THE ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF TWO TZELTAL VILLAGES IN
HIGHLAND CHIAPAS, MEXICO

by

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The Economic Integration of Two Tzeltal Villages

in Highland Chiapas, Mexico

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A striking feature of the Latin American economic landscape is its heterogeneity, which is to say that very different economic forms operate side by side. This thesis explores the manner in which these forms are integrated in Sibaca and Abasolo, two villages in the Tzeltal cultural region of highland Chiapas, Mexico, and further, how the villages are linked to national and world economic systems.

The research is based on a framework which employs concepts drawn from materialist political economy. Key concepts are: the partial integration of households which engage in subsistence agriculture; the household as the fundamental unit of the peasant economy; the historical development of peasant integration; and the function of the peasant sector in contemporary Mexico. Empirically the thesis proceeds by comparing the patterns of economic integration of households in each village. On the basis of inter-household comparisons, economic integration profiles were developed for Sibaca and Abasolo. Data were collected by means of in-depth interviews with the heads of four households, selected from different positions in each of the two communities, and field investigation of the economic institutions of Sibaca and Abasolo.

Comparison of these households and villages showed how economic integration is crucial to the ability of peasant households to meet their consumption needs. Four aspects of peasant integration emerged as significant. First, there is a great variation in the forms that integration can take. Second, there is a complex interplay between integration and subsistence production involved in the way that peasant households meet their consumption needs. Third, as the nexus of integration
moves on to peasant land, capitalist economic forms assume greater control over peasant production which can accelerate the process of integration. Fourth, the partial nature of economic integration is reinforced by both the organization of peasant production in households, and the inability of the Mexican economy to productively absorb peasant labour.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgement is due first and foremost to the people of the villages of Sibaca and Abasolo who, with a less than perfect understanding of our motives, gave us food and shelter and spoke to us about their lives. I am grateful for their trust and cooperation. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of my advisors. I thank Marilyn and Gary Gates for inviting my wife Fatima and me to join in their work in Mexico. The experiences we shared are fundamental to my understanding of Mexico. Phil Wagner, as senior supervisor, gave me the freedom to develop my own ideas. Frank Cunningham's scrupulous editorial comments have helped to make the writing in this thesis less opaque than it would have been otherwise. My thanks also to Roger Hayter for his stimulating observations, questions, and friendship. Most importantly, I thank my wife Fatima for her charm, tact, patience, stamina and assistance, both in the field and at home. Without her love, help and understanding this thesis would not have been possible.
GLOSSARY

agente municipal, elected leader of the village as a settlement.

anticipos de cosecha, prepayment according to anticipated harvest.

arroyo, stream.

azadón, hoe.

bulto, bag holding approximately 80 kilos of coffee.

cabecