modernization in this context refers to those elements affecting the
Social relationships of the entire society: growth of urban centers, literacy, mass media communication, social class mobility, and the democratization of the body politic (Portes 1973:249).

In order to discern the existence of role change, three factors were selected for testing by means of interview and questionnaire: education, family size, and family bonds. Since the Mexican middle class could be assumed to consist of two groups—the traditional members by means of the families' socio-cultural background and those who, by means of education, marriage, or economic good fortune have recently moved into this social category, these criteria would apply to both. There was no indication in the literature that a clear-cut or measurable distinction could be made between these groups. Nor did it seem valid to establish an occupational criterion since that would entail too much subjectivity. As Lomnitz (personal communication) observed, it would be difficult to follow the socio-economic vicissitudes of middle or upper-class families and their members. By using criteria which were not tied to occupations or socio-economic mobility, it seemed possible to achieve greater objectivity in discerning attitudinal and role changes.

Various sources (Giele and Smock 1977, Hartmann 1981, Ericksen and Ericksen 1979, Inkeles 1969, Women's Bureau 1966, Committee on the College Student 1975, Kreps 1976) have shown that in the United States and elsewhere, as women and men attain higher levels of education, there may result more continuous employment, shared authority in the family, and lower fertility. We asked if this would be true also for Mexicans. Sexual dichotomization of family roles and traditional social attitudes may or may not be altered in the process of modernization depending upon the social network, education, and economic situation of the persons and
families involved (Denich 1974, Goode 1960, Ericksen and Ericksen 1979). Thus, it seemed possible to discern the tension between the forces of modernization and cultural tradition through the testing of hypotheses concerning these elements. The specific hypotheses formulated were:

a) Middle-class Mexican women increasingly will tend to reject their traditional passive, submissive female roles to the extent that they acquire professional or technical education.

b) Middle-class women will tend to limit the size of their families (number of children) where such limitation seems to enhance their personal independence and opportunities for employment or career advances.

c) The traditional family bonds and relationships will tend to be altered through increased role sharing as more middle-class women enter the work force.

Rationale

Having stated the problem, we now consider the underlying rationale. Industrialization involves the substitution of mechanized power and production for animal and human energy and labor. From the example of the industrialized nations of Western Europe and others such as the United States and Japan, we see the resultant dependence upon minerals and energy sources, the growth of international corporations and financial institutions. An urban, specialized and mobile work force must come into existence with the economy shifting from a land to a money base. Applied science and technology assume great importance as they stimulate innovation and change in the productive, communicative, and financial aspects of the economy. New industries are spawned and old ones altered.

Modernization is the allied process in which socio-cultural transformations occur as the society adapts to a complex, money-based economy.
(Steward 1967, Nash 1977). With occupational specialization, urbanization, and increasing social interdependence, the traditional extended family units lose importance or disintegrate as the nuclear family becomes more compatible with occupational mobility. A contradiction seemingly appears for women as they are relieved of time-demanding domestic chores. As a woman acquires free time through the acquisition of time-saving technology, she becomes enmeshed in consumerism and its correspondingly greater financial demands. Time may again become precious as she strives to find ways to cover the expenses of a higher standard of living.

With appropriate education women can enter the white-collar sector of the work force. The basic requirements for active participation in the restructuring of the elements of power, resources, and wealth include education and social as well as spatial mobility (Nash 1977). This usually means that persons through their own efforts and talents can achieve higher status and can enjoy the rewards of their success. However, for various social, legal, and ideological reasons, women have not generally shared in the process except vicariously through their menfolk (Boserup 1970, Wellesley 1977, Schlegel 1977).

The absence of role models may be a source of constraint for women as they leave the traditional pathways to follow careers or to combine a career with marriage. In Latin America, rather than compete with men in the job market, educated women select either independent professions or those considered proper for women's "maternal instincts"—teaching, nursing, etc. On the other hand, when professional women compete with men for high managerial or executive positions within the modern corporate and government structures as in Thailand, they seem to delay,
sometimes indefinitely, marriage and children (Springer and Gable 1981).

For endogenous social change to occur within the cultural framework of a modernizing society, the members of the society must know and understand it (Hall 1977). Otherwise, they seem to adopt the socio-cultural values of the industrialized powers who are present in the country encouraging its development (Mintz 1966, Boserup 1970). Sex-role differentiation favoring male acquisition of power and status accompanies the process (Mintz 1966, Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974, Nash and Safa 1980). Furthermore, it appears most important that the members of the developing nations' economic middle class understand their cultural influences since they are the social group capable and ready to utilize the forces for renovation and change in the pre-industrial state. They are literate and desirous of a share of political and economic power (Nash 1957).

In terms of our problem of the connection between cultural awareness and modernization, the middle class is often less tradition-bound, and therefore most likely to drop customs and attitudes perceived as outmoded and detrimental to their socio-economic mobility (Ramos 1962, Careaga 1974). Since our focus is upon individuals rather than upon the social structure per se, we shall use the term 'modernization' to mean those attitudinal and behavioral patterns associated with urban-industrial societies (Inkeles 1969, Nash 1977, Portes 1973): openness to innovation and change, ambitious, individualistic, respectful of the rights of others in their endeavors to succeed, self-sufficient, confident in the efficacy of one's own efforts, secularistic, educated, informed politically, and desirous of acquiring the most recent technologically-developed consumer goods. Although these characteristics and the criticisms (Portes 1973) as found in the literature are predicated upon male responses,
The concept of modernization is most applicable for an evaluation of the effects of socio-economic pressures exerted upon Mexican middle-class women as a result of the renewed efforts to industrialize.

The choice of Mexico

Mexico has experienced great economic and social development since 1940. At least two generations of women have matured during this period characterized by the expansion of urban growth, social services, and economic development. Women received the right to vote in 1953. One writer states this was not a step needed to further the entrance of women into the professions: Mexico has had more women doctors, dentists, and lawyers than the United States (Elmendorf 1977:139). The same writer asserts that "situational circumstances" in Mexico have created a wider range of alternative patterns of behavior for women now, superceding their culturally-bound roles (Elmendorf 1977:140). However, as several writers have also noted (Lewis 1959, Youssef 1972, Meyer 1977, Elmendorf 1977, Pescatello 1973, Elu de Lenero 1980), middle-class women, although the most qualified for white-collar employment by reason of their esteem for education, have generally by-passed careers. They have opted for a life of leisure within the marital framework.

Despite strong conservative pressures, some factors in Mexican society in the early 1980's--the oil-fueled economy, government development programs, geographic borders with the United States--might lead one to expect major role changes among the Mexican middle-class women. Bus, air, and car travel to the United States has become relatively inexpensive; likewise, business, recreational, and other communication media (telephone, cinema, computer, literature) between the two nations have
multiplied. Thus, Mexican women from middle-class families with any financial means most likely would have some personal contact with the attitudes and expectations of women in the United States. If educated women in the United States have become dissatisfied with their domestic roles in these days of time-saving technology, then why not educated Mexican women?

On the other hand, Mexico has a culture violently forged out of two ancient civilizations—Aztec and medieval Spanish. Although the result of this acculturative process is a three-tiered society composed of Indian, mestizo (Indian and Spanish), and criollo (Mexican-born Spanish), the roles for all women have been sexually defined. In both civilizations women's basic roles centered upon the home. The Conquest and the subsequent colonial circumstances defined the home as the proper place for women. The family became entrenched as the center of socialization, kinship ties, and economic interests.

Thus, urban educated women in Mexico today seem to be at a point where they can forge an acculturative path: one which combines career and marriage in some type of role complementarity with men.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview

The process of industrialization as it alters the economic structures of developing countries usually creates fluid social and political situations (Spicer 1961, Steward 1967, Nash 1977). The changes which occur in these interrelated areas tend to be irregular in the sense that transformation in one sector does not predictably affect or generate a specific change in another sector (Wellesley 1977). In fact, planned
programs for social change may fall short of their goals because insufficient attention in the planning projections has been given to such factors as cultural traditions and women's roles (Boserup 1970, Boulding 1980, Wellesley 1977, Kinzer 1973, Nash and Safa 1980, Jacquette 1982). One way of understanding the whole process of modernization is to focus upon certain aspects of roles as they undergo some type of transformation (Hamamsy 1957, Mintz 1966). Most attention in the literature has been given to the socio-economic changes wrought in the roles of working-class or rural-based women or women in pre-state societies (Mintz 1966, Denich 1974, Pescatello 1973, Reiter 1975, Giele and Smock 1977, Nash and Safa 1980). These social sectors, of course, have been affected most by the shift from an agrarian to an urban-industrial base. Women in the upper economic classes, however, are felt to have been unaffected, for the most part, in their roles and attitudes. The reason is that since the basic identification of all women as wives and mothers has remained unchanged, women in the 'elite' classes who remain in the home retain their social status. If they do work, their employment is commensurate with their status (Nash 1980:105).

As for industrialization promoting sexual equality, arguments flourish pro and con, often according to one's political outlook (Jacquette 1982, Nash and Safa 1980). However, sources usually agree that women are identified with the family, its continuity, and the loyalty of its members (Quinn 1977). Reiter argues that the state society organizes a sexual division between public and private spheres or domains with public functions as male and private ones as female (1975:273). The domain of the household usually limits the women's roles to service
and reproduction within narrow spatial and social areas.

Some writers make the point that the socialization of women must be transformed first because women are or have been raised either to accept a subordinate status in society or to submit to the expectations of family, teachers, and peers. A woman's world has focused upon home-making activities (Reiter 1975, Komarovsky 1946, Banton 1965, Goode 1960, Kreps 1976, Stevens 1973). Others argue that although industrialization has given women more mobility and freedom of action as a result of technological innovations, it does not necessarily liberate them from male dominance and authority. Women themselves perpetuate the system by motivating their sons to achieve (Jacquette 1982). It is obvious that sources of social control must weaken before women instill desires in their daughters to achieve success in the public realm.

Youssef (1972) notes that cultural norms for Latin American women in the working class are weak because of their high rate of illegitimacy and consequent survival needs. Stevens sees the move for equality in Latin America as originating among "educated middle-class mestizo women in countries whose population is composed of more than one racial group" (1973:314). Perhaps Elmendorf is referring primarily to the educated middle-class white women when she cautions that it is the exceptional ones who have been willing to go against tradition (1977:163). A major problem for both groups is the lack of role models, especially in careers other than independent or nurturant ones.

Another qualifying factor noted by some observers is the present longer life-expectancy of women after child-bearing in developed and modernizing countries (Sullerot 1971, Stevens 1973b). Women have the
energy, time, and desire to be engaged in many things other than the home and grown children. Furthermore, as technology eliminates many areas requiring human labor, Third World developing nations face the similar dilemma of neo-industrial societies caused by the cybernetic revolution—under- and unemployment or early retirement. Latin American women—educated or not—are placed in competition with their men for available employment (Stevens 1973b, Nash and Safa 1980). Whether Latin American male dominance is a 'myth' (Stevens 1973, Pescatello 1973) or a reality, economic competition in terms of western individualism and equal labor opportunities for educated women will not bring about socio-economic development beneficial to both sexes.

In light of the factors of increased longevity, technological underemployment, and an inverse relationship between developed resources and population in Third World countries, an interesting approach is taken by Schlegel (1977:27):

...taking the long view, the industrial mode of production in itself can be a positive factor in sexual equality...that it entails no requirement within itself for procreative activities, which are left to the domestic and educational institutions, and therefore no requirement for the division of labor by sex. The sexual inequality that persists in industrial societies does so for reasons having nothing to do with the requirements of production. Procreative decisions occur within the privacy of the home...

She concludes that "technological changes have isolated the unit of production from the unit of reproduction, thus removing a functional requirement for the sexual division of labor within the unit of production" (Schlegel 1977:36). What is happening is that women's expectations for occupational success have increased. As goals change, women become dissatisfied or frustrated with restraints upholding their
basic roles or confining them to service or support-oriented employment.

From the Latin American perspective, Elu de Lenero takes the approach that women should not follow the path of birth control in order to achieve personhood and equality. "Access to education and greater participation in the labor force can heavily favor this change, but alone they are not enough" (1980:65). She advocates that women call upon their very sexuality—their procreative abilities—in order to humanize their society. Consumerism is dehumanizing civilization; technology, as it currently is developing, will not effect a transformation in the image of woman as an object. Women may have

to reduce their biological fertility, but their social responsibility does not lie in merely being less fertile. At this critical moment, women find themselves in a strategic position because they have succeeded in entering the system, and they must develop their procreative abilities to a level that may have been impossible to achieve previously. Women have in their hands the possibility of procreating a new culture, a new family, and—a new women (Elu de Lenero 1980:66).

That is, women must utilize their procreativity in its broadest sense in order to transform the prevailing value system of an industrial society which alienates and depersonalizes people. As professional and career-proficient women enter the work force, Lenero urges that they take up the challenge to create a more humane system in which life and persons will not be sacrificed to the acquisition of objects and to the dictates of bureaucracy.

**Mexican middle-class women**

Little has been written about Mexican middle-class women. The Mexican middle class itself has not been the object of much research. The greater number of studies focus on tribal groups, **pueblos**, or urban **barrios** (Chiñas 1973, Lewis 1949, 1951, 1959, 1961, Foster 1967,
Kemper 1977, Reichert 1981). One reason is the potential ease for defining research limits in terms of space, population, and scope. Another is the more apparent impact of the processes of industrialization and modernization upon these entities.

In regard to women, these influences most often have relegated them to repetitive, low-income employment or to domestic service jobs. Women at all socio-economic levels receive little actual protection from the law against discrimination. More attention has been given to working-class or rural women in Mexico as elsewhere because these women, usually with little or no formal education, experience extensive exploitation sexually and economically as they enter the industrial and service labor market—restaurants, commercial cleaners, clothing factories, assembly plants, etc. (Salazar 1980). Furthermore, the narrow cultural definition of women's 'natural' roles and characteristics contributes to shaping the demand for female labor, limiting them to occupations related to their womanly nature (Salazar 1980:188, Arizpe 1977).

The relatively few Mexican women who are professionals working with men have been noted in an inclusive report to be constantly under pressure from their male cohorts: they are betraying their sex by working; their comportment is not feminine; their work is inferior (CIDHAL 1980a).

The literature has been ambiguous in its identification of a Mexican middle class. Some use the term itself—Arizpe (1977) and Lewis (1959) for example; others such as Salazar (1980) use the general term 'favored classes'; Kinzer (1973) groups together 'middle and upper'. The 'literate society' is equated with the 'better classes' by Royer (1949). To define or to describe with exactness the middle class of
Mexican society is practically impossible in this analysis. That it exists is specifically affirmed in the literature by writers in Mexico and in the United States (Meyer 1977, Lewis 1959, Ramos 1962, Careaga 1974, Vich 1980). But their indices vary so that the identification of the middle class is founded upon occupation and education either specifically or by implication, or upon income and material acquisitions, or upon a cultural concept of lifestyle, values, and attitudes, or upon social organization.

All would agree that the middle class is a direct result of economic growth and development. It has been enlarged in the twentieth century with technological and industrial expansion and the growth and diversification of the educational system. The overall result is that the middle class of Mexico contains within itself social levels according to power and influence, traditional or newly-arrived status, and ethnic background.

For the purpose of this study, the concept of middle class is based upon the combination of the factors of education, occupation, and material level of well-being as evidenced by possession of home, car, and household furnishings. For the most part, the range of occupations include the traditional proprietors, professionals such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, and the bureaucrats and corporation employees characteristic of the industrial societies. Women are members of this group either through marriage, family, or career education. The laboring classes in Mexico generally have little formal education. Trade craftsmen such as mechanics, plumbers, or carpenters learn on the job as apprentices. They have low status in relation to those occupations
requiring some years of education. Nurses and librarians only recently are gaining respect as their training is formalized through educational coursework and extended time.

Since careers or professions have been described as outside the ideal framework of most middle-class Mexican women, and the level of their formal education has appeared low (in comparison to that of the middle-class women in twentieth century United States), it seems important to identify some specific socio-cultural aspects of this class which is being studied. It is also necessary because, although it cannot be defined in an absolute manner, the middle class provides the role models for a majority of Mexican women (Meyer 1977:122, CIDHAL 1980b). As documented by CIDHAL, a non-profit organization based in Cuernavaca whose purpose is to work for social justice in Mexico, the public media—television, the press, the cinema—project the image of the traditional Mexican middle-class woman: she does not work outside the home; she strives to fulfill perfectly her roles as wife and mother. The evil woman is one who works, is ambitious, deceitful, and competitive with men.

In his popular study Five Families (1959) Lewis presented the vignettes of five socio-economic levels in Mexican society through a representative family unit for each: the subsistent villager, the first generation rural-urban migrant, the urbanized working-class tenement dweller, the enterprising worker with middle-class aspirations, and the 'new rich' middle class. Although most of the women were seen as resigned to their economic deprivation, they were active in husbanding their scarce resources and in manipulating the men in their lives as much as possible
to their own advantage. For this reason, Kinzer states that "it is a mystery why Lewis transformed his gusty ribald ladies into symbols of resignation with 'martyr complexes'" (1973:303).

On the other hand, if Isabel Castro was intended to be a modern-day representative of a sizeable number of Mexican middle-class women, Lewis is consistent in his portrayal of a passive, weak woman caught in the web of male dominance and economic dependency. Judging by his introductory remarks, Lewis himself had little respect for her:

Isabel, his wife, came from an impoverished middle-class family with upward-striving ambitions. She married David because of his money and is now staying with him for the same reason. She would not know how to support her four children alone. Because of her need for luxury, she lacks the resourcefulness and independence of lower-class women who readily support themselves when their marriage is no longer pleasing to them or when they are temporarily abandoned (1959:28).

Careaga, a Mexican male sociologist, supports this view of the modern middle-class Mexican woman when he describes her as being

always in a situation of inferiority, incapable of exercising the littlest acts of individual freedom, constantly vigilant and controlled by a puritanical and selfish education (1974:68, my translation).

The machismo (defined by Lewis as masculinity and often accompanied by the possession of a mistress) exhibited by the husband, the self-made man, is supposedly a strong trait among urban middle- and upper-class men—rather than among the popular classes of peasants and workers (1959:29). In The Children of Sanchez (1961) Consuelo, who acquired a career education to become a teen-aged secretary, never was able to escape sexual exploitation at the hands of her middle-class employers. Yet, women researchers, publishing later, have described machismo as a trait stemming from male insecurity and as affording
women many possibilities for behind-the-scene manipulation and control (Elmendorf 1977:142). For Kinzer the macho trait is one by which a Latin man must constantly prove his manhood, either through physical strength or sexual potency. The macho man upholds the double-standard whereby his woman must always be faithful, constant, and pure (Kinzer 1973:302). However, she denies the stereotype of the resigned, passive, devoted wife and mother. Rather, she says, it is a myth perpetuated by biased or socially-restricted researchers. For example, researchers from the United States could not gain access for interviews to upper-class respondents. Consequently, machismo is a trait really characteristic of the lower-class males who suffer from job insecurity (Kinzer 1973:303, Palau 1974). Other researchers, such as Lewis, are said to have misinterpreted or ignored their data in which women had problems not necessarily attributable to machismo. Moreover, Kinzer refers to comparative research studies demonstrating the equal passivity of Mexican males. Since Mexican mothers "stress obedience and train for dependency," men often are less involved in politics, less achievement-oriented, more obedient, and dependent than men in the United States, Germany, or Italy (1973:303).

It could be that the various social interpretations of machismo reflect the functioning of the Mediterranean tradition with its honor and shame concepts (Peristiany 1966, Schneider 1971). As brought to the Americas by the conquering Spanish, men are cast in the roles of protector and defender of the women in their extended families. The need for this is based upon the fact that family honor, especially the honor of the men, is founded upon the women; however, the women are
considered incapable of resisting sexual temptation (Bourguignon 1980:322). Women cannot succeed in keeping purity without the assistance of male authority. Furthermore, a woman's adultery or failure to keep her pre-marital purity casts dishonor upon the husband or father or brother because the responsible man has failed in his duty (Pitt-Rivers 1966).

The Mexican view of this Spanish-Arabic concept, as expressed by Paz (1961:36), reflects the lingering impact of the Conquest. The Spanish are seen as considering the woman to be "a domesticated wild animal, lecherous and sinful from birth, who must be subdued with a stick and guided by the 'reins of religion'. Therefore, Spaniards consider other women--especially those of a race or religion different from their own--to be easy game."

To the Mexicans, who are implicitly influenced by their Indian heritage, the woman is not evil, but is an "incarnation of the life force." As such, she is mysterious; she cannot have "any personal, individual expression" of her sexual instincts. She must be passive in order to be activated and "shaped" by the male (Paz 1961:36-37). She is to have no will or desires of her own. Because the woman symbolizes the "stability and continuity of the race" (Paz 1961:38), she is not to be publicly profaned or treated disrespectfully. In the final analysis, however, her modesty and the vigilance of society cannot remove her vulnerability to men because, by her physical nature, she is open and submissive. Suffering becomes her coping strategy and, through it, in the words of Paz again (1961:39), "our women become like our men: invulnerable, impassive, and stoic." Once
again, the two traditions—Indian and Spanish—although derived from different sources, mesh to place women in a subordinate condition.

From another viewpoint—that of education—Lewis notes the absence of formal education for both men and women. Isabel, although from a middle-class background, received only a third-grade education. Respectable females did not support themselves (1959:289). Her children, including the girl, now would surpass their parents in schooling—as would children in the other families. This factor was seen as indicative of rapid culture change in Mexico (1959:30-31).

That education is an important key to improving the image of women and to diversifying their role opportunities does not assure their realization. Cultural factors operate to continue to direct women into the more traditional professional and technical careers in medicine, law, psychology, dentistry, business administration, public accountancy, or pharmaceutical sciences (Salazar 1980:199). As in most of Latin America, the State advocates the education of women as a means of preserving the family. Through its preservation, the social order is better maintained. In order to cope with the complexities of a technological society, and to be the more competent 'help-mate' and mother, a woman needs a formal education (Macías 1982, Lavrin 1978).

The image of the Mexican middle-class woman in a state of dependence and a condition of helplessness continues to be affirmed by later studies, however. Although variation according to geographic region, rural or urban contacts, or social strata is acknowledged, current observers still describe Mexican women as confined to the home and to
repetitive tasks, unconditionally subordinated to men, passive, lacking initiative, and self-sacrificing on behalf of the interests of husband and children (Salazar 1980:184-185). While women are in the process of acquiring employment in the public sphere, which requires higher intellectual expertise than previously, they are doing so according to the established societal norms. A description of role perspectives taught to all Mexican women is given by Meyer (1977:120):

Mexican women learn when they are very young that to be a good woman is to be a good mother and wife, and that their identity and self-realization depend exclusively on the family. In Mexico, women have always been the reflection of a man--first the father and later the husband--and, they never were considered important on their own. Women were taught that the reasons for their existence were marriage and child-bearing and that the highest virtues were self-denial, sacrifice, and submission.

Furthermore, it appears that, at least for those in the middle class, employment outside the home is not an ideal for women. If it is self-employment or work in an all-feminine environment, it appears to be equivalent to an acceptable side-line. Thus, Arizpe (1977:33) writes:

Mexican middle-class women generally consider work outside the home undesirable. According to social norms, their fulfillment, dignity, and respectability lie in home and children. Only a minority, usually university graduates, accept salaried work, notably of a professional kind, as a part of a woman's life. Thus it is only women whose husbands do not earn enough who generally engage in part-time activities to earn money. Self-employment by middle-class women outside the home usually involves having a small restaurant, or a small shop that sells cakes, flowers, knitting, etc.

Yet Salazar asserts that "among the more favored classes" exist female entrepreneurs, professionals (lawyers, journalists, researchers, professors), and government officials. Admittedly, their absolute
numbers in relation to the total female population are low (1980:192). Perhaps the suggestion made about Mexican urban society in the late 1940's—that traditional Mexican cultural norms for women shape the society's adaptation to incoming ideas and influences from the United States concerning careers for them (Royer 1949)—is applicable today, almost forty years later. According to the available literature, the family seems to be retaining its primacy for the Mexican middle class, and a woman's personal ambition still is directed mostly toward the well-being of the family and its kin.

Ethnicity separates Mexican women into several social levels. The three broad ethnic groups are: Indigenous, Mestizo, and Spanish. The latter is composed of two, sometimes antagonistic, groups: criollos and Spanish immigrants. These ethnic divisions correspond to a certain degree with the underlying presence of three subcultures, each possessing its own value system or criteria for evaluation and choice of behavior: folk or indigenous, traditional rural or urban, modern urban (Elu de Lenero 1980:52). Thus, as Lenero has so aptly observed,

It is better to speak of a superposition of cultures in a continuous but unfinished process of acculturation, in which all elements have not yet merged into one (1980:51).

In her discussion of these subcultures, Lenero proposes a basis for the continued persistence of the exaltation of the family, with its corresponding wife and mother role ideals, in spite of the pressures from a modernizing society (1980:52-54).

The value systems of the folk and traditional subcultures mesh perfectly—and have done so for the past 400 years. For both, social
prestige is derived from one's ascriptive status; the preservation and perpetuation of the extended family is a principal concern. Male and female roles are differentiated—nature determining their primary functions. Providence and/or Mother Nature determine and control life; the most acceptable and secure life is to preserve traditional customs and norms (Elu de Lenero 1980:52).

In the value complex of the modern subculture, on the other hand, social status is based upon achievement and individual competence. Self-responsibility allied with freedom of conscience replaces familial fealty and obligations. The nuclear family predominates and becomes a unit of consumption as State and corporate institutions take over family duties and services. Fertility is a matter of personal interest and desire, and "women's work responds to personal vocation" (Elu de Lenero 1980:53). Life is oriented toward material prosperity; science and technology not only open up new vistas, but can release persons from the control of disease, death, and sickness—from Providence.

It is possible to correlate Lenero's subcultures with the value system of the middle class. If it is agreed that the Mexican middle class has many ties with the working class in the sense that it is part of the upward mobility movement to desired wealth and status (Careaga 1974:29), then its members will reflect traditional values as well as modern ones. The urban working classes are principally mestizos or those who are in Lenero's traditional subculture category. Historically, most entrepreneurs, professionals, and bureaucrats have been Spanish descendants, urban, and the most educated. As such,
they can be identified with the category of the modern urban subculture. One finds the present-day middle class, composed of mestizos and criollos, upholding the modern urban values of education and science as means for socio-economic advancement and adhering less to religion (Macías 1982, Kinzer 1973, Vallier 1970). It is known for its material acquisition and consumption (Careaga 1974). Not only is its birthrate decreasing, but the trend toward the formation of nuclear family units is quickening for the middle class. Although role division continues and the majority of middle-class women appear to be economically dependent upon their husbands or male relations, more women are initiating movement toward vocational choice.

In summation, although the Mexican State has modernized itself—evidenced by its bureaucracy and multiple institutional services—the family as an institution has not changed as rapidly. Perhaps this is related to a 'felt' need for some stability and security by Mexicans, or perhaps it is to be related to the continued influence of the Church with its cultural tradition of the sacredness of family life. Some writers would connect the persistence of traditional family values with the differential role development of men and women. Men "achieve secular values more rapidly than women" (Elu de Lenero 1980:53). One reason given is that men are "in the world" while women are in the home where traditional cultural norms are maintained and perpetuated. Consequently, although more Mexican women are entering career-oriented jobs, they are doing so with a sense of guilt (Elu de Lenero 1980:54). However, this analysis is based upon empirical evidence from a 1969 survey of young women in "lower middle class
occupations (office workers, beauticians, salesgirls, etc.)" (Elu de Lenero 1980:56).

**Middle class development**

At this point, it would be helpful to review briefly the historical background of the Mexican middle class. Its history provides clarification of the causes for its continued cultural conservatism in regard to the family and to women's participation in the larger society.

If the socio-political strata of the Aztec civilization are considered in conjunction with its economic structure, then Mexico had a Pre-Conquest middle class (Vich 1980). In supplying the capital city with a variety of goods, its merchant class, the pochteca, connected Tenochtitlán to the other urban centers of Mexico and Central America. If those who facilitate exchange between producers and buyers, or who mediate between rulers and the ruled can be considered middle class, then the Indigenous civilizations had such a socio-economic group. Since the Spanish conquistadores only toppled and replaced the ruling strata, especially the high priests of the temples, the commercial and lower echelon politicians carried on (Vich 1980). It may be presumed that through miscegenation, they became part of the middle class which developed in New Spain.

The beginnings of the colonial middle class were the by-product of the development of the mining industry. The mining towns had to be supplied with food, services, materials, etc. Out of the infrastructure of merchants, suppliers, artisans, and bureaucrats emerged the initial members of this class (Vich 1980). However, its blossoming stagnated under imperial mercantile policies until the enactment of
more liberal trade laws by the Bourbons in the eighteenth century. At this time, cities or large towns began to flourish again. With the development of industry and a corresponding monetary system, the middle class grew in size and status (Vich 1980:100). Consequently, prior to Independence in 1810, the middle class included a small but noteworthy number of professors, lawyers, physicians, surgeons and barbers, manufacturers, lower-echelon bureaucrats, notaries, merchants, and artisans (Vich 1980:102). Since the Independence period precipitated economic instability for all Mexico, this middle class almost perished (Vich 1980:104). Not until after the 1910 Revolution and the beginnings of the twentieth century modern economy did a truly "new middle class" develop in Mexico with "few roots in the past" (Vich 1980:108).

A slightly different perspective is provided by Careaga (1974) who, in his chapter entitled "The historical roots of the middle class," identifies the criollos as the antecedents of today's middle class. Its original members were the lawyers, constables, notaries, jewel merchants, and bureaucrats of the Colony. As the colonial social classes took their shape—the mestizos, the criollos, and the new rich—so did incipient capitalism. It did so in the midst of a feudalized society dominated by Church and Viceroy (Careaga 1974:42). The criollos, many of whom were engaged in the monetary aspects of the economy, felt that the Spanish mainlanders (peninsulares) usurped the power and social status which was rightfully theirs. A lasting result of this frustration, according to Careaga, was the development of a great sense of insecurity among them and the need to always establish one's credentials.
Although this socio-economic group finally conspired successfully for the independence of Mexico, they were not prepared to direct an independent nation. Many had joined the revolt merely to assume the prestige and power which they considered should have always been theirs. Their subsequent vacillation and lack of concord over the social and political goals led to the Porfirio Diaz dictatorship in 1876.

The nineteenth century was a century of debate and identity searching for the Mexican criollo middle class. According to Careaga (1974) and Ramos (1962), they aspired to imitate the cultural, political, social, and economic achievements of Europe. They did so, however, without taking a realistic assessment of the country's history and existing conditions in each of these areas. French culture and philosophy were admired and adopted by the Mexicans. French "humanism" contained a utilitarianism for these Mexican middle-class thinkers as they sought to regenerate their society (Ramos 1962). It was in this era that the middle class realized the value of education as their means to establish themselves socially as well as economically—an education basically fitting for school and office.

In the philosophy of Positivism with its guiding motto—"There is no order without progress, nor progress without order"—the middle-class leaders saw the way to bring order out of the existing chaos in the new nation. Under the Diaz regime, education was the State's means to secularize and modernize the people. However, a new elitist attitude took hold of the younger generations in which they depreciated those who worked and created with their hands (artisans and technicians). Rather, the respectable man—and the one who contributed most to the
The well-being of society—had a profession (Careaga 1974:58). It was perhaps, a logical outcome of the 300 years of domination by a leisured ruling group.

The theory of Social Darwinism also justified the forceful actions taken by the Diaz government against any indigenous groups who would not be assimilated into the modernizing society.

Since the middle class is considered the backbone of Mexican history and cultural standards (Ramos 1962:75-76), the working classes look to it as an ideal. It can be assumed that the upwardly mobile, striving for acceptance within the middle class, adopt its customs, mannerisms, and norms. This assumption is derived from Ramos' analysis of Mexican society:

Mimesis is an unconscious phenomenon that reveals a peculiar characteristic of mestizo psychology (1962:18).

The prevailing personality of the past century was that of the mestizo (1962:45).

...the real nucleus of Mexican life, constituted primarily by the middle class, whose whole existence evolves in conformity with European modes of living (1962:75).

In conforming to middle-class cultural standards, the new members take on "the middle-class concepts of family, religion, morality, love, and so forth" (Ramos 1962:76).

That religiosity has been an especially strong trait in all Mexican cultural groups is to be expected, given Mexico's Conquest history. However, the secularist forces operating in the last two centuries have come also from contact with Europe after the upheaval of the French Revolution. According to some observers, this secularism, in conjunction with their trait of imitation, has contributed to a strong propensity toward cultural superficiality (Careaga 1974, Staples 1979).
Returning to our topic of the roles and attitudes of middle-class women, we see both forces of religiosity and secularism operating among them in these two centuries. In the chaotic era following independence, the family was designated as the source of social unity by State and Church. There arose a small group of advocates for female education. They argued that women needed schooling if they were to be a force for family (and therefore social) stability and cultural continuity. These advocates succeeded in awakening public consciousness about the responsibilities and problems of women in all classes (Macías 1982). Public education was made available to the female sex; access to study at the secondary and, then, at the university level was gradually granted to women (CONAPO 1969, Macías 1982, Lavrin 1978). "By the end of the Porfiriato (1910) thousands of middle-class women worked outside the home as schoolteachers, with another 1,785 women working for the government" (Macías 1982:12). Moreover, "an incipient feminist movement, which was led primarily by middle-class, educated women," existed by 1910 (Macías 1982:15-16). More educational opportunities for all women, higher wages for working women, and reform of the civil code to allow women property and legal rights were their demands.

On the other hand, the vast majority of all women in Mexico did not have any formal education in the nineteenth century (Macías 1982, Staples 1979). The more privileged women were more interested in French clothing and hair styles, theaters, luncheons, and those other activities which advertise status and membership in a comfortable economic class (Staples 1979, Lavrin 1978). Yet, if their consciences were stirred, many of these same women would give assistance to the needy.
For the most part, their religious fervor was confined to the home and to the festivals and rituals of their communities. However, in some areas of Mexico, such as in the state of Jalisco, their fervor could be inflamed to the point of direct and outspoken resistance to the actions and demands of the State. This happened during the period of Juarez in the nineteenth century and again in the twentieth during and after the Revolution (Macias 1982).

Since the 1910 Revolution and with the progressive steps taken to industrialize and modernize the country, the urban-centered middle class has expanded in numbers (Careaga 1974:61). Its composition has also diversified more to include a greater percentage of the mestizo population. A number of writers (Elu de Lenero 1980, Careaga 1974, Inkeles 1969) have spoken about the upward economic mobility of the working classes. As noted by Ramos (1962) and suggested by Vich (1980), the working classes are mestizo. However, some would say that the middle class is still a group searching for its proper identity, still lacking unity, and still fearful and insecure.

Since World War II, the United States has replaced Europe as the source of cultural and economic inspirations (Careaga 1974, Ramos 1962, Lewis 1959). With increasing frequency, middle-class families and individuals visit and/or attend schools in the United States. Most of these Mexicans are highly impressed by the efficiency, cleanliness, and well-being of the general population. They try to capture some of these qualities by buying and indulging in the material symbols of the United States middle-class life-style (Careaga 1974, Lewis 1959).
However, their esteem for the seemingly efficient, ordered socio-economic structure of the United States generally has not been allied with similar admiration for its social value system. Thus, the turmoil over the increased independence of women and their struggle for equality between the sexes in the United States has not had much influence upon the life-styles of middle-class Mexican women. Although the Mexican Constitution and civil laws grant all women equal civil and political rights such as the right to vote, to hold office, to inherit, etc., and prohibit discrimination according to sex, the reality falls short of fulfillment (Derechos 1969, Macías 1982, COAP 1976). This present disparity raises questions about the abiding influence of Mexican traditional culture and the future gradual effects of structural changes in Mexican society resulting from economic and government actions.

Throughout this brief review of the development of the Mexican middle class, we see that its members have experienced social and political frustrations which have overshadowed their economic success. As a result, the culture complex of the Mexican middle class, that is the elements of traditional and modern sub-cultures (Elu de Lenero 1980), is seen to be characterized by the traits of imitation and insecurity. Social acceptance becomes most important—for long-standing members as well as for the new arrivals. Lomnitz (1980) refers to a downward mobility among entrepreneurial families whose previous economic success had enabled them to identify socially with the upper class. The upward mobility of the working-class families comes through their sons and daughters who are sent to better
schools. The literature suggests that employment security is more important than actual income to the middle class, either because the job itself is prestigious or because it gives access to persons of status and power (Lomnitz 1980). Another factor could well be the shortage of employment opportunities—especially for men in the current economy.

The woman can be seen as a key element in the middle-class family for she is the one who conserves its history and status. She is the one who bears the responsibility for inculcating family loyalty, values, and pride in its young members. This is a duty further promoted by both Church and State for the sake of social order. Lomnitz refers to the "centralizing woman" who provides continuity for the family in the midst of ideological, social, and political change in the larger world (Lomnitz and Lizaur n.d.). According to Lomnitz, while the family life-style with its external material symbols is determined by the capacity of the man to be a worthy provider and protector, it is the woman who upholds its status by her management of home finances and children. It is also in her trust to further family unity within the kinship network. This is done to a large extent through keeping records of the generations (or leaving out the disgraced), and preserving bonds through customs, culinary recipes, and rituals which connect the family present with its past and with its desired social and cultural milieu. Thus, it is the woman who has the power to help or hinder the ambitions of the man for more prestige.
Imitation becomes a valued quality for the upward mobility of a family in the sense that the norms and customs of the upper social levels can be learned and lived. This means that social change for the woman and the family must be slow in order to ascertain if a change in the cultural norms and attitudes is a passing fad or something permanent. Thus caution is important, but so is the ability to recognize when change is acceptable and even necessary for persons at that social level (Lomnitz and Lizaur n.d.).

**Historical roots of gender roles**

The final portion of this review consists of a sketch of the historical background of women's place in Mexican society since the Conquest. How has she come to hold such a dependent yet central position in the family? Why are the cultural restrictions on her roles so seemingly entrenched in the society?

The unsettled times of the sixteenth century in Mexico occasioned extensive exploitation and destitution especially among Indian women but also among the immigrant Spanish women. Numerous women were abandoned or widowed and without resources for self-support (Muriel 1974). A principal cause, of course, was the initial scarcity of Spanish women which created a "series of illegal situations and formed a mixture based on violence" (Muriel 1974:14). It was prolonged during the colonization but to a lesser degree as a result of attempted royal protection for the Indians. Because the Indigenous and Spanish cultures encountered each other in terms of conquered and conqueror, similar cultural concepts and values went unrecognized by the vast majority of Spaniards. For example, the cultural training of both
groups coincided in that women were taught to be honest, careful of their good name, respectful and faithful to their husbands, and efficient managers of their homes (Muriel 1974, Sahagun 1946, Vásquez 1979). Divorce was discouraged in both groups, although it had been permitted among the Indians only after the failure of reconciliation attempts (Torquemada 1943). Both cultures shared the goal of safeguarding women from becoming "lost women" or mistresses according to the Indians, or prostitutes or "public women" according to the Spanish (Muriel 1974:16). Both had the same remedies: work and enclosure. However, while the Indian society killed adulterers of both sexes (Sahagun 1946), it tended to accept prostitution as a human failing which ultimately brought loneliness and death to its adherents. Under the banner of the Christian religion, the Spanish publicly condemned both the sin and the women as not only evil but worthless (Muriel 1974:31-32). These human problems which arose during the initial colonization period contributed to the establishment of the cultural norm that women were dangerous to men and to the social order. For example, some of the first Spanish female colonists were "public women", "splendidly paid", and admired by their clients. The government finally condemned them for their lack of shame, brazen behavior—especially by attending church without the proper attire and remorse—and consequent bad example (Muriel 1974:36).

In addition to Spanish religious morality, constantly proclaimed and legislated by the Church authorities in New Spain, Spanish rule
brought the concept that women were always children who needed protection. This included the transfer of Spanish laws categorizing women as legal minors until the age of twenty-five. They were excluded from public office and from the exercise of any legal administratorships without crown waiver. "The woman was considered so little responsible as to be unable to be a witness for testament, nor to be a bondsman, nor to be jailed for debts (Muriel 1974:17, my translation). Even later when they were directoresses and abbesses of schools, convents, and other institutions (for women), they were required to be under male supervision.

With the union of Church and State in governing and in administering the society of New Spain (Mexico), the mindset of a dominating male authority was entrenched. The woman had to have her virtue protected; moreover, she might be a potential seductress. Therefore, for her own good, and for that of the family and the society, she belonged either in the home or in the convent (Muriel 1974, Lavrin 1978).

It was natural, then, when in the sixteenth century so many women (who outnumbered the men because these were killed by war, work, or disease) had to survive through whatever resources they could utilize, leaders of the cities, allied with the Church, turned to 'enclosure' as an institution. By this means they hoped to clear the streets of women without specific destinations for passage. The first 'enclosure' established in New Spain for "lost women" was in 1572, Jesus de la Penitencia in Mexico City (Muriel 1974). The enclosures quickly became like convents with nuns in charge over the "reformed prostitutes" and other women who were homeless, divorced, or widowed. The women worked and prayed within the walls, most staying there for a life-time. At least
there they had a refuge against the insecurity and anxieties of living from day to day on the street. These institutions always had a difficult time supporting themselves during the three centuries of their existence. Most wives of the wealthy almsgivers did not feel compelled to support the enclosures as they did religious houses, schools, or hospitals (Muriel 1974:222).

The education of all women in New Spain was limited to Christian doctrine and womanly labors. Not until the eighteenth century with the Spanish Bourbons did the pace of life change in the colony, and with it, the education permitted for women. It was the age of 'enlightenment'. Schools for girls as well as for boys multiplied—but for the very practical purpose of benefitting the economy. Weaving, spinning, candy-making, and hat-making were industries which women were encouraged to learn (Vázquez 1979). Although women belonged to labor organizations, and even worked alongside men in some factories, they were supervised and protected as usual. In the Porfirian era, through the influence of more liberal philosophic thought from Europe and of an expanding economy, women in the middle and upper classes could train to become secretaries, typists, teachers, and salesclerks.

From the sparse collection of records, letters, and written works concerning women in colonial and post-independent Mexico, we have a picture of the sharp cultural distinction between the wealthy women and the others in the nineteenth century. The sheltered lives of the former included servants for all work and childcare, time for tea parties, walks, theater, and lamentation over their marital lives (Vázquez 1979, Escandon 1979). It was evidently in this era that the ideal concept of
the totally self-sacrificing wife and mother, dutifully enclosed in her home, dedicated to her family, achieved its cultural primacy in Mexico. It was rooted in the idle, monotonous life of the wealthy, and adopted by their imitators in the middle class (Staples 1979). Moreover, fathers, sons, and husbands correspondingly were confirmed in the idea that their honor and competency to provide for their families would be discredited if their wives, daughters, or sisters worked outside the home (Vázquez 1979:9).
CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter an overview of research procedures is presented. This includes locations of the fieldwork in Mexico, the on-site selection of informants, and methods of gathering data while in this complex nation.

Investigative itinerary

My collection of ethnographic data began in August of 1981 and continued until the beginning of June, 1982. The course of investigation evolved to have four data-gathering phases, primarily determined by my geographic location and by my contacts in Mexico. The first phase was in historic Cuernavaca, today a growing city in the state of Morelos, Mexico, which is a center for Spanish language study (Figure 1). It has always been noted for its 'eternal springtime' climate, which together with its relative nearness to the capital city of Mexico D.F.—now only an hour and a half away by bus on the carretera (highway)—has made it a week-end resort for capital-city residents. My purpose for going there was to acquire greater facility in speaking Spanish before commencing my investigations. A welcomed by-product of the month spent there was an orientation to Mexican life and culture.
MEXICO - FIELDWORK LOCATIONS

KEY: 1. Cuernavaca
2. Mexico D.F.
3. Puebla
4. Santiago - San Andres
5. Oaxaca
6. Iguala
7. Guadalajara
8. Salamanca

Figure 1
The second phase was settling in Mexico D.F. and making it my base of operations. I had pre-arranged through friends in Columbus, Ohio, to live with a widow in her home of forty years. This arrangement did not turn out to be a happy or satisfactory one. After two months, a Dominican priest friend obtained permission for me to live with a small community of Mexican Dominican sisters. Their house was a combination home and pre-school or jardín de niños. This proved to be a very advantageous place in which to be settled. During this phase which lasted from September through December, I established contacts with middle-class women and gathered basic data for this study on roles and attitudes.

The third phase was a traveling one in which I visited other urban centers of varying sizes. My purpose was to determine whether the role expansion of women into employment and careers and their corresponding attitudes were unique to Mexico D.F. or were indicative of changes occurring throughout the country. The urban centers were initially chosen by reason of their location in geographic areas distant from the United States' Rio Grande border, and their possession of strong roots in traditional Spanish or Indian culture. By this means of observing, conversing with, and interviewing middle-class women in provincial cities—historically more culturally conservative than the women of the capital city, I hoped to obtain a comparative representation by means of which I would have a more accurate idea of middle-class role realities in Mexico. Were attitudes and expectations changing among women in these regions in regard to their traditional ideals of marriage and motherhood? And, if so, what were the factors affecting these
shifts?

To answer these questions, I traveled first to Puebla and spent most of the month of January there. February was the month spent in Santiago and San Andres in the Tuxtla region of the state of Vera Cruz—south of the city of Vera Cruz, near the coast of the Gulf of Mexico in the historic Olmec region (Figure 1). In March I traveled to the deep southern area of Mexico, to Oaxaca. April and May were months in which I made shorter visits of a week or a few days to cities like Guadalajara, Salamanca, and Iguala. Guadalajara was the only city among all those visited which showed in its construction of new homes and its shopping plazas a distinctive influence from the United States. Although I did not know it beforehand, Guadalajara has had a long-established American colony and has been a favorite city for Americans from the southwestern states of the United States.

The fourth and final phase was to spend my last weeks in Mexico D.F., trying to see some of my informants for the last time. It was also an opportune time to survey the capital city again after having seen the layouts and facilities of some other Mexican cities. The pace of life in the capital area was more rushed and hectic like that in metropolitan cities elsewhere (New York, London, Rome). With the exception of Guadalajara's shopping plazas, shops and businesses in the outer cities visited closed during the traditional comida (dinner) hours between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. every afternoon. Their size was still small enough that residential areas where the businessmen lived were neither that distant nor difficult to return to from the center-city business area. Automotive traffic in these provincial cities lacked
the huge volume of the federal district at the rush hours in the morn­
ing and evening. The style of public bus also marked the cosmopolitan D.F. city apart from the other cities, including Guadalajara. Public buses in D.F. looked just like any in the United States. The school­bus model served the city populations outside of the D.F. area. It was my conclusion that this was the only style bus which was high enough to ride over the rough dirt and rock roads connecting many living areas, and which was sufficiently narrow and with steering­wheel clearance for the narrow streets with right­angle turns. Mexico D.F. has been for centuries the power center of the nation. As such, it has been modernized to accommodate the development of communications and of commercial and industrial international corporations. It has also become the hub of the nationwide system of land and air transpor­tation.

Data collection procedures

The bulk of my data was collected through the use of basic an­thropological tools: interview schedules and participant observa­tion. The schedule for family background information was drawn up in response to finding myself within the school setting (Appendix B). The actual interview schedule had been formulated prior to going to Mexico (Appendix A). If education was a factor in role change as hypothesized, then information about the educational background of my informants was necessary. Specific questions about their education were included in the schedule, as well as open­ended questions intended to obtain a measure of their attitudinal change (Appendix A). Presuming that parental attitudes and decisions might be intervening
factors, questions were asked about the education of the parents of my informants and their expectations for their daughters (my informants). Married informants were probed about their hopes for their own daughters.

For the second hypothesis in which the number of children appeared to be a significant indication of personal expectations, schedule questions focused upon the women's perceptions of their responsibilities; however, an explicit question asking whether each married woman had desired more or fewer children was not included. The corollary of 'why' would have provided more specific information about the women's feelings of independence. Although this information was indirectly gained from some informants, it was not obtained from all.

Several questions were directed toward acquiring information about family bonds and their possible alteration if the woman was employed outside the home. A few questions were added to the schedule after the first few sessions. Although Mexico historically has been labeled a Catholic country, many middle-class women of the D.F. area were indifferent to the Church. Thus, questions were added to acquire a better comprehension of the current influence of the clergy and moral teachings of the Church upon the life perspectives of these women. It also seemed pertinent to gain a better understanding of mother-daughter, wife-husband relationships by including questions on aspects of a woman's sexual education.

My informants were asked to give a description of the social classes (middle, upper, lower) as a way of verifying my perception of their social structure. It also provided a native's viewpoint of
Mexico's social hierarchy.

Informal discussion and conversation, and the communication media (television, radio, cinema, newspapers, magazines) were other means utilized to obtain additional information and a better understanding of the cultural climate. My experience as a participant-observer included family living, taking part in the work of a group of women religious, and attending workshops and conferences with them. These living situations helped to provide insights into relationships of various types: among family members, between family and maids, among non-related members of an organization, between the 'better classes' and the laboring class. The experience of living in an area included for me walking the streets, riding the local buses and metro, buying groceries in the supermarkets, and meandering through the parks and traditional market areas. These activities provided me with a greater personal appreciation for Mexican society and culture with its intricacies.

One example of information acquired by means of this approach concerns the topic of sports. Sports seem to be left to the responsibility and income of the individual families. In private schools in Mexico D.F., team sports such as volleyball, softball, or soccer are often provided. One institution for boys had American (U.S.) football. In the D.F. area middle-class families generally enroll their children in private schools if at all possible economically, scholastically, and spatially. (The potential students for both public and private schools outnumber available classroom spaces.) But extracurricular activities must be provided by parents themselves for children.
Mothers are often the chauffeurs in better suburban areas. There were co-ed volleyball games and karate exercises in Chapultepec Park in D.F. -- in addition to American football, which was not co-ed. However, except in Guadalajara, no children or adults elsewhere were observed engaging in sports activities--tennis, volleyball, baseball, golf, etc.

Guadalajara, a city which has attracted residents from the United States over the years as well as a center for travel between the two nations, was the only other city outside of Mexico D.F. where adults were observed jogging early in the morning in U.S.-style sweatsuits. There, too, some new middle-class suburban areas had tennis courts in their parks. Otherwise, persons in urban areas belonged to private sports facilities located within a building complex. Children played together in the streets principally in poor or working-class neighborhoods or in the pueblos. These observations suggested the relative isolation of children from anyone not connected with or well-known to their families and the appeal of activities and products from the United States in areas where money and American corporations were present.

Television programs, including their 'soap operas' and advertisements, the radio, and street music all conveyed informative impressions which filled in data collected for each urban population area. Newspapers also provided insights in some of their articles and columns about what was currently thought or done by women. Their employment section was most revealing about sex distinctions for jobs.

A questionnaire (Appendix D) for the equivalent of high school students was devised after I began making contacts in D.F. The opportunity presented itself to meet and to know a group of students just
completing their academic or career studies. They attended a private high school for girls located in the northern sector of the city near the Basilica of Guadalupe. It has been a bi-lingual school since its foundation by Benedictine sisters from the United States in the late 1940's. Today the programs include primaria (equivalent to grades 1 - 6 in the U.S.), secundaria (either similar to a junior high which goes into high school or a combination of junior high and technical school), and preparatoria (academic high school) (Appendix C). Its faculty and student body had middle-class status. I had the liberty to visit often and, consequently, to pursue various points of inquiry. I was particularly interested in the attitudes and role expectations of those students who were about to enter the work force, marriage, or the university. They could give me an idea of the future path that Mexican middle-class would take.

Access to other private secular and religious schools and their faculty in D.F. and other cities helped to give me a perspective about the school as a carrier and re-enforcer of tradition in accord with local social pressure. It was also possible to see how the centralized school system, which includes all public and private schools, has broken down the traditional separation of boys and girls in classes and games. Subjects are the same for both in primaria and secundaria. If the secundaria is a technical school, then the student body is more or less segregated by choice of occupation. However, since Mexico is a federal union of states, each state has an educational authority. It seems to be at this point in the system that federal goals to graduate fully qualified workers for a developing
economy are short-circuited. It is also at the state level that traditional role perspectives can be perpetuated. State education authorities may mandate special courses for girls and others for boys in the secundaria curriculum. This happened in Puebla where girls in a private school were mandated to take sewing rather than the typing course originally scheduled by the school.

All this exemplifies the kind of data that I was able to obtain by moving out of Mexico D.F. into other parts of the nation. New but related facets of data collected in the D.F. area surfaced to fill in or to broaden original perspectives.

Finally, printed information and historical material was acquired. Some was obtained by following suggestions of informants to visit government data research offices such as CONAPO (Consejo Nacional de Población). I accidentally found the library and offices for contemporary studies, which included contemporary research on women and was located in the National Museum of Anthropology. Just exploring buildings and following signs can lead to marvelous finds. At the government offices, the trick was to be recommended by a person known at the office or at least a person having some official position. It was an indication of how one must know the 'right people' in order to obtain information or other things.

In summation, the methods used in gathering data for this study varied according to circumstances and opportunities presented on site. My living situations during those months became a way of meeting informants and of seeing facets of the whole of Mexican life and culture. A daily record of activities, sights, and conversations was
kept in addition to interview data. In that way, persons met and/or interviewed were placed in geographic and personal context. An explanation of how I met and acquired informants will follow. Data collection by means of schedules, discussion, and conversations was linked with the circumstances by which I came to know each person.

Selection of informants

I went to Mexico with the names of a few persons recommended to me by friends in Columbus, Ohio. A few of them were Mexicans living in the capital city where I intended to spend a major portion of my time. One was a family in which an American woman was married to a Mexican physician. This family was most generous in sharing themselves with me and helping me through a rough period. Another was an American Dominican priest whose assistance was invaluable when I had to change residence in Mexico D.F. I had arrangements to live with a widowed Señora in D.F. after leaving Cuernavaca. I expected to be able to develop that living situation into a productive source of informant possibilities. Otherwise, I knew no one in Mexico.

As stated before, my first intent was to acquire proficiency in Spanish for all the listening and talking I was going to have to do. The month in Cuernavaca provided family living experience, informants, and friends who themselves were going to live in Mexico D.F. for a few months that Fall of 1981. As it turned out, these friends opened up doors for me by introducing me to other Americans living and working in D.F. and to Mexican informants. It is appropriate at this point to mention that Americans in Mexico were a valuable source of data and most helpful in introducing to me other Mexican women. In
this way I was able to converse with the women on a more friendly ba-
sis and the information had more depth and fullness.

The Mexican women teachers at the language school in Cuernavaca
were members of the middle class. As we became friendly, they were
agreeable to being interviewed. Thus, I conducted my first formal in-
terview in Spanish, using my schedule instrument in a more relaxed
setting. Moreover, these teachers gave me the names of their women
relatives living in D.F. so that I could interview them. In addition,
a student at the school introduced me to the woman with whom she was
living while studying there. Although this student stayed with me
during the interview and helped to clarify questions and answers, I
had the experience of interviewing a complete stranger. Another ad-

tage of having her present was that she could fill in background
information about the woman. This was something I always tried to ob-
tain about the individuals interviewed; it seemed to be especially im-
portant if the women were almost complete strangers to me. It was a
help in substantiating the responses received to my schedule questions.

It can be noted here that most women knew that I was a woman re-
ligious. I did not feel, however, that this created any particular
problem for communication. For the most part, women accepted me be-
cause they either knew and trusted the persons who introduced me, or
because they had time to become acquainted with me. The fact that I
spoke Spanish to them helped to dispel hesitancies. They were quite
patient, in fact, and willing to explain things in various ways if
there were any questions about comprehension. In only one instance
did a woman dismiss me because I was a religious. It was in a group-
Sharing session and she was having marital problems. "Religious do not understand about these things." In another situation, an older woman, whom I later interviewed, was initially antagonistic to my presence in a cursillo retreat (a time of introspection in a religious context) because she feared that the participating women would defer to "the sister" in discussions.

While in Cuernavaca, the school directors suggested that I meet and interview the psychologist Silvia Marcos. She had lectured and written on the topic of the roles and attitudes of the Mexican woman. This was to happen in the other cities where I lived—persons knew the professionals in the area and were willing to introduce me to them. In turn, these individuals were open to questions and discussion. Consequently, I had interesting and informative discussions also with Larissa Lomnitz, professor of anthropology at UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico); Marcela LaGarde, professor of anthropology at the University of Puebla; Fernando Bustamente, anthropologist in Santiago, Vera Cruz; Dr. Cora Fierro, a practicing psychiatrist in Mexico D.F.

My stay with the señora in Mexico D.F. did not develop into an advantageous situation as I had hoped. Her husband, a Spanish immigrant, had been dead for over ten years. She lived alone and had developed her own routine. Her three sons and the stepson who knew my friends in Columbus were married, and each had his own home and family. The home of the stepson was his wife's family home, and located around the block from the señora. He tried to be very attentive to her desires and needs. Her own sons usually called her at least once a week in addition to visiting her periodically. Señora's own sisters
lived within walking distance from her house. Although my time living with the señora provided some insights into Mexican family relations of the traditional type, I was not to be included into the family circle; nor would I be able to meet women through the family. I found myself living in a type of chaperoned boarding house with the señora and myself communicating less and less.

However, during that time period, I explored the city and proceeded to make contact with every person possible on my original and amended name list. An American woman working at the Institute of International Education in D.F. took an interest in my topic and compiled a list of names of professional women she either knew or knew about. One of the Mexican women on the list became a friend who helped me contact a religious friend of hers. Through her I arranged to live with sisters of her congregation who worked in Santiago, Vera Cruz. This is an example of how I was able to find a place to live in a city in another geographic area. In Puebla I stayed with an American woman whom I had met in a summer class at Ohio State University. She and her husband were the administrators of the large American school there.

Most of the individual women whom I met through a recommendation and did not have the opportunity to know in other ways were interviewed only once or twice—depending upon the time required by the schedule. One of the language teachers interviewed in D.F. and one of the professional women there were interviewed at their place of work. Another teacher was interviewed at her home. The housewives, of course, were interviewed at home. To see a woman in her home
situation was a help and an advantage in getting a more complete pic-
ture of her as a person. At these sessions, brief notes were taken of
the responses, especially when we deviated from the schedule. After-
wards, I reconstructed the interview and wrote down the complete re-
sponses. The women were all cooperative.

My relationships with women I met through the schools generally
were more informal. We had time to get used to each other, and I had
been introduced to them. Data were collected in these situations over
a period of days or weeks, usually in the faculty rooms. The interview
questions were asked by me in informal ways and during discussions or
conversations. Sometimes I referred directly to my schedule. The set-
ting also gave me an opportunity to see the individuals under pressure,
and in relation to one another. True, this was only one section of
the population I was investigating. However, in view of the fact that
women in other roles were also being met and talked with, I considered
the school scene an asset.

With the one exception of Puebla, my access to private schools
and to the families in Oaxaca was essentially the result of my identi-
fication with the Church. Without using that, I would have been re-
stricted to interviews with some professional persons through my iden-
tification as an American doing dissertation research. Much more
time would have been required to meet potential informants and for us
both to develop a relationship conducive for interviewing. In the
middle-class areas where I lived, the lifestyles of the women I wanted
to meet were not contributive to this.
In summation, the methods utilized were varied and effective. The questions of my interview schedule did not have to be altered extensively from the original set; some were dropped as insignificant, and others were added as I began conversing with Mexican and American women. As an initial study of the roles of middle-class women, I feel that the most important aspect of the study was to travel to other geographic regions in Mexico. An equally important factor was my identification with an institution recognized by the Mexican people. This status, although ambiguous because I was an American and not a member of one of the congregations working there, established a basis for initial personal contact. Also, the women did not have explicit role expectations for me. These factors were assets for the subsequent building of relationships.
CHAPTER III

MODERNIZATION AND RESULTING DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

Before reporting specific interview findings with respect to current expectations and role perceptions of Mexico's urban middle-class women, an overview will be given of some aspects of national development, facilitated by means of government-inaugurated programs since the presidency of Avila Camacho (1940-1946). The ultimate goal of these programs has been to improve the standard of living nationwide. At the beginning of the 1970's, the federal government shifted its emphasis from industrialization to more diversified social and economic programs. These were designed to incorporate a larger percentage of the rural and urban populations into the nation's development and to encourage a more equal distribution of its benefits.

Thus, the first part of this chapter notes the demographic changes wrought by federal social programs. Included in this section is an appraisal of the higher levels of literacy--in particular for women. Some problems obstructing efforts to improve the educational system are also considered. Finally, a closer scrutiny is given to the occupational areas which require professional or career training for women. The second part of the chapter discusses that specific section of the Mexican population under investigation in the study--the middle class.
A sample of the group, obtained through the administration of a questionnaire to two student groups, is analyzed to discover some socio-economic characteristics of the middle class today.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN MODERN MEXICO

Extensive government attention given to hygiene and nutrition over these past forty years has resulted in a sharp population increase (Figures 2 and 3). Infant and adult mortality rates have fallen substantially; the largest percentage of Mexico's population is now under twenty years of age (Figure 3). Life expectancy has increased, with women having an expectant life-span of 66 years (in contrast to approximately 43 years in 1940), and men one of 62 years (in contrast to one of about 40 years in 1940) (CONAPO 1979:28).¹

An interesting trend notable in the census since 1940 is the decrease in the death of males under the age of fifteen. Until 1970, more boys than girls were born, but more died, so that, in the total population, women outnumbered men (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CENSUS FIGURES FOR THE AGE GROUPS 0-4, 15-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in thousands)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979 (est.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2

MEXICO'S POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX FOR 1940 AND 1960

Figure 3

MEXICO'S POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX FOR 1979

The beneficial results of the upgrading and wider distribution of health information and services is also observable in the decrease in the number of deaths of both women and men between the ages of 40-44 (Table 2).

### TABLE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age 35-39</th>
<th>Age 40-44</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>670.7</td>
<td>700.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>748.4</td>
<td>798.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>959.1</td>
<td>961.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1,239.5</td>
<td>1,234.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979 (est.)</td>
<td>1,628.6</td>
<td>1,622.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The increase in population and life expectancy has coincided with a rural to urban movement which escalated sharply in the 1950's and again in the 1970's (Figure 4). According to 1979 estimates of CONAPO, 65.7 percent of the population lives in urban areas; 34.3 percent remain in the countryside. This is just the reverse of the 1940 census, when 35.1 percent of the people lived in the cities, and 64.7 percent lived in rural environs. However, according to the indications of the 1976 census, more children are born in the rural areas than in the urban (Table 3).

Among the ten states (including the Federal District) which I visited and/or resided in for a span of time, Morelos— with 70.7 percent of its population in 1970 in cities— was noted for the urbanization of its people; Oaxaca— with only 27 percent of its population in
Figure 4
RURAL AND URBAN POPULATION 1900 - 1979

cities—exhibited the most ruralness among the thirty-one states of the Republic (CONAPO 1979:48). The other states—Vera Cruz, Querétaro, Puebla, México, Jalisco, Guerrero, and Guanajuato—had between 35 and 68.5 percent of their population urbanized. By 1980 the degree of urbanization had increased. In the ten-year span between 1970-80, according to the urban census calculations of the Colegio de México, the median percent of urban growth for the top forty-six cities of the country was five percent. Almost half of all the cities had population increases of five or six percent—Oaxaca's (city) population grew by 5.4 percent; Puebla (city) by 6.7 percent; Toluca (in the state of Mexico) by 7.5; Guadalajara by 6.2 and Cuernavaca (Morelos) by 8.2 percent (CONAPO 1979:50-51). The population boom in all of these cities was quite apparent in 1981-82 with all the observed construction of housing, market, and office areas. Even in smaller cities, large and small scale construction pointed to population growth and urban expansion. All this should mean more job openings. Much of the housing, however, was being built by two or three men, one of whom was often the owner. When funds ran dry for purchasing materials or hiring labor, the homes stayed unfinished until more money was accumulated. The same procedure seemed to be followed for some big construction projects.

As usual, urbanization has challenged the capabilities of public service systems—schools, medical facilities, water provisions, garbage disposal, etc. Education has been emphasized by the government for a two-fold purpose: to bring down the birth rate and to meet demands for skilled workers. Government authorities have noted a relationship between the level of schooling and the birth rate: the women
### TABLE 3

**AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN ALIVE ACCORDING TO THE AGE OF THE MOTHER AND SIZE OF THE LOCALITY OF RESIDENCE 1976**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Less than 2,500 inhab.</th>
<th>From 2,500 to 19,999 inhab.</th>
<th>From 20,000 to 499,999 inhab.</th>
<th>From 500,000 and up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Average:** 5.0  4.4  3.6  3.3

*Note: In 1976-77 it is to be noted that the average number of children born alive to mothers residing in communities of less than 20,000 inhabitants is higher than those born to mothers residing in larger communities. In general terms the levels of fecundity are lower in urban areas where there are greater levels of social well-being.*

### TABLE 4

**AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN ALIVE, ACCORDING TO THE AGE OF THE MOTHER AND THE LEVEL OF SCHOOLING - 1976**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of mother</th>
<th>No Schooling</th>
<th>Primaria Incomplete</th>
<th>Primaria Complete</th>
<th>Secundaria Incomplete</th>
<th>Secundaria Complete</th>
<th>Preparatoria and above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: It is important to emphasize the relation that the level of schooling has with the median number of children born alive. It is to be noted that when the level of schooling is higher, the number of children is less.

with only a primaria or less amount of education tend to have the most children (Table 4). A correlation exists, of course, between the high birth rate in the countryside (campo) and its significantly higher rate of illiteracy—in 1970, 36.5 percent rural illiteracy to 15.2 percent urban (CONAPO 1979:68-69). With the fast rate of urbanization, the problem plagues the towns and cities, too. While more schools are being opened from the pre-school level through the university level, and the number of teachers increasing slightly, the student population also has increased at each level (Table 5).

Posters, newspaper articles, and television spots stressed capacitación (preparation) for men and women as part of a campaign for education. Meanwhile, reports appeared in the newspapers such as El Sol de México and Excelsior concerning the weaknesses, the successes, and the goals of the school system at its various levels. For example, an article in Excelsior (November 8, 1981:1) reported the meeting of the Second National Popular Congress of Education. The attitude of the participants was generally negative. The government-initiated preschool programs, "which one day would be the pride of the educative system," were suffering from duplication of bureaucracies. Likewise, the two secondary programs for technical training and for academic continuation suffered from inconsistency and shifting of goals on the part of the policy makers in government agencies. The teacher representatives complained further about the overload of work for teachers, inadequate preparation, and low morale. The latter was contributing to teacher absenteeism and physical abuse of the children in the classroom. (The names of the teacher representatives of a predominantly
### TABLE 5

**POPULATION AND EDUCATION**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRE-SCHOOL:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>4,994</td>
<td>5,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>17,142</td>
<td>18,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matriculated</td>
<td>659.0</td>
<td>738.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students (in thous.)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRIMARIA:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>54,642</td>
<td>55,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>286,156</td>
<td>298,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matriculated</td>
<td>12,560.0</td>
<td>13,050.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>students</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECUNDARIA:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>9,098</td>
<td>9,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>145,462</td>
<td>146,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matriculated</td>
<td>2,551.9</td>
<td>2,840.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREPARATORIA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROFESSIONAL:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>1,731</td>
<td>1,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>51,593</td>
<td>58,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matriculated</td>
<td>794.0</td>
<td>845.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NORMAL:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>14,667</td>
<td>15,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matriculated</td>
<td>157.0</td>
<td>168.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNIVERSITY:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>52,140</td>
<td>63,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matriculated</td>
<td>609.1</td>
<td>651.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

female occupation were all male.) It was also noted that student re-
tention at the primary level was poor: in the cities, for every 100
children who started, only 58 finished; in the rural areas, only 12
completed primaria.

Moreover, too few urban schools still exist, especially at the
primaria and secundaria levels. The urban public primarias generally
ran double sessions; teachers referred to teaching in two or three ses-
sions. Classes witnessed in private school primarias in Mexico D.F.,
Puebla, and Oaxaca consisted of fifty to eighty students in one class-
room; yet discipline was good. On the other hand, the noise level was
high at many public primarias observed from the outside; broken win-
dows and poor maintenance characterized the public primarias and
secundarias. Classrooms appeared to be devoid of anything but the
basics of chairdesks, or, in the rural areas, two-seaters attached to
desk tops. The schools are too pressed, furthermore, for space and
resources to bother with children who drop out of the system or who
are dropped for reasons of misbehavior. For example, I knew an eight-
year-old boy who had been refused enrollment for the school year be-
cause of his alleged inability to sit attentively during classes the
previous year. He spent his days either idle on the street or with his
father, who did part-time maintenance work.

Urban middle-class parents in some cities must plan ahead if their
children are to enroll in private schools. And those whose children
attend private schools, whether at the primaria, secundaria, or pre-
paratoria levels, worry each year about re-enrollment. Since social
status within the Mexican middle class is aided or minimized by the
private school from which one's children graduate, the children can be placed under great pressure to succeed academically and to behave satisfactorily.

Articles in *El Sol* indicated that the government intended to expand the secondary system still more, especially in the area of technical training for industry, agriculture, animal husbandry, and fishing (*El Sol de México*, May 4, 1982:10). In *El Sol*, May 8, an article stated that whereas 4.6 million women work, and whereas many of these were mothers who require the service of *guarderías* (day-care centers), specialists in child care were lacking. Among the listing of technical social service career options open and in demand were dieticians, hygienists, recreation and cultural personnel, people trained in preventive medicine and care of the aged. An accompanying picture portrayed a classroom of teen-age girls. (These careers are generally for women.) Most of the graduates from these "short career programs" will begin their work when they are about the age of seventeen.

According to government-published statistics from the Secretariat of Programming and Budget, more women than ever before are literate (Tables 6 and 7). With the 1970 census it appears that, for the first time, women have almost reached parity with men in literacy. The importance of this lies in the fact that, prior to this era, women have not had equal educational opportunity. They usually have had less formal education than the men, especially at the levels of preparatoria and the university. It is evident, according to the 1970 census table, that women who attended school at the time of the 1940's did not have much schooling, especially in the rural areas (Table 7).
TABLE 6

LITERACY FOR MEXICO'S POPULATION ACCORDING TO AGE AND SEX, 1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>LITERATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Both sexes</td>
<td>B Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 and older</td>
<td>8,483,498</td>
<td>4,190,748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>7,292,759</td>
<td>3,505,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>6-9</td>
<td>12,431,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>12,431,880</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The populations of the two age groups--20-24 (4,132,341) and 25-29 (3,260,418)--were combined for an analysis of the total population of those in their twenties at the time of this 1970 census. A better indication of the effectiveness of the government's program, given impetus in 1940 to increase literacy, is given by looking at this population which attended school in the decade of the 1950's. The combined populations of 6-9 (6,035,706) and 10-14 (6,396,174) were in school at the time of the census and, at least, for the latter part of the 1960's.

### TABLE 7

LITERACY ACCORDING TO AGE, SEX, AND SIZE OF LOCALITY, 1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Size of Locality</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>LITERATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Both sexes</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 and older:</td>
<td>less than 2500</td>
<td>3,407,178</td>
<td>1,780,622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50,000 up</td>
<td>2,490,789</td>
<td>1,148,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24:</td>
<td>less than 2500</td>
<td>1,540,858</td>
<td>761,473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5000-9999</td>
<td>307,503</td>
<td>145,657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50,000 up</td>
<td>1,270,906</td>
<td>593,431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9:</td>
<td>less than 2500</td>
<td>2,638,752</td>
<td>1,346,481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5000-9999</td>
<td>476,555</td>
<td>242,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50,000 up</td>
<td>1,554,559</td>
<td>787,288</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The size of a 'less than 2500' locality represents the rural environs; the '50,000 up' represents an urban setting. The '5000-9999' size represents one of the intermediate size towns between the rural and urban settings.

Those who lived in the city presumably had fewer household tasks—hauling water, collecting wood, grinding corn—and easier access to the schools. Their role models also would have been more varied. (This would be true for men, too.)

The lower averages of literacy for the 6-9, 10-14 age groups, indicated in the census, most likely are related to the unfinished process of education for those ages (Tables 6 and 7). School attendance can begin later than age 6, and is often erratic. A fact noted by CONAPO (1980) is that the number of women under the age of 15 in 1970 equaled 46.2 percent of the total population of women. Thus, the age group of 20-24 is most indicative of the changes taking place in the realm of education for women (Tables 6 and 7). Although this is only an accounting of literacy, other research based upon sample populations of male and female employees with data gathered in 1977, indicates that both in the Federal District and in the provinces, women are receiving more education—although still less than the men at the professional levels requiring several years of training (Naranjo 1981: 129, 134).

What none of these charted statistics reveal are the pertinent descriptive factors such as environment, occupations, and status of the persons involved. To know the type of terrain to be traveled over by school-bound children helps one to understand irregularities in school attendance. In the country it is the dirt paths, fields, and streams to be crossed. For those trying to attend a secundaria in the town, it is waiting for the bus which must travel over rough roads, often breaks down, and which requires busfare. In the very
large city, which so far is principally Mexico D.F., the number of heavily-traveled city streets to be traversed or the metro system at rush hour might intimidate parents with young school-age children, unless their children can attend a school nearby their home. If the element of doubt about the usefulness of education exists on the part of the parents or the older child, then the difficulties in getting to school might become insurmountable. The motivation for school attendance depends, too, upon the parents, their educational background and occupations. A poverty-stricken parent may be depending upon the earned income of the child for survival. Many children were seen on the city streets during the daytime school hours as they sold newspapers, candy, trinkets, or carried deliveries from one place to another. Some people proposed that these children attend evening school. According to a television expose, however, it was a matter of non-enforcement of the compulsory education laws and the economic needs of these children, some of whom were self-supporting.

Another aspect of the problems plaguing the efforts to expand and upgrade the educational system is the condition under which teachers work. The majority at the primaria level are women. Their pay is low. If they teach in the countryside, they often live in town and rely on buses for transportation; these may stop operating early in the evening. For example, four women and myself were about to drive back to town after visiting a small pueblo. Although it was only about 6:30 in the evening, the last bus had come and gone. Three young women teachers had missed it and were about to commence walking in the hopes of finding a ride with a rare passing car or truck at that
hour. Instead, they saw us and asked. Young single teachers such as these tried to avoid rural assignments. Their opportunities to meet eligible men with appropriate social status were limited; they faced problems in finding a suitable residence in the towns, and the rural people were not always receptive to them.

Yet more Mexicans, including women, are receiving sufficiently sound public and private educations to qualify them to attend the universities, especially the public-supported ones such as UNAM. In 1970, twenty-four percent of all students at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) were women; the percentage jumped to thirty-six percent by 1976. Moreover, although obstetrics, psychology, and social work are still the predominant careers for women, their presence is increasing in the departments of surgery, engineering, and the literary arts (Editorial Antena 1981).

It may be noted here that in the United States between 1972 and 1980, the employment of women increased 65 percent. However, according to the occupational areas they entered, women in this country, too, still follow the traditionally accepted careers for women here: teaching, nursing, and office work. More than half of those women who have taken employment in the expanded health services area in the United States have become administrators. Otherwise, they are not filling major administrative positions in the business world to any significant degree. Although women in the United States are entering in greater numbers the fields of accounting and computer sciences, they are finishing as computer programmers and not as the systems analysts (Leon 1982). More are also becoming lawyers, dentists, economists,
engineers, and architects. It would appear that while Mexican and American women are following similar paths—an increased number working; entrance into new professions or into those previously the domain of men—each still concentrates in those fields of study and employment considered proper for women by their society.

**Employment and education**

Although the specification of careers and professions is difficult when only category labels are used, some idea of the increased numbers of women completing higher level educational studies can be derived from Mexican government occupational tables for 1969, 1977, and 1979 (Tables 8, 9, and 10). In the category of 'professionals and technicians', 10.1 percent of all the employed women counted in 1969 were categorized as such while 4.6 percent of the men were (Table 8). By 1979 the percentages for women (11.9) and men (6.3) employed in the professions indicated that slightly more women than men had acquired training in these fields (Table 10). In terms of the total number of professionals, both men and women, an inverse trend appears in the percentages, with 3.2 percent more women entering them by 1979 and 3.2 percent fewer men entering the professions since 1969 (columns C/A and B/A).

The percentage of working women in the category of 'higher administrative personnel' had not changed by the end of the decade, but more men have become administrators in the same ten-year period (Tables 8 and 10). However, the percentages of each group in ratio with the total employed population (C/A, B/A) denotes a decrease in the number of men joining administrative ranks between 1969 and 1979. The same
decrease appears for the next category of 'administrative personnel'--a category which would include secretaries, accountants, and others requiring technical schooling after secundaria. As the total work force has increased, so has the percentage of women in administrative or office positions—from 40.7 percent in 1969 to 46.0 percent in 1979. The percentage of men in the same period decreased from 59.3 percent in 1969 to 54.0 percent in 1979. However, when the percentages of the male work force alone are compared with those of the female work force alone, it can be seen that more men than women joined the administrative branches of the economy (Tables 8 and 10). The pattern differs with the fourth category of 'entrepreneurs and sales personnel'--a category with occupations requiring less specialized education than the previous ones. Now, more women than men are employed in proportion to the entire work force of both sexes (C/A and B/A): the percent of 27.8 for the women in 1969 increased to 43.0 percent by 1979; the percent of 72.2 for the men decreased to 57.0 percent in 1979. In looking only at the number of women in ratio to the total number of women employed (col. C), the percentage rose from 10.9 percent to 19.5 percent. The men experienced only a very modest increase in the same time span—from 6.7 percent in 1969 to 8.3 percent in 1979 (Tables 8 and 10).

An interesting readjustment in these four employment areas should be noted between the census figures for 1977 and those of 1979 (Tables 9 and 10). Just looking at the percentages for column C for 1969, 1977, and 1979, a steady increase can be observed for women in two categories: the professions and sales personnel. However, for the
administrative positions, a decrease in percentages occurs between 1977 and 1979. Between 1969 and 1977 the percentages climb from 2.1 to 2.29 in higher administration, and then drop back to the 1969 level of 2.1 by 1979. Considering the absolute number increase of working women over this time period, women experienced a loss in employment in those fields. For the lower echelons of administration, the percentages for women again climb from 16.1 in 1969 to 16.72 in 1977, and then drop to 16.4 in 1979 (Tables 8, 9, and 10). Even in relation to the total work force of both sexes, the percentages for women (C/A) forge ahead and then fall back between 1977 and 1979.

The reasons for these counter-shifts are not clear, but a suggestion may be proposed. In 1977 Mexico was experiencing the economic benefits of its new oil discoveries on the Gulf Coast. Rapid economic expansion usually means more job openings than available qualified employees. Consequently, young women had employment opportunities at the administrative levels. Then, as more men became educationally prepared and the economy slowed down (as it has increasingly since 1979), men either replaced women in the offices or were hired rather than women. Remember, too, that with development, the population of the young men for the first time was greater than that of the young women (Table 1). A woman in an administrative position could be assumed to have either some authority over men or to work closely with other male personnel. Both situations would be considered by tradition to be socially inappropriate for women. If the woman is to be protected and guided by a man, then she cannot easily hold authority over him. If women are temptresses, moreover, as presumed in the Mediterranean tradition mentioned in the literature
review section, then close working relationships between women and men are insufferable.

Let us proceed from this broad appraisal of employment and education for women and men to a specific sampling of middle-class parents.
**TABLE 8**

**ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION OF MEXICO, BY OCCUPATION, 1969**  
*(in thousands and percent)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>A Both Sexes</th>
<th>B Men</th>
<th>C Women</th>
<th>B/A</th>
<th>C/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupation No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12,955,057</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>10,488,800</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,466,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals and technicians</td>
<td>733,209</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>485,268</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>247,941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher administrative personnel in the public and private sectors</td>
<td>319,828</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>267,777</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>52,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative personnel</td>
<td>977,179</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>579,347</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>397,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurs, sales personnel</td>
<td>967,267</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>698,258</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>269,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various service personnel and vehicle drivers</td>
<td>1,560,614</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>876,173</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>684,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and cattleraising workers</td>
<td>4,952,200</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>4,724,803</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>227,397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonagricultural</td>
<td>2,768,780</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>2,415,701</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>353,079</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>A Both Sexes</th>
<th></th>
<th>B Men</th>
<th></th>
<th>C Women</th>
<th></th>
<th>B/A</th>
<th></th>
<th>C/A</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18,042</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>13,897</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>4,145</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>77.0</td>
<td>.23.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals and technicians</td>
<td>1,118</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>10.59</td>
<td>60.73</td>
<td>39.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher administrative personnel in the public and private sectors</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>79.74</td>
<td>20.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative personnel</td>
<td>1,463</td>
<td>8.11</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>16.72</td>
<td>52.63</td>
<td>47.37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurs, sales personnel</td>
<td>1,469</td>
<td>8.14</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>6.93</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>12.21</td>
<td>65.55</td>
<td>34.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various service personnel and vehicle drivers</td>
<td>2,376</td>
<td>13.17</td>
<td>1,162</td>
<td>8.36</td>
<td>1,214</td>
<td>29.29</td>
<td>48.91</td>
<td>51.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and cattleraising workers</td>
<td>7,093</td>
<td>39.31</td>
<td>6,578</td>
<td>47.33</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>12.42</td>
<td>92.74</td>
<td>7.26</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonagricultural</td>
<td>4,054</td>
<td>22.47</td>
<td>3,371</td>
<td>24.26</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>16.48</td>
<td>83.15</td>
<td>16.85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>A Both Sexes</th>
<th>B Men</th>
<th>C Women</th>
<th>B/A</th>
<th>C/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19,174,203</td>
<td>14,555,712</td>
<td>4,618,491</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals and technicians</td>
<td>1,465,364</td>
<td>916,434</td>
<td>548,930</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher administrative personnel in the public and private sectors</td>
<td>516,231</td>
<td>416,635</td>
<td>99,596</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative personnel</td>
<td>1,658,867</td>
<td>902,631</td>
<td>756,236</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurs, sales personnel</td>
<td>2,107,045</td>
<td>1,205,692</td>
<td>901,353</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various service personnel and vehicle drivers</td>
<td>3,059,596</td>
<td>1,767,167</td>
<td>1,292,429</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and cattleraising workers</td>
<td>5,481,264</td>
<td>5,232,239</td>
<td>249,025</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonagricultural</td>
<td>4,877,560</td>
<td>4,107,945</td>
<td>769,615</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As previously mentioned, a questionnaire (Appendix B) was administered during my research in Mexico to two groups of students. The purpose was to obtain a sampling of the Mexican middle-class parents in two different urban locations. One group consisted of 106 young women between the ages of 17 and 19. They attended a private colegio, founded and operated by American Benedictine Sisters in Mexico D.F. This colegio has had two instructional programs: one to prepare bi-lingual secretaries and primaria teachers; the other to prepare for entrance into the university. In the last few years, the school has combined the two programs into one double program because so many of its graduates and current students decided to go on to the university. The group of students who completed the questionnaire in English were a cross-section of the student body, representing those completing their short-career programs (secretarial and teaching) and those others engaged in university preparation. All read and spoke English with relative fluency.

The second group of students consisted of 96 co-ed teenagers. They attended a private school in Puebla which was supported by a Foundation based in the United States. All were expecting to continue their studies the following year in the same school at the preparatoria level. The questionnaire was answered in their English language classes.

The students were asked to give simple information about their families—birthplace, education and occupations of their parents, the number of siblings, and the employment of maids. In this manner, a
sample was gathered for analysis about the roles of middle-class women. The population sample represented two different cities: the cosmopolitan Federal District and a large provincial city. The questionnaire was brief because class time was being used, and it was desired to minimize the probability of misunderstanding. As it was, a few students did not disclose either the level of education or the birthplace of a parent.

The intent behind questions #4 and 11 (birthplace) was to gain an idea of the expansion of the middle class in relation to the general urbanization of the country. Were most of the parents in the sample populations born and raised in the city of present residence, and, consequently, most likely to reflect traditional middle-class values? Or were they relatively new arrivals into the city—a fact which could indicate a geographic move for the purpose of socio-economic advancement.

It is recognized that the numbers in the two sample populations are small, but the tabulations do suggest or coincide with certain trends and changes noted in the literature and government census notes. As indicated in Table 11, more than half of the sample of middle-class men and women of Mexico D.F. were born and are residing there (64.2 percent of the women; 50.5 percent of the men). In Puebla less than half of the middle-class sample originated there (45.8 percent of the women; 46.3 percent of the men). Although an ample number moved into both cities, the breakdown into origins was most interesting for each city. Of the women who migrated to Mexico D.F., 26.4 percent came from smaller cities or towns, and 9.4 percent arrived from Spain—most with their husbands. Of the men who migrated, 35.2 percent came from
smaller localities and 14.3 percent arrived from Spain. For Puebla, a city whose development was in relation to the port city of Vera Cruz, a significant percentage of its new arrivals originated in Mexico D.F. (28.1 percent, or 27 women; 26.3 percent, or 25 men). Some students volunteered the information that their parents did not like Mexico D.F. The Puebla sample reflects the growth of the city as seen in the government census statistics. It also suggests the expansion of the middle class there as well as in Mexico D.F. The fact that about one-half of the men in the D.F. sample migrated into the capital from more rural areas suggests upward socio-economic endeavors. Puebla with its reputation of preserving its Spanish ancestry had about half of the men in the sample coming from either D.F. or other parts of the country. Since corporations and the federal government have moved into the city, many of these employees would probably be new entrants into the middle class. As for the women in both samples, many accompanied their husbands or relatives in the migration. Other women came to both cities for educational purposes, with D.F. receiving more women in this category than Puebla.

The growth of Puebla also might be a reflection of the trend for business people to live in Puebla but to continue working in Mexico City. Heavy commuter and truck traffic exists between Mexico D.F. and Puebla, an approximate two-hour drive on either one of the two highways which connect the two cities.
TABLE 11
PARENTAL ORIGINS BY BIRTHPLACE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City of residence &amp; birthplace</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>non-D.F.</th>
<th>Spain</th>
<th>from D.F.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mex. D.F. nos.</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puebla nos.</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Miller, Roberta. Fieldwork in Mexico, 1981-82.

Since education has been emphasized by the government, and it has been stated previously that the educational level of women has risen since 1940, a comparative analysis was made using the variable of education for each population sample (Table 12). The two groups proved to be distinctly different in their proportional numbers at each level of education. Although the greater majority of both groups had a technical school or above education, more Puebla women had attained the university level.

A comparison of the fathers in each group showed that numerically more Puebla fathers possessed a university education than those in Mexico D.F. (Table 13). In terms of any significant difference in the educational levels achieved by the two paternal populations, however, both groups are quite similar. The majority of men in each group have had at least some university background. This conforms to the tradition which
mandated that men be accorded preference over women in educational opportunities since they were to be the economic providers. Since Mexico D.F. has more male immigrants from small urban areas than Puebla (Table 11), the dearth of higher education facilities throughout the country prior to and since 1940 is probably signified by the tabulations seen in Table 13.

**TABLE 12**

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF MOTHERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Total Women</th>
<th>Primaria No.</th>
<th>Primaria %</th>
<th>Secundaria No.</th>
<th>Secundaria %</th>
<th>Tecnica No.</th>
<th>Tecnica %</th>
<th>Preparatoria No.</th>
<th>Preparatoria %</th>
<th>Universtitaria No.</th>
<th>Universtitaria %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex. D.F.</td>
<td>104 100.0</td>
<td>13 12.5</td>
<td>8 7.7</td>
<td>64 61.5</td>
<td>11 10.6</td>
<td>8 7.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puebla</td>
<td>94 100.0</td>
<td>4 4.3</td>
<td>15 16.0</td>
<td>35 37.2</td>
<td>13 13.8</td>
<td>27 28.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 = 24.0139 \quad 4\text{df} \quad p < .005 \]

Note: It is not known whether the mothers (or fathers) completed their education at the level designated and earned a certificate or degree.

Source: Miller, Roberta. Fieldwork in Mexico, 1981-82.

**TABLE 13**

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF FATHERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Total Men</th>
<th>Primaria No.</th>
<th>Primaria %</th>
<th>Secundaria No.</th>
<th>Secundaria %</th>
<th>Tecnica No.</th>
<th>Tecnica %</th>
<th>Preparatoria No.</th>
<th>Preparatoria %</th>
<th>Universtitaria No.</th>
<th>Universtitaria %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex. D.F.</td>
<td>104 100.0</td>
<td>5 4.8</td>
<td>10 9.6</td>
<td>11 10.6</td>
<td>13 12.5</td>
<td>65 62.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puebla</td>
<td>94 100.0</td>
<td>3 3.2</td>
<td>3 3.2</td>
<td>8 8.5</td>
<td>7 7.4</td>
<td>73 77.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 = 6.51826 \quad 4\text{df} \quad p > .05 \]

Source: Miller, Roberta. Fieldwork in Mexico, 1981-82.
The two variables of the education of the wives (mothers) and that of their husbands (fathers) were analyzed for correlation. It had been assumed, from indications in the literature, that the middle-class women usually had a lower level of education than their husbands. The correlation of the two independent variables, using the Pearson Product Moment Correlations test, for the D.F. parents, showed a distinct relationship existed with a value of \( r = .262 \ (p < .01) \). The test results for the Puebla parents were similar, even though their largest numbers were split between those with a university education and those with a technical one: \( r = .222 \ (p < .05) \).

If the educational levels of the parents are distributively compared, the observed relationships (Tables 14 and 15) may be a reflection of the traditional ideas that women were not intellectual equals of men, and that men were responsible for the economic support of the household. As the Mexican economy has industrialized, it has required its participants to become more qualified in their educational background. For men this has meant going beyond the preparatoria to the university level. For women, the corporate development has opened up careers which can be learned in a relatively short time at technical schools. As several student informants testified, this has led to office romances and matrimony.

The high number of Puebla women with a university level education (Table 15) does not necessarily indicate a departure from tradition. Many young women, according to one university-based informant, are really "husband-hunting" at a university. Socio-economic status may be a factor for these women in Puebla—their families are wealthy
and have a degree of social status. University education has not meant higher incidence of employment among these Pueblo women (Table 16).

A tabulation of the occupations of the fathers and mothers in both samples revealed that a majority of men were employed in the corporate area. (Table 17). The subsequent variation in occupational frequency suggested the operation of different economic or social factors in the two cities.

TABLE 14
PARENTS IN MEXICO D.F. SAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education of Father</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>Total Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education of Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Mothers</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: A = primaria  C = technica  
B = secundaria  D = preparatoria  E = Universitaria

Source: Miller, Roberta. Fieldwork in Mexico, 1981-82.
TABLE 15

PARENTS IN PUEBLA SAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education of Mother</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>Total Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education of Father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Mothers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: A = primaria  C = technica
B = secundaria  D = preparatoria  E = Universitaria

Source: Miller, Roberta. Fieldwork in Mexico, 1981-82.

The greater majority of mothers in each sample were housewives; next in number were educators and self-employed (Table 16). Although both samples witness to continued adherence by middle-class women to the traditional roles of wife and mother, the occupations of the Puebla women attest to their higher level of education.
### TABLE 16

**BASIC OCCUPATIONS OF THE MOTHERS IN EACH CITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Mexico D.F.</th>
<th>Puebla</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>% (105)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>74.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside job</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home business</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specific employment listed by individuals in each city:

- educator (6)
- self-employed (6)
- secretary-typist (4)
- bilingual secretary (3)
- bookkeeper (3)
- nurse (1), manager (1)
- dress design (1)

Source: Miller, Roberta. Fieldwork in Mexico, 1981-82.

### TABLE 17

**TOP SIX EMPLOYMENT AREAS FOR THE FATHERS IN EACH CITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Mexico D.F.</th>
<th>Puebla</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>% (103)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporation</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company Pres.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Miller, Roberta. Fieldwork in Mexico, 1981-82.

A few women in each group were divorced: 3 in D.F. with 2 of these employed; 5 in Puebla with 3 employed. Among the employed divorcees were listed an educator, a manager, a corporate employee,
an accountant, and a home business operator. Their ex-husbands were university trained. Their occupations were noted to be: self-employed, corporate employee, company president, lawyer, physician.

An analysis of variance test was run to ascertain if the education of the mother affected the number of children she had. The hypothesis that the number of children would be less as the mother was more educated was neither upheld nor definitely rejected. As indicated by Table 18, women with a profession, career, or university education tended to have fewer children on the average than those with only a primaria, secundaria, or liberal arts education. If the better-educated women have fewer children—as claimed by the federal government, Table 4, then other factors than education would seem to be operating in this matter, such as the size of the city (cf. Table 3).

### TABLE 18

**NUMBER OF CHILDREN BY EDUCATION LEVEL OF MOTHER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Primaria</th>
<th>Secundaria</th>
<th>Tecnica</th>
<th>Preparatoria</th>
<th>Universitaria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mexico D.F.</strong></td>
<td>no. of women</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>children:mean</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>median no.</td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>4/3</td>
<td>4/3</td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Puebla</strong></td>
<td>no. of women</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>children:mean</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>median no.</td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The mean for the children of the preparatoria women in D.F. was raised by one mother with 10 children.

Source: Miller, Roberta. *Fieldwork in Mexico, 1981-82.*
Finally, a comparison of the two populations was made with the employment of a maid as the variable. A proportion for each sample was made out of its total number of those families with maids. A comparative test for the equality of those two proportions for each group was then done, using a 'test of proportions'. Once again, the two sample populations were shown to be significantly different (Table 19).

| TABLE 19 |
|---|---|
| COMPARISON OF PROPORTION WITH MAIDS |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Sample Total</th>
<th>With Maids</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexico D.F.</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puebla</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>71.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test statistic: \(-2.78318\)  \(p < .005\)

Source: Miller, Roberta. Fieldwork in Mexico, 1981-82.

It is evident that the two population samples are dissimilar. With each variable considered—geographic origins, scholastic background, occupations, children, and maids—the comparative analysis indicated variation. Are these differences based principally upon the dissimilarity of the two cities—D.F., a metropolitan, capital city; Puebla, a much smaller city in size, population, and economy? Mexico City's population diversity and its command position for governmental and economic operations, are basic factors in creating the conditions for the difference between the two urban areas.
Innumerable private schools can flourish in Mexico D.F. as a result. A natural side-effect is that some private schools are more elite than others. Middle-class parents striving to improve their social status will enroll their children in the best schools affordable.

The same is not true for Puebla with its proportionally smaller middle class. The choice and competition among private schools do not exist. Those middle-class parents seeking the most socially and academic propitious school for their offspring have little choice. Consequently, what is probably reflected in the variations between the two school samples are two different sectors of the Mexican middle class. In sociological terminology, the D.F. sample reflects the middle-middle class, and the Puebla group the upper-middle class. In comparison with the D.F. middle-class representation, the higher level of education for both men and women, the more families with maids, and the larger number of doctors and engineers among the men in the Puebla sample, point toward economic success. One wonders if the higher number of divorcees in Puebla may speak to socio-economic security—the woman is not fearful of losing social status and is able to be self-sufficient. This latter is an important factor, since alimony or child support are not usually received.

The analyses were interesting also in their coincidence with government figures in which less education is associated with rurality (Table 7), and more children (Table 4). The increase in the number of men in administration tended to be confirmed by the relatively high percentage of men employed by corporations in both cities. That working women were still predominantly in service or traditional
career occupations was also apparent. The samples showed that single women, probably with small town middle-class status, came to the city at an early age with a relative in order to attend school and/or obtain favorable employment. Of course, many women in the samples arrived in the city with their husbands.

A FORWARD LOOK

The statistics and their analyses raise pertinent questions about the future of urban middle-class women in Mexico. Education is, without doubt, one of the factors which paves the way to new personal horizons and expectations. Young women from small towns have moved to the large city where expanded educational, economic, and social opportunities are available. In Mexico, however, education has been most esteemed, perhaps, for its social value. The number of women in the samples, for example, who are not using their training in careers, suggests the impelling motivation behind schooling was more related to marriage prospects than employment.

At the same time, the age group of these women must be recognized. They are in the age category of the late thirties and forties. Thus, these women in the samples were in school prior to 1969. According to the census figures for that time period (Table 8), the percentage of women in the professions was not high. The strong cultural bias, which still exists, against respectable women living alone must have been even stronger. Women could not easily move away from family to another city with career openings. Lewis in *The Children of Sanchez* (1961) dramatized the pitfalls awaiting single women who did not have family
protection and who lived alone. Most women in the samples who came to Mexico D.F. from other parts of Mexico came with a relative or to relatives already located there. Currently, young women still follow the procedure which includes residence in a supervised women's boarding house. These usually are operated by a religious organization. A modern version has been instituted, however, in the D.F. area. A family rents an apartment in a middle-class district if two or more siblings are attending schools in the city.

A single, widowed, or divorced woman is expected to live with relatives or with her children. On the other hand, an alternative is developing for the unattached professional woman who desires to live and work apart from relatives in the city. She can find residence in a house or family compound in a "proper" section of the city. Now, since housing is scarce in the cities, and the cost of living high and still climbing, older middle-class couples or widows are renovating maid's quarters or unused rooms in their houses and are renting them. The arrangement provides income for the owners and a degree of independence with respectability for the woman. What may be concluded is that cultural traditions are operative, but are being altered to accommodate new situations.

For example, industrialization in Mexico has increased the mileage of paved highways connecting various sections of the country. As cities such as Puebla and Mexico D.F. have been brought closer together with better transportation and communication facilities, corporate and governmental activities have expanded into these areas. An effect has been to increase the mobility of individuals or nuclear families as
they move to where economic opportunities are more available. For couples who migrate from their town or who are sent by the corporation or government to another city, this means geographic separation from either parents or in-laws. In one sense, this separation provides a greater degree of independence for both partners. On the other hand, it may mean a state of more dependence for the woman upon her husband.

Middle-class women who desire to capitalize upon the urbanization process still find their freedom of movement restricted. Sears Roebuck was the first U.S. retail corporation of its kind to open a 'full line store' in Mexico D.F. in 1947. It has had extensive experience with hiring women in sales and management positions. In response to a written request for information about this, a Sears executive responded:

Because it is not socially acceptable for a single woman to travel alone, jobs requiring extensive travel are a problem. Strong family ties and economic conditions also limit the female executive's mobility. If a married female's promotion requires relocation, the move presents problems for her husband, who may have difficulty finding a job in the new locale (Personal correspondence, November, 1982).

Increased mobility and the awareness of social and economic opportunities to be found, especially in Mexico D.F., have created the situation of overwhelming demand to study in the capital city. Academic preparatory schools, technical or vocational schools, and universities flourish there in conjunction with industry and government. The factors of strikes, politics, and instructor absenteeism, which plague the educational system almost everywhere in Mexico, have affected most adversely the quality of basic education and career training in the
UNAM (The National Autonomous University of Mexico) tries to dissuade potential students from these states from coming to study at the D.F. campus. By means such as a quota system, the national university system tries to pressure the students to enroll at their local campuses—to stay in Cuernavaca, Oaxaca, or Puebla. The students and their parents resist these official attempts. One of the ploys is the apartment residence mentioned previously.

In spite of the alteration of some cultural restrictions such as in the realms of education and residence, the yet unknown factor is the desire of middle-class women to become more productive in the public realm of the economy. Furthermore, if the younger generation of women is changing its vision of life, will it be permitted access to the modern instruments of production. Authors have hypothesized that "women become relatively unproductive as a group by virtue of their limited access to modern tools" (Nash 1980:163). So far, both sexes seem to have equal opportunity to the professional training required by the prevailing technological economy.

However, doubts are prevalent among some economic observers that the school system in Mexico at present possesses the equipment or the qualified personnel to graduate men and women ready for the highly sophisticated technology now operative in the industrialized world. Mexican industrialists and academic professionals are well aware of the deficiencies of their labor force. An article in the May 17, 1982 issue of El Sol de México announced that five-hundred graduating seniors from the Instituto Politecnico Nacional would have the opportunity to take an additional set of courses to prepare them for
teaching positions at the school? This university specializes in technology, and includes women in its student body. However, it is doubtful whether it is acquiring the latest equipment to provide its students with a fruitful mix of theory and practice. Up-to-date technology is expensive and must be imported. As analysts of the Mexican economy observed in the 1970's, the ability to employ people productively is "conditioned by the insufficient development of productive forces, the imbalances between and within geographic sectors, . . . the patterns of income distribution, and the scarcity of educational opportunities and other social services. Many of the problems that affect women, affect the whole population" (Salazar 1980: 183).

The preparatory schools and the universities in the large urban areas eventually will adapt themselves to the demands of technical and mechanized economies. Mexico, as the neighbor of the United States, will continue, in all likelihood, to receive assistance in advancing its scientific and technological capabilities. Yet, the prospect that women will not be the beneficiaries of these advancements looms in the foreground. The probability seems high, both from the example of the United States and from Mexico's own historical-cultural background, that the boys' schools will be modernized first. In addition, industries will send first their male employees to school to learn the necessary skills for operating the electronic and other sophisticated machinery and office equipment being produced. Few working women will insist that they too be sent back to school by management. The women who are acquiring the skills and expertise
required by modern industry are those who attend schools in other countries. The government provides some scholarships, but the vast majority of middle-class women cannot afford international education. Consequently, most middle-class women now entering the work force tend to be excluded. Moreover, even if federal legislation forbidding discrimination against women were enforced in the future, it would probably not help those aspirants to skilled and remunerative positions. The groundswell necessary to alter the prevalent practices favoring the men currently does not appear to be present. Furthermore, the private, segregated schools which many middle-class girls attend may adapt their curricula too slowly. In addition to probable inadequacies of financial resources for purchasing up-to-date equipment, and the scarcity of qualified teaching personnel already mentioned, state and federal educational officials must approve curriculum changes. If they do not see the need for preparing women to enter the work force as qualified professionals, they probably would not approve course changes without putting many obstacles in its way. Nor will co-educational public schools in other parts of the country have the resources siphoned to them so that they can update themselves sufficiently and quickly.

Informant responses and personal observations and experiences in relation to the role perceptions and expectations of middle-class women in modern Mexican society follow in the next section.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS - LIFE TODAY

The chapter presents a description of my informants and their present-day environment as well as their views concerning their roles and lives within Mexican society.

Assumptions

My fieldwork was initiated with a few assumptions about the educational background of Mexican urban middle-class women, their qualifications for employment, and their role relationships with men (Lewis 1949, 1959, 1961, Chaney 1979, Nash and Safa 1980, Lavrin 1978, Youssef 1972, Stevens 1973b). It was assumed that middle-class women would have either a liberal arts or career education, or that they would, at least, have the equivalent of a U.S. high school background. An urban environment would not only offer the schooling they would need if they were to have career work, but also the opportunities to meet and marry men who could be categorized as middle class through their occupations. It was assumed, further, that it was a man's world in which single or unattached women would not have a respected place in the society; that married women would be subject to their husbands and would yield most in the relationship. With an awareness of the tensions created in marriages in the United States over such specifics as household allowance,
home maintenance, redecoration, choice of friends, or freedom of movement, it was assumed that these, too, might be problems for Mexican women at this socio-economic level.

Another general assumption was that Mexican middle-class women were aware of the international feminist movements. It was thought that such cognizance would be stimulating many of them to be involved or to be discussing possible ways and means for altering women's roles in Mexico.

Subsequent data collection showed these assumptions to be not entirely accurate. The age, family, and personal history of each woman, and the geographic region in which she lived, proved to be important modifying factors for awareness and interest.

Thirty Mexicans were interviewed according to the schedule (Appendix A); two of these were men. Eight of these individuals, including one of the men, were interviewed either in one or two sessions. The man was a physician interviewed at his office. With the exception of a professional language teacher, the women were seen in their homes. The other individuals were visited several times over a period of weeks, either at their homes or at their place of work. Lengthy discussions were had with about seventy other persons, women and men, Mexicans and Americans who were long-term Mexican residents.

The conversations with the professional women provided information from their own areas of expertise. One of these, a practicing psychiatrist, was very helpful in relation to identifying some of the problems and tensions of women in this socio-economic class.
Age groups

The Mexican women with whom I conversed fall into three age groups: those in their fifties and sixties; those in their thirties and forties, and those in their late teens and twenties. It was not planned to have a sample like this; it was fortuitous by reason of developing contacts while there. It was a very beneficial and enlightening development.

Each age group can be correlated with both a level and type of education. Some in their fifties and over had completed secundaria; some had career training, such as teachers and secretaries. What seemed to be most common to this group, according to information gleaned from discussion, was for women in this social group to have completed primaria. They usually married at the age of sixteen to older men who were more or less established or beginning their business careers or professions. Many of these marriages were arranged as a result of inter-familial friendship or association.

According to my informants, a woman of the upper social class, the traditionally wealthy, attended elite private schools which might have a foreign language curriculum in English, French, or German. Others attended schools in the United States. For both, the purpose was to learn a second language in order to travel outside Mexico and to be social hostesses for their husbands or family.

Woman from the middle class in the period prior to the 1940's were not educated to fulfill roles other than those of wife and mother. Those who were prepared for a career or who completed university studies appeared to have come from traditional middle-class families who
were rather wealthy.

Women in the second age grouping had usually completed the equivalent of high school (preparatoria) or normal school for teachers. Some had university credits, but they married and left school before finishing. Others completed university to earn degrees as psychologists, architects, accountants, etc. The characteristic element is that, when they married, they left their career or profession. Today a few are returning to school in order to update their training.

The new generation of young women is composed of professional and career-minded women. It is difficult to classify them according to social or economic class. The expansion and diversification of the economy over the last twenty to thirty years and the provision of virtually free education through the university level has promoted great socio-economic mobility. The middle class has expanded greatly in Mexico. In the process, some careers, such as nursing, are becoming respectable. As their course training requirements are upgraded, nurses are gaining recognition and respect in the medical field. A significant number of women in this age group are said to be determined to have work experience in their chosen careers. Although most desire marriage, some say they are willing to postpone it until they have not only completed their studies, but have practiced their learned skills. This is considered especially important for those entering male-oriented academic and professional fields such as computer science, administration, and chemical engineering. Others desire to or are combining marriage and career.
Social class distinctions

Not even the 1910 Revolution has been able to abolish the ethnically based social class distinctions of Mexican society. Although the middle class has expanded since that psychologically searing upheaval, it includes within itself social distinctions based upon ethnicity. The responses of my informants to the schedule in which they were asked to describe the social classes of Mexico reflect both their class bias and a justification of their standard of living. The 'rich' are described by them as the very rich (including the politicians) who own grand houses with at least one seaside villa and a condominium in the United States. They have maids, chauffeurs, and few children. Their children receive international educations; no one has any financial worries. The men of this class usually support a second woman. The impression given by my informants was that the elite could bend social rules without much loss of status.

The middle class, according to my middle-class informants, contains the responsible people who value education and professional careers. They work diligently to support the family in a comfortable style. They possess a home, a car, and other lesser material things not necessary to survival—such as a washing machine, refrigerator, pressure cooker, television, etc. Often, they have a maid, and some men may have a 'lover' but not a mistress—that is, the woman does not receive financial support.

The poor, on the other hand, are described as the uneducated who often do not value education. They include the lazy and irresponsible ones who have many children without considering how they will be
able to provide for them.

One informant began the interview with a brief historical survey in which she distinguished between the treatment of the indigenous women and the immigrant Spanish women. The indigenous women were placed in a subject position in relation to the conquistadores and never knew any other place. Their children, maturing in an atmosphere in which the man used and abused the woman, perpetuated the relationship. But the Spanish women, initially, were equals to the conquistadores in background and erudition. However, in New Spain, the succeeding generations of men received school educations through the efforts of the friars. Women gradually were relegated to the domestic domain alone without having equal educational opportunities. (This informant's own personal success resulted from her intelligence and determination to acquire an appropriate education for business.)

Another informant explained that the Indian and mestizo women always took second place— their Spanish husbands deserted them for Spanish women when the latter arrived. Their feelings of insecurity have become part of the cultural heritage of women in time, especially with the growth of the macho (male) attitude among men who themselves were insecure. By implication, most men and women of middle-class status shared this problem with many in the laboring classes.

Yet another informant divided the middle class into three groups: the upper middle-class professionals of physicians, lawyers, and other university-level careers; the traditional merchants, and the bottom-rung new entrants who fill the technical positions of the modernizing industry and the steady career jobs of teachers, secretaries, and
low-level bureaucrats.

Mexicans say they can easily distinguish members of the various social levels according to that nebulous quality of 'culture' or manners and taste in dress and house furnishings. It was interesting to observe the interior decor of homes visited and to see how it coincided with occupation and status: the modern homes and furnishings of the successful banker, physician, or corporation manager; the blend of heirlooms and period contemporary styles of the more traditional merchants. The new economic success of the mestizo is reflected in an interesting blend of colonial Mexican furniture and modern conveniences. The social level of the women is subtly distinguishable by their educational and home background, age group, and manner of style and dress. Once in a while, a family which considers itself criollo is sharply reminded of its indigenous connections in the birth of a darker-skinned child. According to private-school informants, a family like this tends to reject the child for being ethnically undesirable.

The present study indicates that the socio-economic status of many urban middle-class Mexican women is dependent upon that of their husbands. Although the question of status is a complex one, involving the social positions of the couples' parents, and their cultural backgrounds as well as the careers of the husbands, married women generally assume their social identity from their spouses. Their circle outside the family usually is confined to the business associates of their husbands. The primary circle of friends for unmarried women seems to consist of family, especially their brothers and sisters after
the parents die. Moreover, the traditional concept is that women find their fulfillment in life through marriage and children; the unmarried can do so vicariously through other roles such as being the 'aunt' or the housekeeper for unmarried brothers.

Yet, Mexican women are not entirely overshadowed in the male-oriented social structure. They not only retain their own surname in the married state, which symbolizes the union of two families, but also are known only by this family name in legal documents pertaining to inheritance and property. In addition, the government, as an employer, asks only for their personal identity as though all employees were independent of any marital ties.

The importance of education

As noted earlier in the 'samples' discussion, women's subordination in Mexico is not only founded upon varied historic-cultural factors, but also upon having less education than men. Among sixteen women between the ages of thirty to fifty-five whom I interviewed in the urban areas of Mexico D.F., Puebla, and Oaxaca, five had completed preparatoria; four had continued on to the university. The others had completed technical schools for careers in teaching, accounting, and secretarial work. As Table 20 shows, although almost all had more education than their mothers, both groups generally had less schooling than their husbands. Other women interviewed were not certain about how much schooling their mothers had. As it was, the preparatoria classification for the 'mothers over 55' really was equivalent to 'finishing school.'
TABLE 20
EDUCATION OF GENERATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>Primaria</th>
<th>Secundaria</th>
<th>Tecnica</th>
<th>Preparatoria</th>
<th>Universitaria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother over 55</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father over 55</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter 30-55</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husbands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Miller, Roberta. Fieldwork 1981-82.

Even if they had not attended university, the schooling for the fathers and husbands was sufficient for a white-collar or sales career. Once in a while, a woman might have more education than her husband—as when a secretary married a stockboy with only a primaria education. This would be more common in smaller cities, however. Most of those women in both age groups who did have careers or professions had ceased to work after marriage. Widowhood, divorce, or marital problems forced some to re-enter the work force.

It is notable that although some women with careers had brothers, this fact had not meant fewer educational opportunities for them. In a Cuernavaca family of ten children, for example, one of the older brothers postponed his higher education in order to work for school money for his younger sisters and brothers. He himself finished preparatoria in night school and, eventually, put himself through a career program. On the other hand, in some other families, as with one in Puebla, the boys were sent to elite preparatoria schools while the
girls attended either public schools or less-esteemed private schools. It is common for parents to insist or strongly urge their daughters to take 'short career' programs after secundaria. This means training to become a secretary or a teacher at the primary levels because it takes only three to four years as opposed to several more years for a profession (Appendix C). The parents reason that the common experience of the girls is to marry before completion of their university education. When this happens, the money is considered wasted because the girl is not prepared for any kind of supportive employment.

Children as a prime responsibility

Today's urban middle-class ama de casa (housewife) in or near her forties considers her children as her prime responsibility. She is concerned about their welfare and future, and tries to provide materially for them as much as is economically possible.

When their children were young, these mothers' interests centered almost completely upon child care. As one woman in Cuernavaca said, staying at home with the small children was more important than working. She had meals to plan and the family unit to maintain. It was her contention that a maid could not give the same attention to a small child as its mother. She felt that it is the mother who knows or senses her child's needs such as when its behavior points to sickness. Women in Puebla, Guadalajara, Mexico D.F., and Oaxaca expressed the same ideas.

In times past, if the mother had to work, by helping to operate the family store, she could have the children with her. If this was
not possible, then she tried to leave the small ones with family—her mother, sister, or sister-in-law. When the children were in primaria, and the mother worked, she arranged to be home at comida time (about 2:00 p.m.) or to have someone such as a neighbor or relative meet the children at the school or bus stop if she herself could not make it in time. By the time the children were in secundaria, it was commonly felt that they could manage on their own.

For the middle-class housewife whose children are all in school, time becomes plentiful—if she is well-organized. This is even true for the wealthier housewife who chauffeurs her children in the afternoon after the comida (main meal). For the unorganized ama de casa, even with a maid, the day never has enough hours to clean, shop, cook, and be with husband and children.

It is noticeable that socio-economic standing seems to be a factor in relation to the idea that older children do not need a parent's constant presence. Those women married to financially well-off men—bankers, corporate executives, physicians, etc.—raise their children in protective environments. These children, even in their teens and especially if girls, are driven to extra-curricular activities—piano lessons, dance, karate, tennis. They are driven to the homes of friends and to shops. It is those children whose parents are lower echelon executives or government officials, or are self-employed, that are more self-reliant and capable of traveling alone on public transportation. Of course, their parents at this economic level are not living in the new development areas of the city which are beyond the reach of public transport service.
Housekeeping alterations

In Mexico D.F. and Puebla the middle-class housewife might or might not have a maid. Informants noted that even part-time maids are difficult to hire. They are considered expensive and the younger women are increasingly viewed as unreliable. In the more southern states where industrialization has not yet had as much impact, maids are still common for all. Washing machines and vacuum cleaners have eased housework in many parts of the nation. (The scarcity of water and of replaceable machine parts and inadequate electricity often render these household aids useless for extended periods of time.)

Another side of the maid situation was brought to the foreground in a study made of how many and what type of households in Mexico D.F. hired maids (Barbieri 1980). It was found that 24.3 percent of salaried professionals, such as managers or medium-size business entrepreneurs, in the city had at least one maid. For some families it meant the pooling of incomes of two or three family members to pay for her. According to Barbieri (1980), the significance of this finding was that it disproved the idea that only the very wealthy and upper middle-class hired servants. Among nuclear families, 21.7 percent of them had maids and 35.8 percent of extended family groups hired them. In addition, the study uncovered the following information: that wives of non-professional employees did not have paid domestics; middle-class homes with either children or a working wife had domestics, and if neither factor was present, then there were no maids; part-time servants who came to do the washing, ironing, and general household cleaning were common; many housewives with children and a maid did most of the basic food
buying, cooking, and taking care of the children. The article posed the question of whether domestic labor would disappear with the advent of a capitalist system; it concluded with the idea that servants preserved a sense of humanity for middle-class families in the midst of their consumerism. In as much as the ideal standard of living for the middle class included maids, then the report suggests that having a maid today is a social status symbol.

The article also seems to imply that Mexican middle-class women consider the mother-child relationship to be a major priority: children are not often entrusted to the maid. For many women, moreover, cooking was another important home responsibility. This would tie in with references made by informants about how their husbands often expect and prefer meals cooked by the wives. One means of avoiding this time-consuming task was to teach the maids how to cook as much as possible like the women themselves did.

The technology which has accompanied industrialization has effected the broadest changes for the middle-class women as well as for the other social classes. Mass production has made available certain common items—plastic buckets, Tupperware products and their imitations, porcelain kitchen utensils, lingerie, contemporary factory-made fashions, sweets like paletas (ices), packaged candies, and soft drinks. Handcrafted items, such as wooden utensils, leathers, and clothing, are used less and less; they are produced principally for the tourists. While consumerism has touched all economic classes, the middle class with its urban location is a ready market for the latest technology: from microwave ovens to the electronic games of television.
and video-tape movie cameras. The electric blender has been one invention which has become a household essential for any family with electricity. One can observe the upward economic movement of families by the material objects they buy for their homes.

Grocery shopping is done daily, although the housewife with a freezer section in her refrigerator can buy in quantity for the next few days. Bimbo, a bread corporation which packages and distributes in the style of the U.S. bread chains, appears to have a monopoly throughout the central and southern parts of Mexico. Its bread and cakes are a staple for most middle-class homes, although many still buy tortillas on a daily basis for the main meal. Milk is more or less a staple in middle-class families, but it, like tortillas, is bought on a daily basis when available. Sometimes, in some places or areas of the cities, milk can be purchased in quantity. What becomes important is the woman's organization of her time and activities, and her ability to plan ahead. If she is working, her time for grocery buying is limited. If she is not working, she wants time for herself.

Traditional views

An interview question about husband-wife relationships (Appendix A) elicited varied responses according to the personal background of each woman. The purpose was to get a view of each woman's expectations for the marriage relationship and of her attitude about the limitations of her position. A difference in the responses occurred if a woman had the example of a working mother, or had a degree of independence herself before marriage. The variances were minor, however, and certain aspects of the marital relationship were commonly present for all
couples to deal with. The husband usually expected his wife to be at home when he or the children arrived. He was the economic provider for the family. While that was his major responsibility, hers was the care of the home and children.

Although middle-class women work, they do not seem to be at peace with their situation. One informant in her fifties with several children and teaching at the preparatoria perhaps expresses the view of this age group reared traditionally, but aware of the needs of changing times. After commenting upon how men currently must be better educated to get jobs, she went on to say:

To be outstanding in one's profession, each must devote one's attention, time, and thought to it. Thus, a woman cannot be a good wife and mother and professional woman at the same time. Nothing is perfect, but being a wife and mother is a full-time job. The fulfillment of a woman is in bearing and raising children who, when grown, can give her pride and joy in their fruits. It is in giving herself to another and in sharing her life in loyalty and devotion with the man that she is happiest.

It is evident that although Mexico has changed materially with industrialization and modernization, so far, her customs and social structure have been altered only slightly. Until recently, women have lacked the appropriate education to work in the public sector to any degree. Nor have they had the work experience to resume a career later on in life. Modern household technology has partially compensated for the reduced availability of maids. It does not automatically produce leisure time for the woman.

As a social group which considers itself to be the most responsible of all the classes, the women of the middle class appear to be liable to social pressures exerted on behalf of traditional role
fulfillment. This does not mean that these women are satisfied with their present role situations. Tensions are rising among them as expectations are raised by education, technological advances, and travel.

Inexpensive air travel rates have enabled many middle-class families to visit the United States or Europe. In 1982, in fact, before the devaluation, it was cheaper for Mexicans to visit Disneyland in Florida than to tour other parts of Mexico. Some women earned extra money by flying to Texas to shop for clothes; upon returning, they retailed them to friends and acquaintances. Women see on their travels and in American films a style of living different from their own. As a result, they exchange experiences with their friends and begin questioning their own lives and male-female relationships.

The next section will report the responses of specific women interviewed to inquiries about their dependent status, their family responsibilities and ties, work, and divorce.

The women speak

Consuelo, married nineteen years with two teen-age girls, began law studies but did not like the courses; she shifted to a career as a beautician which was against her parents' wishes. She did not marry until her twenties, and then to a salesman. Her parents did not like her choice in this matter, either. Her husband did not want her to continue work as a beautician, but she prevailed over his objections. She could carry on the business in the house. Now she has switched to real estate—again because it can be done from her home and at her
own hours. Consequently, she sees no conflict between work and the fulfillment of her duties as a mother. She lists as her priorities: her daughters first, then her work, house, meals, and her husband—who is away for most of the week. His duty is to earn money to support her and the girls. She works because it is something useful and she does not enjoy sitting home to embroider, gossip, play cards, or watch television. What does she do with her earnings? Since it is her work, time, and effort, it is her money to be spent on luxuries or personal things. What does she argue most about with her husband: first it was over working, and then about sex.

Beatriz, married about twenty-one years with three children, teaches at a language school in Cuernavaca. Her husband, about ten years older than she, is a banker. She regrets choosing marriage rather than continuing her university studies. Family responsibilities have been a prime concern of hers, especially when the children were young. A maid is no substitute for a mother's attention. She is teaching because she feels 'useless' with the children at school and her husband at work. She has a maid who prepares the comida so that she can come home at 2:00 p.m., just before her husband and the youngest girl, who is in secundaria, arrive. All can sit down together to eat, and Beatriz can devote her full attention to her husband and children. The house is small, moreover, and she is well-organized. Her money earned is hers to use, while her husband's earnings pay for the upkeep of the house, for the two small cars, and for daily needs. Beatriz considers money, sex, and the children's education to be the common topics for marital disagreements.
Neither Lolli nor her husband finished their respective studies at the university: she in pharmaceutical medicine and he as a veterinarian. They married, and since neither side of the family could support them, he had to leave school and find work. They have one daughter who attends a private all-girls school. She and her husband opened a gift shop in the home of his parents. Then he got a steady job, and she kept the shop going as an economic cushion in case he lost his employment. He helps when he is not working. Lolli likes to operate the shop because it keeps her from being bored in her house. The shop has included them in the social world of the neighborhood in which they live. She, too, is well-organized with a small home to care for.

Matrimony has been her primary interest; her daughter and husband's happiness and welfare are still her principal concerns. She sees the usual topics for marital strife to be money and the education of the children.

Juana, a bi-lingual secretary before her marriage, has three children, all in school. Her husband makes good money as a manufacturer. Although she has two maids, she tries to have the children to pick up their things after using them. They usually see their father on the weekends since he returns home after they have retired during the week. She has the major burden of raising and disciplining them. When he is home, he wants his wife there with peace and calm reigning. The principal topic of marital discord for her is his absence, or, in other words, family neglect by reason of his not being home. Her primary concern now is for the children: "I have to do everything for my children. Mexico is too big, and I'm afraid to leave them alone."
Rosario, married fifteen years with two girls, has returned to secretarial work with a friend of her husband's. Her husband has just changed sales jobs. Since he and her employer know each other (her husband arranged the job), she has hours which enable her to come home by 1:00 p.m. when the girls finish school. Although it is evident that he expects to be the master of the home, he does help his wife with chores. If it were not for his own employment difficulties, Rosario would probably stay at home. As it is, she is expected to keep him constantly informed about her activities outside the house.

The dependent state of the woman, either upon her family or upon her husband, still is a basic element of Mexican social structure. In marriage this means that she is economically dependent upon her husband. His basic responsibility as a husband is to support wife and children. Some would say, however, that the woman's dependency is necessary for the portrayal of the husband's 'manly' image.

An older informant provided further insights into the situation. Maria, a woman in her late fifties who teaches at a renowned language school in Mexico D.F., describes herself as an atypical Mexican of the middle class. Her mother was French; her father was a mestizo lawyer. Her husband is a Mexican-American musician who renounced his U.S. citizenship. She is an independent person who feels that she has accomplishments in her own right. At the same time, she sees herself as a typical Mexican in that she is family-oriented and a woman who believes that mothers should stay home with their babies until they are at least three years old. But she also thinks that a mother
can be overly present, protective, and stifling to her children. To her way of thinking, separation during the day is beneficial for both mother and child.

It was Maria's observation that middle-class parents do not teach their children to resolve their problems and to be responsible persons. Liberty is a mental attitude, and many Mexican women lack this spirit. She suggested that Mexican women who go to work today are merely changing bosses: instead of taking orders from her husband, she is told what to do by a male boss. Furthermore, she said, middle-class women have usually not been stimulated either in their families or at school to be creative. Creativity and the spirit of liberty are allied. Thus, after the burden of child-care has been lifted, the women are lost, and the idea of employment becomes a form of escape.

It is pertinent to note here that informants in Puebla implicated the schools for the characteristics of conformity, inertia, or procrastination popularly attributed to many Mexicans. An assistant principal related the professional problems which derive from the emphasis on memorization of authorities in courses of study. For example, teachers waited to be told how to proceed in various matters, or expected their superiors to solve their problems at the school. Both men and women have been educated to obey orders and, in effect, to avoid making decisions or to accept the consequent responsibilities.

Another aspect of this lack of inner independence surfaced in the expressed idea that a woman becomes a man's possession. A woman from the United States who lived and studied in Mexico for several years before working there, mentioned this from the experiences of her women
friends. First of all, her friends from wealthy middle-class backgrounds only had finishing school educations. They married at twenty-one, had three to five children, and now in their thirties find themselves adrift. Their husbands insist that they stay home, although the husbands are not home to be companions. They are out to dinners and other engagements, ostensibly in connection with their businesses.

Another example of this possessiveness was related in Puebla. A physician divorced his wife for a woman doctor. Although usually a man would not seek to obtain a divorce in order to have another woman, the latter must have insisted, perhaps by reason of her own professional status. However, he continued to return to the house to check up on the activities of his former wife. Finally, she summoned up enough courage to tell him to cease.

The double standard is involved here. Prior to marriage the men are said to be most attentive, polite, and full of promises. After marriage and the first one or two children, their wives stay home while they go out. All the promises are forgotten. If the wife complains about her husband's absences or resists his conjugal demands, she risks physical abuse. As a UNAM language professor observed, most men have been raised to expect service from the women in the house. Thus, a woman is not being a proper wife if she does not serve. Another side of this picture is that most women are not usually attuned to men helping them in the household chores. Whether or not they perceive the assistance as interference in their affairs, the women reject their husbands' offers as "not being his place."
Factors underlying subordination

The interviews and discussions reveal that when the woman has no employable skills, she usually endures or becomes resigned to a bad situation in the home. "What will I do? I have no training. I have the children" are commonly expressed refrains of women when faced with the choice of divorce. Most often the woman says she will not leave because of the children. Rather, she makes excuses to them for the behavior or absence of their father, her husband. She becomes dependent upon her children and/or family. If she lives near or with her mother-in-law, as happens very often today outside Mexico D.F., the mother-in-law (suegra) orders her life.

Another factor which contributes to the woman's general subordination has been the almost universal absence of any knowledge about sex on the part of the middle-class girl or woman entering the state of marriage. Traditionally, the topic has been taboo in the home. While the men prior to marriage have had their experiences through visiting prostitutes, or perhaps with maids and other girls of lower status, the women have been kept ignorant of the whole matter of sex. It is only recently, according to my informants, that many mothers have begun to understand their bodily processes as a result of reading their children's science textbooks or watching informative television programs. Until now, their knowledge of sexual matters has been limited to their marital experiences. Physical sex for women has been viewed as sinful outside of marriage, and a necessary evil within that state. The husband often conceived of sex as a conjugal duty, but reserved its pleasurable aspects for a mistress. This, as a psychiatrist
stated, usually relates to his upbringing and his relationship to his mother. If he was distant from her, or if she became the ideal woman for him, the foundation for an intimate love relationship between him and his wife would be very insecure from the beginning.

To explain her economic dependency in another way is to refer to the type of education a woman in the middle class has had. If she had career training, it is a question of how many years ago and if she ever was employed. Few maintained their skills or ever thought they would want to exercise them--unless it was a necessity. For most women, careers and marriage could not be combined. Now they feel inadequate and incapable of re-entering the office place with its modern technological advancements. Furthermore, family upbringing usually imbued a woman with the values of responsibility to her children and to the home with the idea that the husband would provide support. As one secretary in Puebla said, a man goes to work and forgets all about his children. The woman can never do that.

Usually a woman has no example of women being alone, self-supporting, and happy or successful working. She is fearful not only of trying to find employment, but also of loneliness. She doubts that she can be successful in her attempts to work or to be self-sufficient. As Dr. Cora Fierro, a psychiatrist, commented, the women who return to work or to study often view this activity as not only extracurricular, but as an intrusion upon their home responsibilities. The result is self-defeat. Worse, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy for them--they cannot succeed. Furthermore, their husbands have been constantly telling them that they can never 'make it' outside the home. As a
result, when the women engage in work or study, they do so with feel­ings of guilt—they are cheating their family; they are being selfish, etc. Husbands, relatives, and peers all have varying attitudes rang­ing from outright disapproval to non-comprehension of an absurd idea. For a woman to earn money is a slight against her husband. Today, with inflation, it is more acceptable for a woman to earn money to 'help out' with family expenses—especially if there are extraordinary expenses or situations. But when the woman's husband is quite success­ful financially and she wants to work, it is just incomprehensible to all. According to Dr. Fierro, the matter then just is not discussed.

There is the matter of a woman's friends being secondary to her husband's associates. As Dr. Fierro again explained, women in the for­ty to fifty age bracket know the family to be their central sphere of activity. They have few personal friends outside the family. Then again, an American woman married to a Mexican related how her mother-in-law lectured her on restricting her friendships to family alone. "Friends will betray you. Only the family will be true." To the mother-in-law, close non-family friends were inconceivable. Personal observation seemed to confirm rather widespread acceptance of this be­lief. For example, the life of señora, my landlady, revolved around her own three sons and their families, her adopted son and family, and her own two sisters. With the exception of her own sons, who lived in the State of Mexico, the others lived within city blocks of her house. In addition, my impression was that the daughters-in-law kept close so­cial contacts with their relatives. In Salamanca, a smaller city pos­sessing an oil refinery, a similar family situation was observed.
Seven of the eleven surviving adult children lived within blocks of or at the family home. The father often visited cousins living in northern Mexico and Texas since the death of his wife, their mother. Although his own children had a difficult time relating to him and he was unnerved by them, family ties, even though weakened by the death of the mother, were maintained among all. Two of his unmarried daughters in their late twenties worked and kept house for him. They tended to be the least family-oriented, and were rather resentful because they were tied to the house and not married with their own families. Four other daughters were in a religious congregation, scattered in other parts of the nation. They, however, managed to keep in contact and to help one another.

Larissa Lomnitz in her study of the developing fortunes of a Mexican family, many of whose members would be placed in the upper middle class, elucidates the above when she describes the family values of the kin-group (Lomnitz and Lizaur n.d.). First of all, the nuclear family is the basis and center of all social life among them. In a sense, because the parents live, work, and strive for social prestige for them, the children as brothers and sisters must always remain close to one another. The place of the wife is in the home to look after the social life of the family, to raise children, and to be a selfless companion to her husband. "As far as the outside world is concerned, each nuclear family should appear as a monolithic block. Morality is largely based on family interests. . ." (Lomnitz and Lizaur n.d.).
If a woman should have personal friends at her place of work or from her works of charity, the friends of her husband and his social engagements take precedence. In the school in Mexico D.F. and at the one in Puebla where research was done, and also at the language school in Cuernavaca, faculty parties were held during the school hours. They could not extend overtime nor be in the evenings. The husbands would not attend social activities connected with the employment of their wives. Most of the faculties at these schools were composed of women with families. These had to return home in time for husband and children. At the student-faculty socials in Cuernavaca, the women faculty just quietly departed for home if the socializing did extend overtime. The husbands of the faculty women at the preparatorias usually did not know one another, since evening parties had been abandoned as impractical. In a city such as Puebla, the woman often did not share social functions with her husband, either, but remained solely within the family social circle.

The breadth or narrowness of family social circles seems to depend upon the family and its social ambitions. One traditional way in which a nuclear family has either tied to itself non-family persons or strengthened bonds between itself and relatives is through the Church custom of having baptismal sponsors or godparents for a child. According to Foster (1960), the Spanish custom is to select relatives as godparents with the binding relationship established between child and godparent. In Spanish America, however, friends are asked to be sponsors, and the relationship is between parent and godparent (Foster 1960, 1961). This adapted form has been especially common in rural Mexico as
individual family units attempt to secure some socio-economic defenses against the uncertainties of life (Foster 1961).

The baptisms which I observed or which were mentioned to me by informants demonstrated the use of both friends and relatives as godparents by middle-class families. A family in Salamanca chose godparents from among its extended family members, as did a family in Puebla. On the other hand, a D.F. family selected as godparents for at least one of its children long-time friends known to them from school days. In this case, the godparents and parents evidently possessed equal socio-economic status (Foster 1961). However, in Oaxaca, the prospective godparents to a successful middle-class family were themselves in an economic descent. Although they bought the gold medallion with the initials and date inscribed, a new baby suit, and arranged for the church and priest, they would soon not be able to continue to pay for these types of things. If they were equals in the beginning, the godparents would soon be needing financial help.

Although this is only a projection, requiring further data, it would appear likely that middle-class family units utilize both methods of selecting godparents to re-emphasize family ties as well as to extend their social circle. It also would seem that the Spanish custom perhaps has been more prevalent within the Mexican middle class—as part of their imitative pattern.

Responses to a question about friends vary, according to the social level and city. Mercedes, for example, lives in Mexico D.F. and all her relatives are in Monterrey. She socializes with her circle of friends who live nearby and are also from Monterrey. The husbands all
know one another since they too are from Monterrey and the same schools. Mercedes accompanies her husband on some business trips and to social affairs. When they go on business trips, the children are cared for by one of their godparents, a school friend of Mercedes. However, this godparent has established definite limits on what she will and will not do; she will not babysit for any social trips, for example.

Then there is the situation of various circles of friends shared by husband and wife. These circles may overlap if parents live in a neighborhood in which business associates also reside, and in which they belong to the same parent-school associations and frequent the same shopping center. For example, Luisa, as a professional woman, has a group of friends in connection with her position as dean at a private and elite university in Mexico D.F. She has insisted that her husband accompany her to the dinners, dances, and conventions sponsored by the university or related organizations. Recently, she wrenched from him the permission to attend conventions outside the country, affairs that he would not want to attend but neither did he want her to participate. The second group of friends are the bankers from the husband's banking system. The bank also sponsors dinners and conventions at which wives and husbands are expected to be present. The third circle of associates consists of neighborhood families and the fourth of members of the private school association. But many of the same people are members of all these groups because of the shared economic level which enables them to live in the particular suburb area and their children to attend the same schools.
The urban growth that is promoting the development of nuclear families and friendships with non-family persons also means that in Mexico D.F., Puebla, and Oaxaca families have relatives and parents in other cities. If husband and wife do not form friendships at the place of work or in the neighborhood, life is rather lonely. It is especially difficult for the woman to meet other women and to form friendships. If the neighborhood is new, it is somewhat easier, but if one has moved into an established residential area, it is quite difficult. Then, the woman must rely upon her husband for friends. Church groups that exist in Oaxaca, for example, do not extend a welcoming hand to newcomers if someone, as a member of the organization, does not introduce them.

The woman's realm

In reality, many amas-de-casa in the urban middle class rule their household. In the development of the middle class, areas of responsibility crystallized in which the wife presided over the domestic domain and the husband over the public one. Lomnitz expresses it in terms of tight family loyalty, "Women are expected to be housewives in exchange for the economic protection afforded by her husband." Or again, the "man's masculinity is directly related to his capacity as a provider" (Lomnitz and Lizaur n.d.). Although tradition projects the image that the man is in charge of his home, even if it means that his wife and children fear him as well as respect him, what really seems to take place is a covert struggle for power between the pair. Many women come to possess the actual power, but either conceal the fact from their spouses or exercise it discreetly without upsetting the male
ego. It is most common for the housewife to hold the reins of power in the home when the man is never there. She then has the complete responsibility for decisions regarding the children, discipline, school selection, religious belief and values, and management of the household economy. She juggles expenses to fit the allowance usually given, although sometimes, she might have the entire paycheck to administer.

According to one of my informants, the woman has used submission to gain her independence. It is a form of manipulation. For example, Luisa, the professional woman who has acquired a degree of independence from her husband in order to function successfully as a university dean, still makes it a point to be home in time for comida with her husband and children. At the dinner table she serves him and defers to his wishes, even to placing the coffee cup at his wrist, directly in front of him. She says that her daughters have commented disparagingly about this. He, however, sees the action as a sign of her affection for him. In her view, it is a matter of giving in on little things in order to obtain the more important ones. Although she does not specifically express the idea, she knows that she dare not challenge his position as the principal provider for the household.

Luisa's husband does like to discuss his business at the bank with her. Even though she is more of a sounding board for him, this type of exchange is rather out of the ordinary. Most husbands tell their wives very little about their business affairs; whatever wives know must be gleaned from the network of friends and relatives they share with their husbands. Usually wives do not inquire. On the other hand, Luisa's husband will not listen to her when she would like
to discuss her activities or problems connected with her university work. She has accepted the dichotomy as the way it has to be.

Another example of the art of manipulation as practiced by many Mexican women was revealed in a story told by an informant about her aunt. The aunt always told her daughter to ask her father about doing or getting something. But when she told her daughter this, she also instructed her how to take a 'no': "If it's 'no', then we both will think of a way to get around him."

Money is the first value to a Mexican woman, according to María L., an informant quite active in the major political party. Money can be obtained in various ways: marriage, work, or sale of homemade products. The verity of this is known through the countless accounts of women who scrimped and saved to dress and put their children through school for the sake of upward economic mobility. In contemporary Mexico, the middle-class expansion in numbers is partially due to the determination and money-management skills of these women. It also has meant that the non-working middle-class woman is quite satisfied with the public/private realms of operation. Her husband gives her the allowance and/or credit cards, and usually leaves her free to spend as she pleases. Unless she needs more money, the husband will not question her expenses or purchases. Mercedes, for example, receives an allowance for clothes, food, and medicine. Her husband takes care of the gas and electricity and other house-related bills. He also has given her credit cards to the major department stores (Liverpool, Palacio Hierro) and an American Express Card. She pays for her purchases with credit cards and from her allowance.
Usually, with prudent management, Mercedes and others like her can cover their expenses and even save within the limits of their allowance allotments.

A manipulative skill practiced by many women is simply to know her husband and to think before asking. Mercedes says that she first thinks through her situation and what she wants. She then calculates the best route of action according to timing (when is the best time to present her case), how or in what manner to ask, etc. Some women by their personality maneuver less effectively than others. Those who know how to manage their husbands wield great power over the actions and choices of their children and husbands. In crediting their mothers for their success in business, many men realize that their mothers guided their lives through their youth to adulthood. As some informants observed, however, when the topic is a working wife, men will block the reality of the added financial assistance out of their minds, or look the other way if they can do so without losing prestige.

This subtle rivalry for power is usually decided early in a marriage. The woman can elicit support in her endeavors to obtain the reins of power from her mother and/or sisters. These may have provided advice and been role models earlier for her.

Supports and pressures

It has been stated that upper middle-class women always had handicraft or social clubs where they conversed, discussed and exchanged ideas, advice, etc. My friend Maria L. advised me never to believe the Mexican middle-class woman who said that she had no women friends. While this would appear to contradict the traditional idea that women
restrict their close friends to the family circle, we have seen that women have continued to keep school friends, especially when known mutually by the husbands. It has also been noted that the wealthy tend to provide the models for what is social fashion—such as a discussion club. Thus, according to my informant Maria L., whether women are maids or secretaries or professionals, they usually have a social club to which they belong. A cursillo group of women—cursillo being a Catholic movement designed to generate informed, active participant believers—was observed to function in a manner similar to this type of social club: in addition to carrying out the religious goals of the meeting, they shared the news of events, social circles, and some family aspects. However, their sharing tended to be superficial. While individuals might discuss a family problem, assistance would not go beyond advice. As another informant said, "If you try to help a friend, you may end up being in the wrong."

On the other hand, the type of club, where it is located, and its purpose may not bring women together to share views. At some exercise clubs in Mexico D.F., for example, the women do not know one another except by face and possibly name, because they run in and out—before or after work or errands.

Judging by the number of times that informants referred to the sense of family responsibility possessed by the members of the middle class, it could be concluded that the family and the home have been rather sacred to them—or at least the ideal of parental fidelity and allegiance. It was clear that the woman was expected to govern the domestic domain—she herself expected to do so. Lomnitz, in her study
of the Gomez family, determined that not only have family membership and "bourgeois" economics been joined, but that women have been expected to uphold and further the family position (Lomnitz and Lizaur n.d.).

If a woman does not have her mother to advise her, she may have other relatives upon whom she may rely. While many mothers are close to their sons, they also have a close relationship with their daughters. The impression of the primacy of mother-son relationships had been acquired from the literature (Lavrin 1978, Stevens 1973, Pescatello 1973, Careaga 1974, Azcona 1974). This was supported, moreover, by observations and interview data obtained from several women in Mexico. These all indicated the domination of a mother over her son(s), in which her wishes took precedence over a wife. There was also the case of one young, unmarried woman in Oaxaca whose maternal grandmother ruled the family compound, domineering her daughter and son-in-law. Consequently, rather distant mother-daughter relationships were assumed in the initial stages of data gathering. There was also the fact, uncovered in the interviews, that daughters did not discuss very intimate personal things with their mothers before—or after—marriage. However, the psychiatrist, Dr. Fierro, related that mothers and daughters are constantly on the telephone, if not visiting each other. In Puebla an informant stated matter-of-factly that married women daily visit their mothers. (This is an example also of the continued core population stability in many cities outside the capital city district.) When their husbands leave for work in the mornings, the wives go to see their mothers. (At holiday times, both
sets of parents and relatives must be visited—a possible source of tension, depending upon the mothers-in-law.) Thus, when a woman's mother dies, she may experience great loneliness and a sense of abandonment.

Some widowed mothers live with their married children on a rotation basis. Many homes have a room for 'mother'. Sometimes, in the course of discussion with them, women lamented the loss of their mothers because it coincided with the disintegration of the family's unity. For example, at holiday or fiesta times, it was the mother who acted as the 'centralizing force' for the family gathering. Lomnitz describes this type of woman as one who knows all the intricacies of the family history and who preserves its particular customs, recipes, and memorable tales. In the absence of this type of woman, each sibling tends to go his or her own way, often to the in-laws. The oldest daughter may be expected to come forth and to assume leadership of the family, but that occurrence seems to depend upon the relationships among the siblings and the personalities involved. What was observed was the situation in which the eldest son and daughter emerged as father-mother substitutes. He had the connections to provide financial or legal assistance to younger brothers and sisters; she commanded sufficient respect to mediate in their inter-personal conflicts—especially for the unmarried sisters.

The traditional custom of the mother bearing the prime responsibility for the children would appear to encourage either their great solicitude for or dependence upon her. Certainly, señora's sons exemplified the aspect of much concern for her. As previously
mentioned, mothers-in-law were cited as sources of friction and alienation for wives over such topics as children, household management, and/or attention to the husband's needs. Daughters, in turn, evidently were expected to be attentive to the mother in her advanced years. Once in a while, however, a daughter will rebel at her mother's overpowering expectations (Foppa 1978). In Oaxaca the woman with whom I stayed finally told me how she let people presume that her mother was deceased. She had broken relations with her mother and could not cope with the condemnatory attitudes or non-understanding of people when they heard her story. She was the only child, and had been very close to her father. She inherited from him a retail business which she maintained with the aid of her husband and children. (Her husband operates a very successful manufacturing business with a large plant in Mexico D.F. which he visited weekly.) Her mother, although she had a comfortable income, demanded Auxilio's constant attention. Auxilio, in turn, felt that the mother's demands were detrimental to her marriage and resented the idea of being so bound by her mother's expectations. There was no satisfying the mother: "I sacrificed for you when you were at home; now it is your duty to make a return for my sacrifices." Auxilio's peers could not understand why she could not accept this attitude of her mother and just fulfill her obligations. At the advice of a Spanish priest friend, Auxilio finally ceased in her attempts to find any sort of compromise relationship, and now never mentions her mother.
Signs of changing values

Arranged marriages and chaperones are part of the stereotype of Latin-American women. For the very wealthy, interested in maintaining a closed, elite circle, or for those interested in bettering themselves financially and socially (Lomnitz and Lizaur n.d.), the arranged marriage has been a viable means. The impression emerged from discussions with informants over the identification of social class (Appendix A) that it would be difficult for a man or woman to marry upward. Parents usually attempted to discern the family heritage of a prospective marriage partner (Lomnitz personal communication), and informants referred to speech patterns, dress, or general social bearing as indicative of social class.

Every one of the women in the middle-age range who had been interviewed, had married men of their own choice. Their brothers and sisters married or did not marry as they chose. Spouses met at fiestas, at work, or at school. For some women, family objections had to be overcome. For others, time was needed until the family could come to know the intended. In general, the women chose their husbands with a limited degree of directive family pressure. One informant who married a man much older than she met him at work. Although he was established in his career, her family encouraged her to obtain a profession first—she did not have to marry him. In traditional times, the suitor's assets would have evoked the family's encouragement of the match.

This seems to be in contrast to rural marriages, where, even today according to informants, the girls who work in rural areas marry
younger, and often to older men whom they have not chosen. The middle-
class women known to me married at an older age than did their mothers,
and most have had fewer children than their mothers. They do not see
themselves as having much influence over their daughters' choices of
husbands.

Some of these women, however, may present equivocal examples to
their daughters. For example, the preparatoria typing teacher, men-
tioned previously, began teaching twenty years ago and had three of
her eight children during this time period. She came from a tradi-
tional middle-class family in which her father was a general practition-
er in medicine. She married an educated man who is now an editor with
a publication firm. She had a small baby when she was offered the op-
portunity to teach, but the circumstances were favorable enough for her
husband to agree: she lived near the school, only had to teach four
hours, and had her mother living with her. Her original motivation for
taking the job was never clear to me. Furthermore, she now expresses
the idea that women cannot combine satisfactorily marriage with child-
ren and a profession. She concedes that circumstances such as finan-
cial need or family problems might necessitate employment. Or if a
married woman could fulfill her duties by having the benefits of choice
of work hours and the assistance of relatives as she did, employment
may be acceptable.

Choices were, and still are for many, limited by the schools the
women attend. Every all girls' school seems to have its male counter-
part. Parents know the approximate socio-economic status of the stu-
dents and parents. It is at the university level--unless it is an
elite one—where parents have a more difficult time in ascertaining
the socio-economic stratum of the companions of their daughters or
sons. However, as Professor Lomnitz observed, concerned parents can
acquire some idea about a man's eligibility by knowing his full name—
that is, his father's and mother's names. Furthermore, since students
tend to group themselves together according to interests and social
backgrounds, the social anonymity, fostered by increased mobility for
students through expanded educational opportunities, is somewhat di-
minished.

Women from families proud of their Spanish background apparently
meet their husbands either through membership in a Spanish club or
through trips to Spain. This seems to be the one situation for direct
family manipulation of the occasions and places to meet future spouses.
At least one of the women who married a Spaniard this way has not had
a happy marriage. For her husband has been as jealous, possessive,
and imperious as a man could be. In the two or three cases heard
about, the Spanish husband has allowed the wife very little freedom,
even in the domestic realm. Each was also very prone to use physical
force. Puebla, a city proud of its Spanish foundation and heritage,
was the only city visited where the physical abuse of wives was con-
sidered commonplace.

As for the matter of chaperones, the system seems to be dying
rapidly, even in the more conservative regions of the southern part of
Mexico. Some women referred to having a brother or sister accompany
them on movie dates or shopping trips, or to dances. A few such com-
panions are still observable in public, and it was easy to see how a
younger sibling could be easily bribed to see or do other things for a while. Some siblings were said to have developed a 'blackmail' system. Older brothers were considered to be the worst type of chaperone for a girl, since they tended to be more critical of boyfriends than either parent. In addition, they physically could frighten away a potential boyfriend. It seems, however, that with coeducation and cars, the third party is disappearing.

Again, a sign of changes induced by modernization and the breakdown of isolation is the decline in the importance of the Quince Años (fifteen years) celebration. This equivalent of a 'coming out' party for the girl has been a social event by which parents have displayed their financial well-being in the local community. Bake shops in the cities outside Mexico D.F. have huge letters advertising that they bake for Quince Años fiestas. In the past it was the time a girl had her first dance and was considered to have reached social maturity. The party and dance were preceded by a religious liturgical celebration at which the girl was (and is) dressed as a bride. She may or may not have attendants. Many girls still, in the rural areas especially, are pining to have some modified form of a Quince celebration. Unlike the rural girls, however, the middle-class girl today has had dates and gone to dances long before she attained the age of fifteen. Consequently, an increasing number of these young women are indifferent or even opposed to the idea. Although one still sees Quince Años liturgies in various middle-class sections of Mexico D.F., the participating families are proclaiming their socio-economic status or are maintaining tradition.
Varying expectations.

As the woman's horizons broaden through the communications media, travel, and education, her hopes and expectations diverge from those of her husband. This can become an underlying cause of the battered woman syndrome now recognized as a problem in Mexico. Again from the psychiatrist, abortion can be a way in which a wife asserts her independence from her husband, for she sees children as a form of imposed restrictions upon her.

Women who marry men who have spent some time in the United States often benefit from the men's experiences which have broadened their views about women. Sylvia's husband studied in Texas; he is a language professor at UNAM, as she is. On his day off, he is in charge of the house and children. A sign of their non-traditional ways is that the couple had agreed to have only two children, after not wanting any at first. Even so, Sylvia can laugh at herself, because as her mother pointed out to her and to her sisters, they all consider themselves to be 'liberated women'. However, they must keep their lives very organized in order to fulfill responsibilities in the house, to the children, and at work. She, their mother, was a lady of leisure as only a housewife with three maids.

Or there is Tacho, the twenty-six-year-old physician who is doing his year of family practice at a small local infirmary in Puebla, his home city. He, too, is an example of how the experience of studying in the United States can alter a Mexican male's view about women. For him, the woman has become a human person, intelligent, and deserving of respect. In Puebla, however, he now has problems dating because the
women are not expecting this type of approach and do not respect him. His peers keep offering him advice on how to be more manly (macho). Tacho certainly still has the example of how to be macho from his brother-in-law, his father, and his younger brother. Moreover, his mother agrees with them when they counsel his sister that a woman should think first of her husband's needs and should always obey him. In their opinion, no woman should work and, if she does, then she should forego ambitions to advance in her work, especially when she knows that her husband is in opposition to the employment. His sister works and has been offered promotions. She has had to refuse them because of her husband and her family's support of his objections.

Tacho taught his sister-in-law how to dance and now is persona non grata at his brother's house. This is a variation of the usual jealousy aroused in a husband against a close brother-sister relationship. The husband sees his possessive hold over his spouse as threatened.

A woman does not have to travel abroad in order to acquire a different perspective. One woman met in Puebla began her career as a bilingual secretary. Her father had designated the short career route in studies for her. After working in Puebla for a few years, Dolores went to Mexico D.F. to work for an American advertising firm. Her boss was an American, and she received excellent training in public relations methods. The firm had management problems, so when Dolores received an offer to become the Public Relations Assistant with her own secretary at a private university in Puebla, she took it. After seven successful years there, she was fired by an incompetent
alcoholic boss. She says he could not cope with her evident superiority in management. Dolores did not feel that she should have to explain or defend herself against this man before the president of the university. In spite of the unfairness of the situation, when she was fired, she said that she felt very depressed and worthless for the first week; during the second week, however, she received many calls offering good employment positions, and her self-esteem returned, strengthened by the experience.

Dolores has by nature a strong personality. She angered her parents in the early days of dating by refusing to take seriously those boys who had approached them for permission to date her. Although she wanted to date men of her own choosing, the closed society which still exists in Puebla and which considers women as the weaker sex prohibited her from doing so. She must combine independence with a sense of self-confidence. This Dolores has been able to do as a result of her very positive work experiences and on-the-job training.

According to Dr. Fierro, contemporary married women resent the apparent inability of their husbands to recognize and praise their out-of-the-ordinary endeavors. They also resent the lack of respect for their time and the insensitivity to their needs. It seems that many are no longer willing to be taken for granted, to be content with the reflected glory of being the wife, or to be satisfied with selfless service. The problem often builds up after the first few years of marriage and the establishment of the domestic and public realms of responsibilities. The husband is stingy with the allotted allowance, and the wife does not feel justified to ask for more money for herself.
Dr. Fierro referred to the lack of organization on the part of many middle-class women when they marry. They start out in marriage dependent upon the husband. But the husbands expect their wives to learn how to organize and to manage money, time, activities, etc. When a wife fails to do so, this becomes a source of tension. On the other hand, those wives that do learn time and money management receive no praise or recognition for their achievement. For these women, when the children are grown, and their duties systematized, the view of life seen in travel or in the media holds great allurement. They would like a life with more challenge and excitement than that offered by home and family. The husbands, however, have no vision or concept of any changes in their horizons or in their relationships.

Furthermore, these women have no appropriate models to follow in their search for new outlets. Thus, the tension rises and the solutions or settlements are arrived at more haphazardly than not. As mentioned before, few women lack guilt feelings and, consequently, bear a debilitating burden from the beginning of any new ventures. Even if she is only involved in voluntary works, the husband might demean his wife's interests and activity if he judges that she is not paying him enough attention. He tells her that she is wasting her time, or that anybody could do what she is doing. Yet women are moving out of the domestic into the public realm in spite of the difficulties.

Working women

The state of the economy does not appear to be the basic reason for the increased numbers of middle-class women looking to enter the world of employment. Rather, the interview and discussion data
indicate that it is a search for a sense of self-worth and independence, a desire to be recognized as an individual. For example, when questioned about the criteria used for budgeting money when both worked, some women became rather defensive about the right to their own money. A review of excerpts of some of their answers will demonstrate this.

Consuelo, a real estate agent, feels that her own fulfillment is very important. She keeps her earnings as her just due for her work. She distinguishes between household maintenance and provisioning and her personal needs. When it comes to shady areas involving the children, then she negotiates with her husband over the amounts each should pay. This is what they did for the Quince Años fiesta for their oldest daughter.

Beatriz, the self-taught language school teacher, counsels her daughters about the wisdom of completing studies for a professional career before matrimony. She says that it is the woman's right to decide how she will use her earnings—either for herself or to pay common bills.

Lolli, co-owner of the gift shop, feels that a contemporary woman can no longer depend upon her parents or her husband for money for material goods over and above the necessities. Besides, husbands do not like their wives to ask constantly for money. Therefore, if the woman can earn extra money, she can use it as she wants for the things she wants. Men, moreover, just do not understand how clothes wear out, curtains need to be changed, and furniture redone. Many of her women customers at the store are seeking work not only because
they are bored at home, but because they do not want to become old-looking. They like to look pretty and to feel attractive. If a woman has her own source of income, she is free to go to the hairdresser or to buy make-up, etc. Going out to work, furthermore, gives the women more incentive to maintain their appearances.

Luz, a housewife who sells jewelry from her home, says that all the money she earns goes into the common pot. She and her husband both agreed to it. She administers all the income, however, including his salary, and she has the freedom to do as she wants with it. She believes that it is better for a woman to be able to combine marriage and a career. Both daughters are in career training.

Maria, the professional musician and language teacher in Mexico D.F., says it is customary for a Mexican woman to keep her income separate from that of her husband's. It is a way of asserting her independence. Maria also sees 'power' as the principal source of marital arguments: who holds the reins of authority? Who is the decision-maker?

Juana, a housewife, has fought with her husband over money. There was a period when he gave her very little and only said "spend less" and "don't worry" when she requested more money for household necessities. He never told her until much later about his business problems. Now, he has changed jobs and they discuss his business to the extent that she knows how much he earns. She still receives an allowance, but can also write checks.

Sylvia, the UNAM language professor, says her female associates refuse to pool their earnings with those of their husbands. The man is
to pay the household expenses, and the wife will decide about her in-
come and how it will be spent. She, too, refers to the idea of power:
the power of decision-making. Again, the women who make their own de-
cisions about money expenditures assert their independence.

When a successful Puebla internist was asked about his wife work-
ing, he replied that she did make and sell honey candies from the
home. She used the money for clothing for herself and the children.
It became clear in the conversation that although this type of income
activity did not bother him, outside employment would.

For some of the women interviewed, working was a necessity and/
or an escape from a difficult home situation. Rose, for example, is
married to a previously divorced lawyer. They have a son about eight
years old. She taught at the secundaria level prior to marriage and
has continued teaching. Her husband has proved to be unfaithful also
to her. She will not divorce him because of the boy. Many of the wo-
men who are employed as typists, school office secretaries, or librar-
ians must work because their husbands have low-salaried jobs. For one
of them, Mrs. M. who is at least sixty-five years old, work is a res-
pite from worries over invalid sons and other home problems.

The traditional middle-class women still exist. The few met were
in their sixties, but younger women who had encountered some censor-
ship from their peers indicated that the homebody tradition still
flourishes at all age levels. To these women, employment outside the
home is not socially correct; it is an evil. They view women as ir-
responsible if they are not home when there are children of any age
still at home. These women are content with the status and income of
their husbands, even if these do have mistresses and are never home. Status is quite important in some cities such as Puebla. There, a woman is accorded respect in line with the social position of her husband. If he is quite important, she will be given due deference. And, if she remains the 'blameless one', she keeps her status and even acquires more respect by continuing to maintain the household.

Some of these women, like Sylvia's mother, think their daughters are 'crazy' for taking on an added responsibility. Why are they not content to live at a more leisurely pace? These older women enjoy their plentiful opportunities to eat out with other women, to play cards, and to attend cultural events. However, they are not very aware of world or political events or the plight of millions of poor in Mexico and elsewhere. For that matter, a few informants attested to the situation that the greater majority of Mexican women, whether they work or not, are not readers. News magazines like *Time* or *Newsweek* in the United States, which provide a cross-section of political, economic, cultural, and other topics, are not available. Some political opinion magazines are published weekly and several kinds of daily newspapers are printed to meet the interests of various sectors of the reading public from businessmen to sports fans. If women do read, most are seen reading either comic book novels or women's magazines like *Buenhogar* (Good Housekeeping but published in Florida).

A change in the federal government law has made the environment more conducive for married women to work. In 1968 the social security law was altered so that the government paid for maternity leave for married working women. Before that, a private firm had to pay one-half
of the expenses for the maternity leave of its employees. Consequently, many businesses, especially banks, before 1968, fired all employed single women who married. Now it is different because the government bears all expenses: forty-two days full pay before birth, and forty-two full days' pay after birth. But a woman cannot rearrange the days; nor can she claim days lost because the baby came early or late within those designated time periods. The government itself is an employer of a substantial number of women, single and married, with and without children. It records only the woman's own family name and ignores her marital status. As explained to me, this avoids censure for matrimonial irregularities such as divorce or unwed motherhood.

A matter of divorce

Divorced women are less censured publicly today than in years past. Prior to 1970, for example, a woman faculty member at the American School in Puebla had to resign if she became divorced. This is no longer required, unless the divorce is a scandalous affair. In fact, the rising divorce rate in Mexico not only reflects the more liberal social atmosphere in which women tend not to accept moral or social stigma for being divorced, but also their specific refusal to be treated as objects or to be taken for granted. Some discretion is still observed since some companies will not hire a divorced woman. It is assumed that she may have affairs and disrupt the office operations. Here, too, government policy favoring the opening and maintenance of guardarías for working women has eased the plight of divorced women who must work. Significantly, public and private guardarías abound in Mexico D.F, but are much fewer in number in other
A fundamental cause of divorce is associated with rising self-awareness among women (Estrada 1981, 1982, Foppa 1978, Editorial Atena 1981). As they become aware of new possibilities in life, they acquire new aspirations for themselves and different expectations of men. They perceive that they need not let themselves be taken for granted, or have to endure their husbands' indignities and domination.

Some wives, according to psychiatrists, push their spouses into getting a divorce. Their tactic is to keep distancing themselves. If there is another woman, that becomes the perfect excuse to withdraw. The wife, however, does not necessarily want to become the active agent for divorce. She may fear an actual divorce because there are no provisions to enforce the husband's financial support for her or any children. If she has never been employed, fear and the lack of confidence become overpowering forces militating against separation.

Divorced women do remarry, either because they want to be supported or desire the marital relationship. As one divorcee stated, the second one is usually a little better than the first. The status of divorcees in the Church is ambiguous. Some automatically assume themselves to be cut off; others who are a little better informed and who have some connections with the hierarchy may consult a priest. The priests vary in their attitudes toward divorce according to their age, training, awareness of the situation, geographic location, and liberality of mind. It would seem that until recently, the greater percentage of priests would counsel against divorce on the grounds that the stability of the woman was most important (cf. section on the
Church). On the whole, the Church prohibition against divorce does not appear to be a factor of much consideration for most couples today.

Some women would like to remarry but are very cautious about a second entanglement. One of these said that, for now, she was happy, enjoying her social life—she had no children from her former bonds. According to her, if a single or divorced woman knows the limits of her social environment, she can maneuver quite well within those limits. The game is to know the proper behavior for a woman in various places, at which times and occasions. This woman, a teacher studying to qualify for the university level, comes from a very wealthy, upper middle-class family. She evidently travels within an elite circle of society.

Other social circles do not share similar attitudes and values with the more elite. In their view, a husband has reason to become enraged if his wife is seen alone in public with another man, even if the man is young enough to be her son. The reason given is: "There is no such thing as a platonic relationship between a man and a woman." Women from the United States who marry Mexicans and live in Mexico, have had to learn this axiom. Although it has historic roots, the implied possessiveness and exclusivity are the qualities now being questioned by some informed Mexican women. As more women become aware of inner strengths and abilities that hitherto have been ignored or demeaned by the prevailing social values and environment, these traditional standards may be loosened.
CHAPTER V

CURRENT TRENDS

Both expanded contacts with other cultural modes of thinking and changes in the educational system are effecting attitudinal shifts. This chapter considers young women with career or professional training, their expectations and role attitudes. The influence of Catholicism as an institution and as a faith is discussed in relation to the lives and perspectives of women.

WOMEN IN THEIR TWENTIES

Women now in their twenties have entered the work force with more educational background than their predecessors and in the context of a more mobile, open environment than previously. The result is that, for the most part, their perspectives and expectations are in a state of flux. Given the multiplicity of national and international corporations in D.F., or Puebla, or Guadalajara, qualified technicians are scarce, as well as office workers and administrators. A number of women have been hired in the personnel departments, entrusted with the responsibilities of training employees for job positions.

Career opportunities and expectations

The Mexican coordinator of the education committee at the American Chamber of Commerce in Mexico D.F. was asked about the kinds of
jobs that are wide-open fields for both men and women. However, women with a degree from the United States and a little influence are more employable than those without. Women have little trouble finding employment in the traditional fields of commerce, service, and processing.

Because so much of the office and scientific machinery is imported, those women with bi-lingual training have many employment possibilities. As of now, girls from higher income families still have an advantage over those from lower income ones. If they do not attend school in another country, they attend elite or private schools to learn a second language. This is especially true for those living outside of Mexico D.F. where transportation costs and the lack of bilingual schools or truly bi-lingual teachers diminish accessibility to this type of career education.

Within a metropolitan area such as Mexico D.F. where the economy has many international ties, the demand for bi-lingual personnel has led to the establishment of innumerable language schools—of variable quality, to be sure. Furthermore, the national university system requires at least a reading knowledge of English. Those in the medical disciplines, for example, are reading English textbooks. Consequently, learning English has become a route for upward mobility for many now entering or in their twenties. Moreover, many of these women realize that they need work experience—if only to be able to support themselves later if a marriage turns 'sour' or a spouse dies. Once again, the girl from the higher income family may have more job opportunities than the girl who is trying to climb the economic ladder because the
former is not as concerned over the salary amount.

Coeducation has been an intangible influence in changing attitudes among members of the younger generation toward careers and matrimony. Although there is still much room for improvement in terms of acceptance and respect for women in academia, women are proving themselves equally capable in scholastic competition with the men. The public schools have long been coeducational, although boys and girls may have been seated in separated sections. However, since few girls used to continue in school beyond primaria, contact between the two sexes on any kind of intellectual plane was scarce. Private schools have been segregated; today, the majority still are. Now, with government efforts to increase literacy and to educate its work force, expectations to remain in school have risen among young women. Whereas many of their mothers did not expect to have an education beyond secundaria and a few thought to acquire a short-career, this generation (in the middle class) does expect to obtain either career (secretary, technician, teacher, etc.) or professional training (doctor, lawyer, writer, etc.). With coeducation at the upper scholastic levels becoming an experience more common to all, the myth that women cannot think philosophically or analyze rationally is being disproved. True, the majority of young women still pursue the more or less practical disciplines, but more are noted to be taking higher mathematics, physics, philosophy, etc. It takes self-confidence on the part of the young women to withstand the pressures against them, but an increasing number are seen resisting and continuing with study. A factor functioning on their behalf is the practically free public education through...
university level. Women who have the encouragement of their mothers
or their fathers have an advantage, of course, but even without this,
some appear determined to pursue personal goals.

Two young women were met who exemplify this determination to
have a profession. A third told about her younger sister. Rita is
almost thirty, not married, and a student at UNAM. She is working
for a degree in abstract and applied mathematics. She commutes daily
between Cuernavaca and Mexico D.F.—a bus ride of at least one and
one-half hours each way. She lives with her mother in the family
home, thus cutting expenses. Her father, now deceased, had decreed
that a girl only needed a primaria education—the accepted belief just
twenty years ago. Rita got a job in the local bank, but had decided
that she wanted a profession. Since the bank would not alter her
hours so that she could attend night school to earn her secundaria
certificate, she quit and took a factory job. Then, in order to ob-
tain her preparatoria certificate which would enable her to enter the
university, she had to commute to Mexico D.F. She finally received
this certificate, passed the entrance exam for the university, and now
has almost completed her course of studies. 'When' depends upon the
financing. She has worked in the summers at one of the language
schools in Cuernavaca in order to pay book and travel expenses.

The second young woman lives in Oaxaca, a much more traditional
city than Mexico D.F. It is only in the past twenty years with the
completion of the highway connections between Oaxaca and the northern
parts of Mexico that the area has been undergoing changes wrought by
the industrialization process. Maids are still relatively easy to
hire there, but mass production is rapidly destroying the native handicraft industries. Blanca, also about thirty, not married and living with her widowed mother, a married brother and his family, and her mother's sister in the family compound, works as a secretary from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in a government office. At 5:00 p.m. she goes to evening school with the hope of soon earning her preparatoria certificate. She arrives home after 9:00 p.m. and studies for a few hours. Her goal is to get a university degree in administration. Her mother had completed normal school and taught (at the age of sixteen) in a primaria in a neighboring pueblo. When the mother married, she stopped teaching. Her husband, Blanca's father, was a lawyer by profession, but shifted early in his career to a government job. Blanca's brothers all have professions. Her sister is married and living in Mexico D.F. She, too, is striving to advance by going to school to earn a law degree, apparently with the consent of her husband. She has her child in a jardín de niños (kindergarten for three to five year olds). Blanca, who felt the death of her father very much, was the logical one to stay home with her mother. She had been very much protected by her parents as a result of a bad accident which almost took her life as a child. Now, however, she has worked out this goal for herself, and, in spite of weariness and discouragement, she continues to strive toward it.

The third example of determination was also found in Oaxaca. Nubia and her sister are licensed dentists. Nubia shares a practice with one of her uncles in Oaxaca, while her sister works with another uncle in D.F. Her three older brothers are professionals. Her father is a surgeon; her mother only finished secundaria. The father sent his
three sons to the United States in order to learn English. The girls asked to go and were refused on the grounds that it was not necessary. (Implication: they would marry, raise a family, and, perhaps, have a part-time practice later on.) Nubia had difficulties obtaining her education because she insisted that she transfer to Mexico D.F. to complete her studies. The University of Oaxaca was plagued by strikes, political unrest, and inferior teaching. Therefore, she did not pursue the matter of learning English. She is trying to pick it up through self-study, and someday might try to attend school for it in the United States. However, her sister profited from Nubia's experiences and began her studies in Mexico D.F. Furthermore, she determined to learn English by going to the United States in spite of what her father had decreed. She did so by arranging, while she was studying in D.F., to be an exchange student at a school in Virginia.

On the other hand, there are examples of young women who are indecisive about their goals for the future. One informant, about twenty-five years old, a preparatoria teacher, said she does not always know what she wants. She has a boyfriend who keeps asking her to wait for him while he takes care of his mother. She questions whether she is "the right person" for him, but will not date other men. Donna, at present, considers him to be "the right person" for her, so she says that she will not marry another. She lives at home with her parents and a younger sister whom she describes as able to manipulate their father so that she has the great freedom "to come and go" as she pleases. Donna herself is evidently treated as a child in this respect, although the father depends upon her in operating his small
Despite continued pressures to the contrary, many young women of the middle class in Mexico today seem to be questioning the idea that the married state contains all happiness and personal fulfillment for a woman. They know it has not been true for many of their mothers or relatives or friends. Careers are seen as another source of satisfaction. In pursuing this route, they do not reject matrimony, but see the personal value of bringing to the marital relationship a degree of independence—of having the status of an adult from the very beginning. As the counselor in a 'question-answer' newspaper column responded to the unmarried, twenty-year-old working girl: "...the woman now has much more facilities for diversifying herself—studies, independence, career, employment—than before and, thus, they prefer to wait longer before marrying and dedicating themselves to husband and home" (Lamont, Jr. 1982). In his opinion, furthermore, the great change in the attitude of women is that they have ceased to make home and husband the principal goal of their lives.

**Altering man-woman relationships**

It was mentioned previously that many women now in their late forties or fifties married older men who were established in their careers. Almost all of the mothers of these women had little work experience and less knowledge about themselves as sexual persons. With the age difference and naivete of youth, a marriage relationship could easily be initiated on an unequal basis. Women now in their twenties, however, not only are more knowledgeable about sex and life as a result of their schooling, television, and the cinema,
but also fewer are marrying older men.

An example of felt subordination mentioned numerous times was the woman's attitude that she had no right to ask her husband for more money. Interviews indicated the increased perception among women that, if they have their own source of income, they do not have to ask. Thus, some are encouraging their daughters to pursue careers by which they can be self-supporting if need be. These young women have accepted this message, and some are going one step further: to follow a career or profession because they like it. Since careers and professions can provide experiences which elevate one's sense of self-respect, a hypothesis for this thesis would appear to have validity: that urban middle-class women in Mexico increasingly will tend to reject their traditional passive, submissive roles as they acquire professional or technical educations.

A corollary to the above hypothesis is that traditional family bonds and relationships will tend to be altered through increased role sharing by both parties. One aspect of this change is very visible on the streets, in the parks, and on the Metro in Mexico D.F., and also, to a lesser extent, in Cuernavaca, Iguala, Oaxaca, and Guadalajara. Men were grocery shopping with and without their wives, or buying tortillas on the weekend, or carrying packages, or taking care of children from babes-in-arms to toddlers. A relatively few years ago, none of this would have been a normal sight in public, according to informants. The macho attitude would not permit a man to do a 'woman's thing' such as grocery shopping. Previously, especially among the campesinos, and still in evidence there, no man would help
out his wife in any of those ways.

Gender stereotypes and ideals have been under pressure as Mexicans are exposed increasingly to outside influences through education, the media, and travel. Middle-class young women and men were interviewed in a study of the personality dimensions underlying sex role divisions. The study was conducted by a mixed group of university professors between 1979 and 1980 (Rodriguez 1980). The responses indicated that both groups almost equally shared the same expectations and aspirations to succeed in life through matrimony and work. In fact, it appeared that more young women, in contrast to the men interviewed, were rating mastery of work skills and occupational success over marriage and children. The panel concluded from its study that cultural sex role stereotypes were dependent variables upon the level of education: the higher the level of education, the less sex role stereotyping.

Personal discussions with young women about to graduate from career and academic programs suggested their growing determination to be their 'own persons'. However, they also reflected in their ideas the influences of their parents, mothers in particular, of their peers, of their teachers, and of the media. Still, many were weighing the attitudes and ideas presented by their teachers and parents with their own experiences, especially with boyfriends. A few had the rather startling realization that for the boyfriend, his girl held second place to his male friends and/or his job. Yet, the boyfriend expected his girl to have 'eyes only for him'. It made these girls think seriously about their own self-identity and goals.
Evidence that the deeper changes in the male-female relationship are occurring is seen in the rising divorce rate. Mexico D.F. is quoted as having the highest divorce rate in all Mexico with forty out of every one thousand couples getting divorced. The majority of divorces are happening at one of three stages: at the end of the first year of marriage; after seven years; or after twenty years when the children are grown (Reborado 1981). In the past, women may not have liked their marital situations, home duties and obligations, but alternatives did not really exist for most in the economic class under consideration. Therefore, they accepted situations and tried to create diversions for themselves. Today, especially, the younger women see themselves as able to change their circumstances. In addition, young women are rejecting the ideal lived by many of their mothers, aunts, and grandmothers that the woman "needs to suffer to be a true woman." As it was explained further to me, the true woman is she who has proven herself in her management of babies and husband, and in the endurance of the 'second front' (the other woman). Now the idea is growing, and spreading slowly beyond Mexico D.F., that a woman need not tolerate a straying husband. Some today in the capital district are said to be willing to separate if the new husband does not live up to his pre-marital promises of love, concern, and shared responsibility in the home. If she has a child and a job, the young woman of today can say 'good-bye' to her husband and manage--with difficulties. She can utilize government guardarias or, perhaps, her parents or another relative for help in child care.
Attitudinal changes are slowly occurring among the young men also. At least a few are thinking along the lines of a young airline pilot with whom I conversed. He says he wants a wife who will be a companion, someone with whom he can discuss the affairs of the world as well as personal things. He does not expect to have a division between his world and hers. Certainly, there would seem to be more intellectual sharing and general communication among those who have shared schooling. In a few instances related to me, where brothers sided with their sisters against parental restrictions, the young men had acquired a respect for women. Perhaps it is because some have experienced living in another culture—such as in the United States or, in one case, in Italy, or because their vision has been broadened through contact with other people from other countries. The realization that relationships other than sexual ones can and do exist between the sexes has to spread among many more Mexicans within the various socio-economic levels of society before such a liberating attitude becomes widespread.

Birth control and economics

Another hypothesis which has substantiation from respondents is that middle-class women will tend to limit the size of their families where such limitation appears to enhance their independence and desire to follow personal interests such as a career. For example, the woman who places her one child in the jardín and attends school for a law or other degree is deliberately limiting the size of her family. Most young women have some information from school about birth control. The government encourages the dissemination of such
information in its campaign to reduce the country’s population growth rate. Although forms of birth control, especially abortion, have been used before, now women are planning their number of children from the initiation of matrimony. In these cases, both husband and wife are in agreement—at least for a while. The young woman can have her way in order to continue with her career experience, to continue to enjoy social activities with her husband, and to accumulate some savings. As one woman observed, parents are learning to stop expecting grandchildren within the first year of marriage.

Among the young married teachers who were interviewed, some were still postponing having children; some had two children and were having no more. These latter were in either guardarías or jardines de niños. One teacher had her mother babysitting for her. As mentioned previously, several women interviewed approached the limitation of children as a type of declaration of independence. A few of the older women did not agree with the thinking of their daughters or younger acquaintances. It was interesting to note that one of these older women had only been able to have two children. She also had never stopped working since she and her husband own and manage a store. The other women always had maids. Most of the women whose daughters would be reaching or were in their twenties passed no judgments on the matter. They themselves generally had fewer children than their mothers and were the very ones who chafed at the inability to 'break out' of the home.

Economics has had some impact upon the decisions to postpone or to have fewer children. Inflation has cut into the incomes of everyone
everywhere. Middle-class couples, among others, share the desire to acquire more of the material conveniences which make life easier and more comfortable. Housing is expensive, and so are cars. Unless one works for the government and has access to government-subsidized housing, a couple today must pay high rents for old as well as new apartments. Yet new housing developments keep rising, and people keep buying or renting, but at great expense. In the more distant regions, such as Oaxaca or in smaller towns, some new couples are able to live within the family compound. This has distinct disadvantages as previously noted in relation to the mother-in-law, and the contemporary educated young woman is leary of beginning married life under these circumstances.

A frequently named symbol of the middle class is the ownership of a car. These are very expensive, even though they are made in Mexico. (The rich are said to own several cars, one of which is usually an imported car.) Electric appliances, furniture, clothing, and other small luxuries all are considered an important part of one's standard of living. Thus, although children are a 'must' for most women and families, they do not have to be numerous, especially since money must be saved for their education.

As usual, motivations are mixed in the matter of limitation of children. The underlying thread seems to be less willingness on the part of many Mexican women to sacrifice or to deprive themselves, as did their mothers and grandmothers for husband and family. Dr. Fierro observed that whether or not these women married to have children, or married for the sake of marriage, or to escape the family situation,
or for love, more are planning the number of children they will have. The old attitudes of having as many as 'God wants' or of dealing with consequences when they happen are being replaced as women try to assume greater control over their lives.

**Combining marriage and employment**

Although the majority of women still stop working when they do have children, an increasing number do not—if they have jobs they like or need the money in these days of inflation. The phenomenon occurs principally in Mexico D.F. as the most cosmopolitan section of the nation and with the most employment opportunities for women. The language professor at UNAM ventured the opinion that many women use their husbands as an excuse not to work. Work is a negative factor to them. She had a friend, for example, who excused herself as only being a housewife because her husband would not allow her to work. Sylvia knew the husband well enough to ask him one day why he objected to his wife getting a job. He denied that he had ever forbidden her. Another woman whose family roots are in Guadalajara also expressed the same idea about the negative image of work for Mexican middle-class women.

This idea, of course, has been expressed in the work of Lewis (1959) and by Arizpe (1977) as a matter of social status. However, if the symbols change to include paid employment, some of these women would probably shift in their perspectives. Moreover, an element of dependence could well be a hidden factor for these women. Given a sheltered upbringing and accustomed by example and training to function within the boundaries of domesticity and male dominance, these women do not conceive of employment, careers, or individualistic
ventures as viable options for themselves. If they listen to the experiences of friends who did find employment as secretaries or assistant managers, they could be convinced that they are adhering to the better way. For, if their friends are those who feel guilty about working, they may be the type who take orders submissively and who bear the burden of male dominance in the office.

In other cities such as Oaxaca or Puebla, women continue working after childbirth because their salaries are needed to maintain what the couple considers to be an acceptable standard of living. Again, motives appear to be mixed between preferring not to have to work when the children are small and liking the economic benefits and associated independence. From the consensus of opinion, their husbands have mixed emotions, too. They may understand the economics of the situation, but find it demeaning socially. Some men feel threatened personally, especially if the wife might advance in her job and earn more than he. In Mexico D.F. this has been reported as the cause of divorce—the woman divorcing the husband. The women went to work against the wishes of the husbands, succeeded, and then found the husbands to be mediocre and unworthy of them. They felt that they deserved another type of man (Reboredo 1981).

What happens to the children in the multiplying cases where mothers continue working? The broader question might be what happens to the children of those mothers who prefer to do other things, rather than stay at home with their offspring. The children are put in guardaríasis or jardines de niños where other women (some trained, many not) take care of them. The government or privately-owned guardaríasis are
are usually equipped for baby-care and should have certified nurses available. Meals are provided. The mothers determine the hours of care and pay accordingly.

Although the starting age of children who should be three years for the jardines, a baby of a few months was observed left there, as were two-year-olds. Their young mothers were working. They brought their children to the jardín at about 7:30 a.m. and retrieved them after noontime. In the situation of one of the two-year-olds, the mother did not have to work. Her husband had a promising career as a military officer; the family was prosperous. Many of the children at this same jardín had non-working mothers, some of whom brought their children to the school in the mornings. Other children were brought by grandmothers or maids or by an older child. Some mothers had morning engagements such as attendance at a sports or bridge club, or at school studies.

Some women say that the children are suffering because they are not receiving at their most crucial ages the love and attention of their mothers. The idea that only the mother can judge the well-being of her baby, or can discipline the child for its own well-being was heard in Cuernavaca, Mexico D.F., Oaxaca, and Guadalajara. No maid or non-family person cares or is that concerned about another's child. These women, of course, reflect the traditional ideals, and they are among the majority who stop working when they have children. In these same cities, others are saying that putting the child in guardarías is no different from leaving them with the maids in days past. And, these say, they think that the attention and care is better in the guardarías.
and jardines. A few also definitely thought that the separation of the child from its mother was good. Otherwise, they say, the child is smothered from the very beginning and forever after by its mother's overprotection. Immaturity and dependence stem from the constant presence and interference of the mothers in the view of these young, more liberal-thinking women.

If the question is asked about value training, the countering response is that the values of the maids could be questioned. These young women will admit that some 'nannies' came to love their charges as their own— which is unlikely to happen in a guardería or jardín. Then, too, the small ones in the jardín receive citizenship instruction and learn to have respect for others which would be training 'nannies' usually would not impart.

Different women noted that perhaps the priority of the woman should be the home and her children when they are young. However, if she were to become a 'nervous wreck', it would be better for her to have the release from children for a while, even if that meant employment. One or two of the older women thought in terms of how tired the mother would be when she returned home after working to face children, husband, and meal preparation. Pros and cons existed on both sides of the question of leaving small children in the care of para-professionals or certified teachers. One interesting observation on the matter looked into the future: the present mothers will not want to be grandmothers. The corollary could be: a future generation of young women may not want to be mothers.
THE CHURCH

An institution and a faith

In order to discuss the influence of the Catholic Church in the lives of women, one must distinguish between the Church as institution and the Church as faith. As an institution with laws and regulations, its overall presence in the lives of most middle-class women is weak. The liberalization and renovation of its parts since Vatican II—in discipline, liturgy, sacraments, social teachings—has wrought confusion and disaffection within its middle-class members. The Church as institution, moreover, is not a legal entity in Mexico as a result of the 1910 Revolution. All church buildings of whatever sect are owned by the State; sectarian schools operate under the names of private citizens. Freedom of religion exists, but no religion may be taught within government-accredited schools. Consequently, religion as such is not a course offering in the Catholic schools.

Another aspect of the institutional Church is its essentially Spanish face—an historically-based phenomenon, since the Church never really cultivated the rise of indigenous clergy and religious until the present century, priests and religious of both sexes are of predominantly Spanish and criollo heritage. Ricard (1966) notes how the Indians, both men and women, early in the Conquest era, with their own religious heritage, were drawn to monastic life and to the priesthood. Too many Spaniards were unable to accept the fact of the Indians' religious and intellectual capabilities and their implicit equality with them, the Spanish. Today, the Church can elicit a fair
degree of financial and moral support from among members of the upper
echelons of the middle class and from the very wealthy. From among
those moving up the economic ladder, it seems to depend upon the good
will of the persons or upon the social value perceived to be gained
through membership.

Conversations and observations suggested that the numbers of in-
formed Catholic laity, especially among women, are small and dependent
upon the clergy or religious for leadership. One informant complained
about the lack of cooperation on the part of the priest when parishion-
ers attempt to organize functions for the teen-agers or adults. The
events consequently failed. However, others noted that Mexicans do
not think in terms of a 'parish community'. They also would be quite
reluctant to organize or to support any activity without the sanction
of the priest. Macías (1982) and Vallier (1970) have noted the active
roles of Mexican women when motivated by the clergy in Mexican history.
Since the Church history of clerical activity in Mexico has been author-
itarian, these attitudes are understandable.

The prohibition against doctrinal and social teachings of the
Church being taught in the schools, the long-standing prejudice against
philosophical or abstract education for women, and their self-admitted
non-reading habits all would seem to be contributing factors toward
women's general ignorance of current church teachings. What notions
many seem to have are derived from the precepts concerning Christian
matrimony as set forth by Pius XI (1930). These present marriage as a
preferred state for women, with children as her crown of glory and her
husband as the venerable 'head' of the family. Moreover, women are to
be dissuaded from following their own interests outside the family: they should not be active in business or public affairs (Pius XI 1930: 23). Today, the growing tide of consumerism and concern for one's material welfare just adds to the lack of interest in the Church and to the perception of its irrelevancy in one's life. Religion is not among the foremost concerns of many middle-class Mexican women.

The personalities of the parish priests and religious and local bishops form part of the picture. As of now, these can attract their parishioners, lead the people under their jurisdiction toward fuller membership within the Church, or antagonize them. The priest was the villain for several of my informants in relation to the question probing for the degree of church influence in their lives. Many of these women had attended religious-operated schools and/or sent their daughters and sons to them. Certainly, then, they would be open to hear the words of the Church on moral matters and social justice. Not so, as even the priests will admit. According to Adele, a woman in her twenties, the Church is not an influence upon life styles. It is seen as a social institution which brings people together at the time of baptism and death. In many homes in the middle class, the church marriage after the civil rite is a social necessity. Dr. Fierro asserted that, generally, church rules are separated from the faith aspects. Thus, like Lolli, Luz, and others, the women may go to Sunday Mass more or less regularly, but they are not listening for any social or moral messages from the pulpit. The priests are criticized for not being available in the parish; for not supporting the people with their presence or showing interest when they, the people, try to organize programs for
the youth and themselves. Some priests try to avoid dictating or taking a stance on matters like birth control, abortion, or infidelity, and are thus accused of fostering confusion and ignorance. Others still encourage women to stay at home with or for their children. They are known, moreover, to advise the woman to endure the husband's violence and infidelities because she really cannot do anything else. "What can a woman do without a man?" the priest and lawyer ask. They hold the traditional idea that the unattached woman goes searching for a man. Thus, her last state is worse than her first. As the women say, "We gradually lose any sense of self-esteem we might have had. We hear constantly from our husbands and others that we need the man to protect and guide us; after a while, we begin to believe it." Consequently, the priest, too, is viewed as opting for the man's infidelity and for the justification of male control.

So far, the most basic source of religiosity of these women has been their own mothers. At least two informants credited their mothers for their concept of God and the application of their faith in their daily lives. They, in turn, are trying to share this foundation with their children. Two other informants indirectly credited parents for their religious indifference: in one case, the husband's mother was a member of an evangelical sect; in the other, her own mother was. Both women saw and felt nothing but tension and 'fanaticism' in the relationships.

One must talk about the Church in Mexico in terms of the faith of the people as adapted to their history and experiences. Religious faith permeates life as accepting the good things of life and good
health as gifts from God; the sorrows as the will of God. It is a devotional faith among most of the social classes, among men and women. For the previously stated reasons, study of the doctrines of the faith, the scriptures, and explicative readings are rare. It is a faith passed down through the generations of families through the women. Its beliefs are founded very much upon local customs and the history of social status in a family—traditions passed down from Spanish ancestors or from Indian. For example, Our Lady of Guadalupe is an Indian lady, popular among the Indians and mestizos. Our Lady of Remedios came with Cortez. Our Lady of Guadalupe has become acceptable among all as a symbol of Mexican nationalism, utilized by the government to keep the popular classes supportive.

The devotional religiosity of Mexicans of varied ages, economic groups, and both sexes is evident at liturgies, church visits, fiestas and processions. The devotions of the women to the Blessed Virgin Mother might be commented upon here. I had thought that this devotion was bolstering their spirit of passivism and resignation to suffering. Statues of the 'suffering mother' are common in the churches. She represents the mother who was steadfast in the time of extreme trial; the mother who is the center and heart of the home; the mother whose example promises a happy after-life. These days, however, devotion to Mary among women in the middle class is not very evident in terms of pictures and statues in the homes—except in older homes of the traditional middle class. Secondly, from conversation, it is apparent that their devotion is not the kind to discourage direct action or the determination to change situations or to solve problems. As one woman in
Oaxaca said, the Blessed Mother was human with human emotions and her own ideas. Perhaps as society opens up and women become less isolated so that they see other options in their lives, this devotion to the Virgin is becoming more vitalizing. If before she was the one to whom they prayed for strength to accept what could not be changed, now she may be the one asked for the courage to go ahead and fight to change a situation.

In view of all these factors, it should not be surprising that, within the various economic levels of Mexican society, women often have no problem with having abortions, tubes tied, or using other methods of birth control. (The major element to fear seems to be the husband.) Those who are more informed about the revision of church laws regarding matrimony, divorce, and family planning, search out the priests who interpret the rules in the light of the circumstances and understanding of the people involved. Some women make their own judgments about the justifiability of their actions and stay within the Church—that is, they maintain Sunday worship. Others just drop out, although they will provide for the children at the times of the sacraments.

The 450th anniversary of the appearances of Our Lady of Guadalupe to the Indian Juan Diego at the edge of what is today Mexico D.F. was in 1981. The Church had a year's special program of evangelization as a preparation for the principal celebration on December 12. According to religious involved in conducting sessions on the social and sacramental (baptism, marriage, reconciliation, etc.) teachings of the Church, the enormous deficiencies in the informed faith of the
people—as well as their indifference—became quite clear. For practical purposes, among the poor and middle classes, Mexico is still missionary country. If many members of the middle class have not embraced one of the Protestant groups—Methodist, Mormon, or evangelical sect—it is probably because Catholicism is the symbol of Mexico’s heritage and nationalism. The middle class wants to be identified with the interests of Mexico; these Protestant sects are introduced from the United States, and therefore are initially alien. Moreover, Protestantism and social status do not yet seem compatible.

Modern movements

The Church has been instigating various types of Catholic Action movements in an effort to revivify believers and to reach out to the masses of uninformed. In cities like Puebla, Mexico D.F., Cuernavaca, and Guadalajara, marriage encounter groups have become popular within the middle class. Charismatic prayer groups are not only popular, but are intermingling members of different social strata. In Oaxaca, the Cursillo movement which originated in Spain has a growing number of adherents throughout the middle class. In these renewal and action type groups, both men and women are expected to study and to participate as leaders at the meetings. What is noteworthy is the gradual educational process being started. If it gains momentum among the women, it could change their manner of living the faith and of participating within the institutional structure. It does have its antecedent in previous centuries when the Mexican hierarchy relied on “pious women” to teach catechism and to perform charitable works for the poor (Youssef 1972).
While tradition has always entrusted women with the duty of handing on to their children the basics of the faith and its devotions, now Mexican women appear to have an opportunity to become involved in the more intellectual aspects of teaching and proclaiming their faith. Although few women, either as lay women or religious, will probably come forward to become leaders in this area at this time, at least the seeds seem to be sown for the future.
CHAPTER VI

ROLES AND THE SETTING FOR CHANGE

Role change is discussed in this chapter within the context of Mexico's cultural tradition. The tradition has always contained loopholes through which women deviated from the social norms for role behavior. Although national economic development is altering the role perspectives and expectations of middle-class women, these changes tend to be oriented by the existing socio-cultural patterns.

Today's role setting

A role may be understood as a set of norms and expectations applied to the incumbent of a particular position (Banton 1965:29). A person can be said to hold certain ideas about what are appropriate behaviors in his or her various social relationships, and to be constrained by other persons' expectations for proper behaviors. In most societies role behavior with its netting of rights and obligations according to sex is learned from early babyhood on. An example of this would be watching the interaction between two young Mexican children. A small girl, about age five, coyly persuades a boy, about seven, to prepare and give her a piece of his sugar cane. She never verbally asks; her appeal is in her almost flirtatious actions and eyes. The boy responds accordingly--also without words. The
little girl receives reinforcement for the social behavior she evidently has been watching and is imitating.

In Mexican society a woman's basic roles have been established in a subordinate relationship to the man. As previously explained, history has molded these relationships. Today, role relationships have become so stereotyped and embedded in the society that they can be characterized as "rituals of male-female interactions" (Marcos n.d.). For the middle-class woman, the social distinctions between herself and the man have been set along the lines of domestic and non-domestic domains. That is, the world of the woman has focused upon the home and anything connected with her nurturant nature. The vitality of her roles in society, for most social strata, has been derived from the fundamental conception of a woman's nature: to be a mother. Often, a corollary to this basic role has been that she is a 'sexual object' (Marcos n.d.). In marriage, of course, she has the duty to satisfy her husband's desires. Outside of matrimony, as in the Mediterranean tradition (Bourguignon 1980, Peristiany 1966), she is considered not only to be a temptress to man, but also unable to resist his advances. Her nature is to be passive and submissive, as well as sensual, affectionate, tender, and maternal (Marcos n.d.).

**Independence or dependence**

Within this social structure and atmosphere, the irony exists that although women are expected to be submissive and motherly, they are often in approved situations where they can be independent and assertive. In the traditional social structure, women have been granted access to occupations which conceivably mesh with her nurturant
nature: guidance, counseling, dentistry, pharmacy, nutrition, administration, and architectural design. However, these very professions give women a certain degree of power and independence because decision-making and assertiveness are part of their composition.

The woman has known that the man has had very low expectations for her achievements outside the home. It would appear that it really has not mattered if their paths in the world of work have not intertwined: she could achieve recognition within her own professional circle. As indicated in the interviews, the woman could have complete control in the home through appropriate manipulative forethought and behavior.

Within the structure of role relationships in Mexico, the dependency of a woman has been described as a state in which she neither is given responsibility nor wishes to assume it (Marcos 1978). Some women informally referred to not being permitted by their husbands to go alone freely to various functions—even if it was just shopping downtown. But then they included how they maneuvered to go. Clearly, many of these middle-class women have been neither passive nor resigned.

Almost all middle-class women have the common reaction of initial opposition by their husbands to any suggestion of employment. However, the interviews, discussions, and observations indicate that many of these women have neither conformed to the stereotype as described by Marcos and others (Careaga 1974, Elu de Lenero 1980, Meyer 1977, Foppa 1978), nor have they shunned responsibility or expected to be subordinate within their domain. Rather, they have taken roles
similar to the 'centralizing woman' in the research of Lomnitz and Lizaur (n.d.) and, as suggested by Stevens (1973), pursued their own interests quite actively—albeit with discretion.

Perhaps it is just that two types of women have developed within the structure: those dependent emotionally; those dependent economically. Or perhaps it is a matter of social prestige as perceived differently by various women. There is the esteem accorded from within one's social circle for being the dedicated housewife; there is the personal prestige held within the family circle in which the woman possesses a control over persons and activities in her household (Schlegel 1977). Banton (1965) refers to the prestige factor as associated with various types of roles and the fact that individuals in a complex society usually must exercise a variety of roles. We have already referred to a number of roles a woman in the home can assume in addition to those of mother and wife: a manager of time, finances, personnel, a buyer, a private entrepreneur. Depending upon a woman's perception of what behaviors bring more or less prestige, she will make her choice.

The process of modernization, as taking place in Mexico, reflects the general tendencies observed to occur in other parts of the world. These allow individualized geographical and social mobility which then create the need for job-seekers to obtain educational training if they are to participate successfully in the developing economy. Therefore, mobility and education would inevitably alter role perspectives for development participants.
As women, especially today's university-age generation, are gaining access to technological skills and are exposed to non-traditional ideas, their expectations for themselves are rising. Thus the supposition that middle-class women will tend to reject their traditionally passive and submissive roles as they acquire professional and technical education may have validity. The women within the middle-age bracket of their thirties and forties perhaps are experiencing most the tensions of change. If one's identity is rooted in the social order, then social change effected by technological and industrial advances will necessarily alter the self-identities of that society's participants (Goodenough 1963).

**Current sources of tension**

The problem is exacerbated when referring to male-female role relationships: one side is changing faster in its expectations of itself and of the other. Women in their middle ages have raised their children, but are not ready to settle back and to glory in their children's successes, or to lament their failures. While their husbands, for the most part, are still rising in their careers, the women are the ones left without a meaningful life goal in this energetic urban society. Their household chores have been alleviated by the acquisition of modern conveniences. They perceive—with the aid of advertising and the consumer market—that they are still full of vitality and capable of doing more than vegetating in the house. But, at the same time, many find their husbands neither interested in nor understanding of their frustrations. They find that they have been and are being 'taken for granted': they are expected to run an efficient household, to have
children who successfully complete their education, to be the gracious hostess or companion at social functions important to the husband's public success. Social propriety provides these women only with the horizon of fulfilling their proper obligations as women before them have done. Now comes the conflict because these more educated women are becoming resentful of the non-respect shown for their accomplishments or even potential capabilities, and yet they feel guilty for being resentful.

If a woman lives near her own parents or in-laws, she will not receive much support for her desires or endeavors to seek her own recognition. Her peers also may not uphold her if they have bowed to the traditional social routine of television, exercise clubs, and leisure. She may desire to re-capture some of the excitement of youth—in dress, travel, dance, etc. Her husband, meanwhile, maintains more conservative views in which his wife is there for him and the children—when he comes home. If the couple live away from either of their families because of his job, for example, the woman is even more likely to feel the emptiness of her life. The business and financial expansion effected by industrialization require not only an educated, but a mobile work force. Thus, many wives are finding themselves meeting new people and situations. But they may not be able to make a new circle of friends in the new city; the social circles of the established families in an urban area open up slowly.

Changing role perceptions

Younger women, as described earlier, are receiving encouragement from their mothers and their fathers to acquire careers. They are
living in times of economic expansion which is demanding a qualified, skilled work force. The social pressure, consequently, for these women to withdraw early from the job market is diminishing—at least for now. Moreover, they are meeting men on a more equal intellectual and social basis as a result of co-education and mixed working conditions. This may decrease pressures toward conformity in at least the metropolitan areas. This is not to deny that a long struggle still lies ahead for the career-minded woman. For example, a single woman today in Mexico D.F. still faces derision if she enjoys her work. She must defend herself for her single state and for her independence. One young career woman said it was interesting to watch a male friend's parents freeze when he brought home a date who had her own apartment. More women, however, seem willing to undertake the struggle, as suggested by their emigration from the more quiet, small urban areas to Mexico D.F.

Most of the married women encountered in this study were more aware of their obligations to the family, and especially, to the young children than of personal rights. Young women, however, were thinking more personally. Happiness was the ultimate goal for one group of young women who were preparing to embark upon their careers and who were assuming the state of matrimony to be a reality sometime in their future. This happiness was to be attained through the continued development of their own persons. These young women stated that companionship and mutual respect would be prime values for them in a marriage relationship. The roles of housekeeper and social hostess were seen as undesirable in themselves. However, these young women did
not project a sense of understanding just how they would come to enjoy these values and to avoid the subservient roles so often attached to women. It would appear that their private school teachers had conveyed to them only an intellectual appreciation of the meaning of self-respect and personal dignity.

Most of these young women seemed to lack the inner personal realization and conviction of their self-worth—which best comes with those initial years of socialization in the family. For example, they were admittedly uncertain about their ability to make their own decisions, and to bear the responsibilities of their choices. They blamed their parents for their state of confusion, while they also defended them; the parents do not want to lose their authority; the parents are only following the example of their own parents; they are trying to 'save' their children as long as possible from the difficulties of decision-making; they are protecting their daughters. These young women were in a state of flux—open to non-traditional ideas, yet without either self-confidence or role models to assist them.

As Mexico's educated women are presented with the opportunity to participate in a pluralistic society, they are faced with the need to create their own role models. For example, the woman who assumes the position of an assistant bank manager as the first of her sex must forge her own pattern of behavior. Or the woman who enters into a new field for everyone—such as computers—but an area presumed to be suitable for 'men only': she must be outstanding in order to pave the way for other women in the field. Part of the problem is that her male co-workers (depending upon their age and socialization) may not
know themselves how to respond to her on the basis of equality as an associate. In other words, the expectations on each side of the relationship are not clear; moreover, they are susceptible to the influence of the personalities of the persons engaged in the structure.

Role changing, as Banton says (1965:93), creates problems for social relations because it requires mutual recognition of the changes and accompanying behavior modification. Each party should know the rights and obligations of the new or altered roles. Since roles materialize in the interaction of two persons, each performing a particular function according to office, sex, or task, great ambiguity exists in undertaking new role endeavors. Educated Mexican women are not clear about what rights and obligations they have. However, so many women referred to the lack of respect on the part of men toward them, that they seem to be reaching a consensus about their need for respect. How to be accorded it in these changing times? another matter. In addition, not all those who enter the labor market with its increased social complexities in the corporate bureaucracies are finding their fulfillment and happiness. That is, they are not being accorded respect in their persons, nor for their ideas or capabilities. The degree of determination and confidence possessed by the women who venture into new roles as an administrator, functionary, or planner in various corporations and public enterprises connected with the government is important. Those who enter the world of work and competition as secretaries or bookkeepers must also assume an air of confidence if they are to avoid the traditional role image of service or acquiescence—a carry-over from the home. Self-sufficiency,
resourcefulness, and inventiveness are personal qualities which can help them cope with new social pressures such as exerted in the corporate world. But it appears that most of these women do not yet have the upbringing or background experience for developing these attributes for the office.

Of overall importance is each woman's satisfying experience of success and self-esteem. As one young woman observed, "we want happiness in life; for that reason we want to marry sometime." Right now, many women in the university apparently see matrimony and career as the route to happiness. Others who do not attend the university or are in the more traditional fields of employment—secretary, teacher, bookkeeper—are not so certain about the combination. Their experiences and those of their peers would have to bring some realization of their aspirations if they are to continue to strive to broaden their horizon of life choices.

Women who work often are not receiving any increased respect from their husbands. The observation was made by long-time resident American women that the husbands of working women seemed to pretend that it made no difference economically to their households. Many men, too, have low images of themselves (Paz 1961). Although modernization is exerting pressures to crack the seemingly impenetrable cultural facade of machismo, men do not want to risk derision from their peers by appearing unable to fulfill family responsibilities. Low self-esteem would also contribute to wife-beating as men attempt to assert their control over their women.
Some informants believe the behavior pattern known as machismo to be the most characteristic of the unreasonable actions of men in the working classes. Others believe it to be a general expression of male assertiveness and manliness, applicable to all social classes. It is a behavior pattern which interlocks with Mexico's particular socio-cultural development. Paz (1961) describes defensive aggression, secretiveness, and resignation as virtues which were nurtured as Indian, mestizo and criollo struggled to cope with their life situations. There is the perspective of the Mediterranean Spanish who view the sexual natures of man and woman as mutually provocative, creating the need for man to control or restrict the woman. These two factors, in addition to the economic hardships wrought by drought, floods, and volcanoes, would contribute to widespread growth of an underlying, pervasive sense of fatality, of fear to hope for success in Mexico.

From the viewpoint of how male-female relationships have been affected by history, it would seem that men and women have had to be—at worst—opponents; at best, isolated, independent persons. They could not live without each other, but neither could they live together in true friendship. The individual—both man and woman—was subordinate to the 'good' of the family, its survival and prosperity. As expressed by Lomnitz (personal comment), individualism and independence have not been esteemed values in Mexican families.

Thus, the supposition that family bonds and relationships will tend to change through increased role sharing as more middle-class women enter the work force is only partially true. It is valid to the extent that young couples have or will revise their expectations of
each other. It applies in the sense that the working woman questions her obligations in the home and the absence of much recognition and respect for what she is doing. The supposition errs to the extent that reciprocity on the part of the man is to be expected. Reciprocal role sharing of traditionally perceived domestic tasks depends upon the characters of the individual men, the strength of social identity for each man, and upon the basic marital relationship between husband and wife.

In a very interesting discussion with Marcela LaGarde, the social anthropologist at the University of Puebla, about women working and the family, she pointed out that many opportunities exist at the university for women to rise to top executive positions. This is true in the political party and in the teachers' union. However, in the union, the largest and most powerful union in all Mexico and with a predominantly female membership, the national executive positions are held by men. The women choose to drop out of the running for high office. They do not feel that they can fulfill two major roles at once: the obligations of executive and those of her home. This agreed closely with later discussions with the psychiatrist Fierro.

Women who have become active in politics and in the unions learn to speak up, to lead in public in a mixed assembly, and to behave as equals. But, LaGarde says, in the daily reality of the political arena, men keep talking while the women do the working. The accepted principle is that women, as practical persons, are better suited to 'doing' than to philosophizing. She associates the word fracaso (failure) with the woman's view of herself (Fierro did also). The Mexican
woman sees herself not only as a personal failure but as one alone, or the only one whose attempts at work are fruitless and whose marriage is a fiasco. Fierro discusses the problem in terms of 'ambivalence'—the desire to succeed but with the guilt about trying. Thus women become the victims of self-fulfilling prophecies.

Networks

A network is defined as the "interlocking of relationships whereby the interactions implicit in one determine those occurring in others" (Nadel 1957:16). It was thought equivalent social ties might exist among middle-class women by which means they achieved a degree of independence from male domination. However, the data indicated that the relationships of the women were conditioned initially by either the social needs of the husbands or by the extended families. The women circulated within overlapping social circles created by neighborhood, school, business, and, sometimes, a religious movement such as cursillo; each circle was shared with the men. For example, we discussed the close clique of women from the same private school whose husbands were all good friends from the same city. There was also the circle of women friends whose husbands worked for a corporate institution which had sent them out to the provincial city. The couples were all isolated from their families and other social circles. More data would be needed to indicate the extent and strength of a network among these women which would provide them with relationships implied in the definition for coping with the uncertainties and problems of life.

One type of informational exchange was observed in Oaxaca. There, the husband of one of my informants had resigned from his sales position
in a corporation in order to set himself up in his own local business. However, he had not calculated costs sufficiently and, as a result, was unable to buy or rent the store space he needed. This put his wife in the unenviable situation of becoming the income provider for daily expenses. She, with only a secundaria education but with a good sense of business, had built up a rather lucrative private retail business through the sale of fashion clothing. She inquired among her women friends, whom both knew, about interim employment possibilities. He, however, refused two openings she uncovered because he was going to be 'his own boss'. One might suspect that he preferred to make his own contacts through men friends.

One information system did operate entirely apart from the men. This existed for the purpose of obtaining maids, a matter evidently considered to be entirely within the women's realm. Various women had contact women who acted as the intermediaries between the woman seeking a maid and the village families with employable young girls.

Future prospects

Future prospects for equal employment opportunities may rest with the overall feeling of success or discouragement of the women in or now entering the world of employees. (Corporations and government are at present the major employers of women. The level of capital needed to be self-employed and the risk of failure are high.) The present trend among the women appears to combine a career with the initial stage of marriage, or to have a career as an avocation in the later years of marriage.
Given the reality that happiness (i.e., as a general attitude of mind usually associated with 'well-being') is the personal goal of every woman (not to ignore the goals of men), and that this is usually viewed by Mexican women as attainable through companionship with the 'right man', matrimony will probably continue to hold its position of high status. The importance of children will probably hold its place of esteem so that the family will continue as an important institution. This assumes, furthermore, no change in the view that a woman should have a child for her complete fulfillment as a woman. On the other hand, we have seen that such factors as education, technology in the home, travel, and the media will alter the type of relationship between the married partners and the upbringing of the children. This is already suggested by the smaller families.

If today a major source of unhappiness among women in their forties is the lack of respect given them by their husbands—many times indicated by non-recognition of a personal need or the time and effort required to accomplish a certain task, then the diminution of this attitude could conceivably downplay the drive to leave the home in order to work for a salary. This is not referring to the economic necessity for some women to find employment; this is in reference to women whose husbands are prosperous and to whom employment is a choice.

It has been suggested that children of young middle-class families receive confusing signals about the roles of wife and mother, husband and father (LaGarde personal communication). If the mother works, they, the children, are left alone or with neighbors, grandparents, or maids. Few would have the traditional model of an enduring wife and
devoted mother. From school or their 'substitute parents' they may hear about the customary roles but they see and experience the opposites—from the harassed, angry, tired, frustrated woman known as 'mother' to the seldom-seen man known as 'father'. Television, or the 'other mother' (LaGarde personal communication) plays a significant part in forming role image in the minds of the young. In fact, it is reinforcing the ancient concept that the true woman is passive, receptive, and malleable. In the telenovelas (soap operas), the 'good woman' is the faithful mother, while the 'bad woman' is the aggressive working woman (CIDHAL 1980b).

At the present time, Fierro in Mexico D.F. observed that among the couples in their twenties with whom she has been working, communication is quite good between the partners. Both do desire to plan their lives together: career experience, children, aspirations and problems. From personal observations, it appears evident that these young couples are willing to break down sex-role images in the home with both doing child-care and shopping.

One reason for the variance in attitudes and roles among women and families in Mexico is the disparity which exists among the geographic regions. It is for this reason that I had determined it necessary to visit urban areas outside of Mexico D.F. The literature suggested that the capital city would present an atypical picture of women's roles and attitudes (Macías 1982, Lavrin 1978). It not only has been the center of the nation's political system, but also has been the hub for communication, transportation, business, education, and culture in the country. Other cities and towns are joined to and
participate in the systems in varying degrees. For example, in Santiago and San Andres, jobs are scarce for all. Consequently, the value of education beyond some applicable technical career is questioned for both men and women. Furthermore, it is difficult and expansive for a person to get an education for a career or profession in many regions outside of the capital district. These schools are located principally in the larger towns, which necessitates rather long and expensive bus trips for small town or rural-based students. Under such circumstances, the men usually would seem to be given the preference for schooling.

Moreover, although the classes are mixed, the pace of life is slower outside the D.F. area; the incentive for women to improve intellectually and to broaden their perspectives is weaker. Economics is said to be reducing the number of casitas (the second family) in all regions, but it is doubtful whether economics has reduced the appeal of amantes (mistresses) for the men.

Although middle-class women in all the urban areas which I visited indicated similar concerns, the data manifested that those residents outside the capital area were more traditional in their attitude and life style. For example, numerous guarderías operated in Mexico D.F. as working and non-working mothers placed their children in them. Only one or two were able to function in Puebla and Oaxaca as mothers either kept the children with them all day or with family members. Nor were there as many working middle-class women. The government and the educational system were the principal employers of women in cities outside of Mexico D.F. and Guadalajara. Otherwise, most middle-class
women who worked were professionals or had a family business. Among the non-working women in these provincial cities were many who had learned a handicraft or culinary skill. These skills—making and decorating cakes for party celebrations, confectioneries, cheese producing, flower making—gave the older women a pastime, but also provided all with a source of extra income. My Mexican city informants in the same age brackets—thirties to fifties—did not appear to be active in such things. If they did not work, they seemed to be engrossed in various types of material consumption for their children, themselves, or the home.

The middle-class family is observed to be in a particular situation by its very composition: it is the unit of consumption (Careaga 1974). The wealthy by means of their family alliances (Lomnitz and Lizaur n.d.) conserve and build up their riches; the campesinos and workers are the producers. The middle class would seem to serve and to connect the other two groups. In such a position, members of the middle class seem to be in a constant struggle for recognition and acceptance. This has been reflected in the role relationships between men and women. What the women in the middle class appear to desire most is not to be treated as an object, but to be acknowledged as a person in the complementary partnership of matrimony. They do not talk in terms of 'equality' since that term is considered to have a connotation which ignores the sexuality of men and women. The Mexican women appreciate their womanhood and tend to shy away from terminology which denotes to them male-female competitiveness. However, they appear to function in an atmosphere antagonistic to the building up of
self-esteem, for they lack environmental supports and personal habits which could help to develop this quality. As various critics argue (CIDHAL 1980a, Falomir 1980, Barbieri 1980), Mexico, with its unequal technological and industrial development, contains institutions of school, church, and business which still exert pressures to undermine the unfolding of a woman as a person.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

At the national level Mexican women have been recognized as an important, vital social group. They have been praised as being the 'backbone' of society and their roles in the history of Mexico have been glorified in many Mexican works of art. The editors of a 1981 book about outstanding contemporary Mexican women (Quien Es Quien) have stated that each day Mexican women hold a more important place in the active life of the nation. In the daily reality of living, the majority of Mexican women in the working and middle classes have not received such recognition. We have seen that within the structure of Mexican society, women are subordinate to men. Between the combined forces of Church and State, they have been indoctrinated for generations to be helpmates and mothers.

Yet Paz (1961) has described Mexican society as a matriarchy. Informants have conveyed the concept of Mexican women as relatively powerless in society, but very powerful within the family and through personal relationships. Consequently, successful men often praise their mothers as the stimulus behind their prosperity.

This tension between the woman's apparent 'powerlessness' in the public realm of society and her 'powerfulness' within the domestic realm of the family complicates any evaluation of the effects of
modernization upon the roles and attitudes of Mexican middle-class women. At the present time they are caught up in a turmoil caused by a developing economy which can use their skills, and simultaneously are faced with the long-standing tradition that women of any social status did not openly function in the marketplace. The country's economic problems bring into focus what the data suggest is a primary interest for Mexican women of the middle class: a readjustment of male-female role relationships from a state of inferiority to one of equal complementarity.

The old dictum that "only family can be trusted" continues to have a foundation in view of the prevailing atmosphere of political and economic favoritism in Mexico. Within this setting, middle-class women do not appear desirous of competing with the men for employment. What they resent is the lack of recognition of their capabilities by men. Women spoke of not being respected by men, of being taken for granted, of being told they, in effect, were not capable of any intellectual work. This self-doubt was described as increasing women's ambivalence about working in the public spheres, especially as professionals in a mixed group situation.

Mexican men, too, are seen as bound within society's expectations that they be authorities, sages, or superior beings in relation to women at work and at home. Machismo thus becomes a coping measure for male insecurity. As a result, any alteration of role relationships between the sexes can be viewed as being necessarily tied to structural changes in society in which male self-esteem also is enhanced.
The constants in contemporary Mexican middle-class society for women have been: the importance of education for life preparation and upward social mobility; marriage and the family; the centrality of the woman's position in the family. She probably will continue to bear fundamental responsibility for children; the man will continue to be the principal provider for a family.

The sources of actual and potential change for women within the society have been: the economy and its employment opportunities; attention to and enforcement of existing federal laws by the government relating to equality in hiring practices, remuneration and benefits; the expansion of day-care centers and kindergartens.

We have seen that cultural constraints for women of the middle class against employment, although related to the historic-societal structure, are varied. The society in general is visually-oriented. Since reading is not a common pastime for many of these women, television and radio provide the bulk of their information about national happenings and concerns. As we have seen, these media project reinforcement of traditional roles. This limitation has been increased by women's relative social isolation, especially in urban areas outside of the few metropolitan cities. Thus, individual women have been described as not seeing the entire picture of women's endeavors; rather, each woman sees herself as in a unique situation (LaGarde, personal communication).

The middle class as a group has been described as imitative (Paz 1961, Careaga 1974). It would seem that while imitators may react to situations, they are not good initiators of change. Some
informants thus referred to the need for encouraging creativity among women in this social group.

What we have seen in this research is that Mexican middle-class women appreciate and cultivate their womanhood; even when casually dressed for grocery shopping, they are stylish and well-groomed. They are not adverse to being supported financially nor to a family setting. Relatives still seem to be considered as most trustworthy in times of need. Some women in this socio-economic group desire to follow a career, most often in conjunction with marriage; others prefer the more traditional roles. Some women have had working mothers as role models; others have had mothers with craft hobbies which they enjoyed and through which they acquired extra personal money.

Another cultural factor to consider in reference to the modernization process among Mexicans is that Mexicans of both sexes conceive of work as a means to acquire wealth and status. As previously mentioned, several informants explained that Mexicans do not like to work, especially to do manual labor. Work has been associated with subservience and low social status since the Spanish Conquest. Thus Mexicans work in the hope of achieving certain goals of riches and high status. Once these goals are attained, they prefer to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Although some women might refer to marriage and the family as a profession, upon reflection, it is not considered in the same perspective as is employment or a career. Children are considered fulfilling to a woman's being, just as 'fathering' makes a man. While the responsibilities of child-care and support are in the ideal shared by both
parents, historical events and circumstances have left the women with the major share. This condition is what many would like to redress.

People are more important than time schedules and efficient routines at the present time in Mexico. For example, an interview is not necessarily ended by the allotted appointment time, but by the completion of the discussion. One does not receive the impression from the cultural climate that diligent work efforts will necessarily result in success. The aura of 'doubt' and resignation—associated with their periodic negation of their Indian and Spanish roots (Paz 1961)—co-exists with the changes taking place through the processes of industrialization and modernization. Although the government has been trying to promote civic pride in the nation's ancient Indian roots as a result of such prize archaeological discoveries as the Great Temple of Tenochtitlán (Mexico City under the Aztecs), the impetus of removing the Mexican sense of inferiority and incompetence must come primarily from home socialization. Paz (1961:31) refers to Mexicans being "taught from childhood to accept defeat with dignity" and to the sense of resignation as a popular virtue. Adversity is considered inescapable. The schooling of both sexes tends to discourage personal initiatives and responsibility through its emphasis upon authority and memorization.

The data collected during the year of 1981-1982 suggests that any substantial change in roles for Mexican middle-class women rests upon the alteration or elimination of certain social and industrial limitations. At present, restricted access to housing for unattached women, and great suspicion of male-female relationships limit the ability of
career and professional women to move freely to various parts of the nation.

There is the problem, too, of ethnicity and social class divisions. These seem to preclude the sharing of common goals among women not related by family or religious ties.

An inadequate electric power system, together with Mexico's chronic water scarcity, means that household appliances are not reliable time-savers. In addition to their inflated prices, consumer goods and the repair parts are in short supply. Mexican industry does not yet have the productive capacity nor the related distributive system. It can take months, if not years, for an appliance such as a washing machine to be repaired in many urban areas, including D.F. Consequently, even with an available maid, many women with young children may not have the leisure hours to use for personal interests.

The desire to sally forth into the job market may be just a passing interest for many women and not a permanent goal. Despite the usual association of the complex of factors such as personal ambition, independence, and openness to change with the process of modernization (Inkeles 1969), these characteristics are derived from the observation of men apparently in the low economic stratum of the six countries of Israel, Nigeria, Chile, Argentina, India, and Bangladesh. The economic level, the history, and ethnic composition of nations all influence what a people assimilates from others (Spicer 1971). Consequently, what has been interpreted as necessary for individuals moving into an urban-industrial setting may not be universally valid, especially for those already acclimated to an urban environment and, in particular,
for women.

The data demonstrate that many middle-class Mexican women have been assertive, responsible, ambitious, secularistic, and open to innovations both materially and personally. However, they have exercised these qualities from the perspective that family is the core of their lives: their personal ambitions have been intertwined with the collective good. When commentators on modernization such as Lenero make distinctions in which women are more tradition-bound than men, they tend to overlook in their evaluations the influence of male-female relationships, peer pressures, and other socio-cultural constraints which modify individual behavior.

As explained before, history and nature have not left Mexican women free to develop specific personal talent, to be independent, geographically mobile, or optimistic about the future. Children must be nurtured and properly trained. These women have and do take calculated risks for the betterment of a family situation; plan for the future of their offspring, and are open to most innovations and inventions which will ease their household labors or provide enjoyment. Throughout time, more Mexican middle-class women than men have probably learned how to accept responsibilities and to cope with the consequences of decisions through their experiences of raising children, managing the household, and its finances.

Foster (1962) has noted that prestige perception and self-interest are important elements in the consideration of role continuance or modification. For example, overt participation in Church activities may be encouraged or discouraged by the prestige attached to such activities
or by one's perception of related 'good'. We have seen how animosity towards Church clerics or family tension over different religious groups have turned away some people from openly practicing their religion. Many factors may be involved in the secularization of individuals. What the process of modernization seems to have done over the years in Mexico is to facilitate the breaking or loosening of socio-cultural bonds by individuals or groups of persons who wish to do so.

The perception of status meant previously the acceptance of the concept that middle-class women properly belonged in the home. Today, self-interest on the part of women may result in their perception that the creation of a more favorable home situation is preferable to employment in the public realm. As Jacquette (1982) has observed, most women everywhere are rational actors who act to maximize benefits and minimize risks. Mexican women have little assurance that they will improve their status or increase their prestige by moving out into the competitive industrial world. In fact, they may endanger or lose their current sources of power and prestige. For many women, the traditional division of labor into domestic (home and female-oriented) and public (work and male-oriented) spheres has served to give them a type of independence and authority of their own.

The question posed by some Mexican women is: Why should women trade their situation in which they wield a degree of authority, create their own work and leisure hours, for the bonds of employment with its restrictions established by others? This would suggest the women's perception of how corporate business treats its employees—like pawns to be shifted from place to place as the market demands. Moreover,
Lomnitz and LaGarde referred to the interlocking system of loyalties which operates in both the extended family and in the working world (personal communication). These loyalties function on the peer and hierarchical levels in business and government—which includes the university system. This type of labor relations operates on behalf of job security and stability. At the present time with the prevailing social attitude against married middle-class women working, it would be the exceptional woman who could acquire equivalent power and prestige within this type of labor organization.

Then, too, there is the economic problem of a projected, continued scarcity of employment for all qualified workers, which means women as well as men. Furthermore, according to informants, the added scarcity of adequate living quarters make it doubly difficult for women (single or married) to aspire to executive or research positions which might require moving to other sections of the nation.

On the other hand, employment, we are told, has caused some husbands to treat their wives with more respect. Many women work to rebel against the over-powering dominance of the husbands. Women say that many of them have always resented their state of dependence, although they have not outwardly shown it. Having their own source of income decreases the dependence. Sex with its fear of conception has also been associated with subordination. Fewer children can be a means taken to reduce the sense of bondage.

The presence of factors such as coeducation and international corporations has meant that men and women in some parts of Mexico are beginning to relate to one another in a variety of new ways. One result
is that today some young married couples have come to share household chores. As Nash (1977) has observed, changes take place within an established cultural setting and under particular historical circumstances. The choices and consequences of those choices as made by the Mexicans in turn influence the subsequent selections and rejections of elements in the process of modernization. If a trend is to be discerned in Mexico, it would appear to be toward a revision of the present concept of complementarity between the sexes.

The cultural traditions of Mexico concerning male-female roles and family bonds have been formed within the historical framework of conquest, colonialism, and a political independence with much instability. Moreover, in the acculturation process in which the Aztecan and Spanish civilizations have meshed to form present-day Mexican society, role divisions and the concept of the primacy of the family were strengthened. City life, manufacturing and trade, governmental regulation and bureaucracy have long been familiar to both groups. What is different today are the pressures exerted by the rapidity of technological changes and the network of international economics. Although each nation is caught in the web of international business and politics, it is possible for each to adapt according to its historic-cultural traditions and values. In Mexico the promotion of role complementarity is one example of this type of adaptation.

Finally, my research supports the thesis that modernization does not necessarily mean the breakdown and loss of a society's social structure with its particular value system and traditions in a nation-state whose people share a strong cultural tradition. As we have
seen, it may modify the socio-cultural system while being modified by new societal and economic pressures.
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Estas son preguntas sobre sus antecedentes personales. No tiene que contestar todos.

1. Ciudad o lugar de nacimiento.
2. Año en que nació.
3. ¿Es Ud. casada? ¿soltera? ¿separada? ¿divorciada?
4. ¿Cuántos hermanas y hermanos propios tiene?
5. ¿Cuántos niños tiene Ud.?
6. ¿Lugar de nacimiento de sus padres?
7. ¿Qué grado de escolaridad tiene su padre? ¿su madre?
8. ¿Fueron a la escuela sus abuelos?
9. ¿Fueron a la escuela privada o pública sus padres?
10. ¿Fue a la escuela privada o pública?
11. ¿Quién lo alentó para que continuara con sus estudios para una carrera?
12. ¿Tiene religión un importante lugar en su vida?
13. ¿Qué modelos de mujer presentaba la religión que te enseñaron?
14. ¿Cómo conoció Ud. a su esposo?
15. ¿Cuáles cualidades tuvo el las que le gustaron a ella?
16. ¿Cuál es la ocupación o profesión de su esposo?
17. ¿Cuál es su profesión?
18. ¿Podría Ud. describir aquellas características que identifican a una persona de clase medio?
19. ¿Podría Ud. describir aquellas características que identifican a una persona de clase alta en la esfera social?

II. Quiero comprender que Ud. piensa sobre las partes de mujeres en la sociedad mexicana. Sus respuestas me ayudarán a comprender.

1. ¿Quién, en el tiempo pasado, era el encargado de enseñar a la mujer la manera correcta de comportarse en sus relaciones hombre-mujer?
2. ¿Quién hoy es el encargado de enseñar a la mujer?
3. ¿Pudo platicar con su madre de casos sexuales?
4. ¿En su opinión, platican hoy con sus madres las muchachas de les?
5. ¿Debe la mujer tener una carrera profesional? ¿Porqué?

6. ¿A veces(siempre) ha considerado Ud. otra carrera adicional al o otra que el matrimonio?

7. ¿En alguna manera sus padres la estimularon para obtener una carrera profesional? ¿Si alguna, cuál?

8. ¿Esperaban sus padres que Ud. se casaba?

9. ¿Cree Ud. que su esposo la ayudaría con los asuntos domésticos, si tuviera que trabajar a tiempo completo?

10. ¿Debe una mujer casada esperar tener una carrera profesional y prosperar en ella al mismo tiempo que cuidar del hogar?

11. ¿Debe una mujer con jóvenes en edad pre-escolar trabajar fuera del hogar? ¿Porqué?

12. ¿Debe una mujer con jóvenes en edad escolar trabajar fuera del hogar? ¿Porqué?

13. ¿En su opinión, debe la mujer interesada en trabajar fuera del hogar poner a un lado las objeciones del esposo y salir a trabajar?

14. ¿En su opinión, es la mujer la que más da en la relación matrimonial? Ejemplo: satisfacer las necesidades del esposo para evitar su cólera o mantener control sobre emociones propias.

15. ¿Cuáles cree Ud. son aquellos tópicos que normalmente son la causa de desacuerdos entre el marido y la mujer?

16. ¿Podría describir cuales Ud. considera son las responsabilidades de una esposa?

17. ¿Tiene la mujer el derecho a utilizar su propio criterio para gastar el dinero que ella recibe?

18. ¿Educará (educe) a sus hijos por las costumbres tradicionales?

19. ¿Cree que la educación de sus hijas sería diferente de la de hijos? ¿Cómo?

20. ¿Cree que le gusta a Ud. trabajar bajo un jefe masculino? o bajo una jefe femenina?

21. ¿En su opinión, pertenecen sus amigos a su marido también?

1 Numbers underlined were questions added after fieldwork was begun.
APPENDIX B

THE FAMILY OF A MEXICAN STUDENT

INSTRUCTIONS: Would you please answer the following items as directed. For some items you are to CIRCLE the answers which are suitable to you and your family; for others, you are to write the answer in the space provided.

1. CIRCLE THE NUMBERS which are true about your parents:
   1. mother and father are alive
   2. mother and father are divorced
   3. one parent is dead
   4. both parents are dead

2. CIRCLE THE NUMBERS which apply to your living situation: with whom do you live?
   1. both parents
   2. mother only
   3. father only
   4. grandparents
   5. other relatives
   6. Other _________________________________

3. HOW MANY brothers and sisters do you have?_____________________

4. IN WHAT CITY OR STATE was your mother born and raised?_________

5. CIRCLE the number which applies: what is the highest level of education your mother has had?
   1. primaria
   2. secundaria
   3. tecnologia or escuela especial
   4. preparatoria
   5. universidad

6. CIRCLE THE NUMBERS which apply to your mother:
   1. she is an "ama de casa"
   2. she works outside the house
   3. she has a business carried on from the house (e.g. selling jewelry)
7. IF YOUR MOTHER WORKS OUTSIDE THE HOME, what is her occupation?

8. For how long has she been working?____________________________________

9. Do you have a maid in the house? YES______ NO_____

10. Is the maid a "live in" or does she come only during the day?

11. IN WHAT CITY OR STATE was your father born and raised?

12. CIRCLE THE NUMBER which applies: what is the highest level of education your father has had?
   1. primaria
   2. secundaria
   3. tecnologia or escuela especial
   4. preparatoria
   5. universidad

13. What is the occupation of your father or what is his business?

14. Do you see him to talk to every day? YES______ NO_____

Muchas gracias por su amabilidad.
APPENDIX C

SCHOOL LEVELS IN THE NATIONAL SYSTEM

PRE-SCHOOL - a non-obligatory preliminary to primary education. Duration from 1 to 3 years.

PRIMARY - obligatory for all. To form basic concepts in scientific thinking and in the social disciplines. Duration is 6 years.

TERMINAL ELEMENTARY EDUCATION - its antecedent is primary studies; its purpose is to impart basic vocational skills for farm and factory work. Duration is 4 years.

SECONDARY - to provide academic preparation for advanced studies. Duration is 3 years.

TERMINAL MIDDLE EDUCATION - its antecedent is secondary studies; its purpose is vocational education. Duration is from 2 to 4 years.

PRE-SCHOOL NORMAL - to prepare pre-school educators. Duration is 4 years after secondary.

PRIMARY NORMAL - to prepare primary teachers. Duration is 4 years after secondary.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION - to prepare teachers of physical education. Duration is 4 years after secondary.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION - to prepare vocational teachers for industry and agriculture. Duration is 4 years after secondary.

SUPERIOR EDUCATION NORMAL - to prepare teachers for the specialized academic areas at the secondary level. Duration is 4 years after normal school or the reception of a 'bachillerato'.

SUPERIOR EDUCATION - the third level of the education system. To prepare and qualify professionals in technical, scientific, and academic areas. It includes all postgraduate and higher education.

Chapter 1

1. Prior to the advent of the Conquistadors, the Aztecs finally had subdued their rivals in the area of the Central Plateau. Their empire extended south to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and east to Vera Cruz. In the words of Octavio Paz in the *Labyrinth of Solitude* (1961:100), "If Mexico was born in the sixteenth century, we must agree that it was the child of a double violence, imperial and unifying: that of the Aztecs and that of the Spaniards."

It was with the aid of some of the subject peoples—Tlaxcalans, Totonacs, Toltecs, Tepanecs—that the Spanish conquistadors under Cortez were able to obtain their original foothold.

Chapter 3

1. Consejo Nacional de Población was a government agency created in 1974 for the purpose of population planning for the country in order to facilitate national economic and social development.

2. The National Politechnic Institute was established in 1937 in response to new economic conditions which required skilled workers. Its purpose was to prepare both men and women in its classroom and workshops for jobs in engineering, architecture, commerce and administration, textiles, and rural medicine (Derechos de la Mujer Mexicana, 1969).

3. The document, *El Reglamento de la Ley General de Población*, 1976, Chap. 2, sec. 3, states that the demographic plans (to be drawn up) will establish the measures for impelling the social and economic equality of women so that the same opportunities and rights are provided to them as to the men for the activities that they perform.

In the Constitution of 1917, article 123 set down worker rights—hours, salary, right to organize, etc.—in addition to prohibiting to women and minors under the age of 16 work dangerous to their health. Since the Constitution in earlier articles declared the equality of men and women before the law, women would be included in the provisions of article 123.
Chapter 4

1. Not many bosses are women yet. Several informants were asked whether they preferred a woman or a man as a 'boss'. The responses were reserved: if she was competent and fair; if she is respectful to me. A comment by one close informant about Mexican middle-class women perhaps stated the problem: "women hate one another" out of jealousy. The overall impression received was that women perceive men as chiefs to be more courteous, respectful, and uplifting.

Chapter 5

1. The original question in the column "Sin Maquillaje" was: I am twenty years old and at times I fear of being an old maid. One of my companions at work who is my age says that I am crazy, that she would not think of marrying until she is twenty-seven or more. Who's right?

The answer was: Your work companion. Although there are no official statistics about it (and I assure you that we will try to obtain them), it is calculated that more Mexican (women) are marrying at about 23 years of age, and Mexican (men) at about 26—a great contrast with what has happened in the past. What they tell me is happening is that the woman now has very much more facilities for diversifying herself—studies, independence, career, employment—than before, and that because of this they prefer to wait a while before marrying and dedicating themselves to their husband and home. It is felt—I do not know if you know it or are thinking about it—that (there is) a great change in the attitude of the woman in respect to marriage and I think that the fundamental (thing) is that for many women (the idea) of sharing a home with a man and dedicating their lives to him has ceased to be the principal goal of their lives.

2. In 1970 a census of priests and religious in all of Mexico revealed that of the total of 6,374 diocesan priests (i.e. priests who take a vow of chastity and who are appointed to their post by and are responsible to a bishop), 1,404 worked in indigenous municipalities. Out of a total of 1,906 religious order priests (such as Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits), only 514 work with the natives. "Grupos indigenas de Mexico," Esquila Misional, Febrero 1982, no. 319, p. 11.

In addition, the gap between the living standards and style of life of most indigenous and many rural campesinos and the urban working classes is too wide for simple adjustments to urban-centered religious communities. The reverse is difficult, too, for religious to return to the countryside and to live in the pueblos.

Chapter 6

1. Careaga describes the mid-20th century middle class as possessed by the ideology of social mobility as a result of the country's political-economic movement with oil nationalization in the 1930's. It
has combined with adulation of the style of life of the consumer society of the United States. However, in the midst of all their consumerism of things from the United States, they lack any historical sense of their country's development, and are always trying to be as sophisticated city people of better economic means.

2. Lomnitz places the cultural rise and fall or maintenance of a family within its ability to adapt to its historically changing socio-economic context. As the family is able to build a viable social network for itself--basically through marriage--it can attain the solidarity and flexibility it needs to build up and to maintain itself socially and economically. Education in the culturally elite schools is a prime means to meet suitable marriage partners as well as to make beneficial political and economic contacts. The middle-class family is least able to resist the tendency to family scattering because of its mobility.
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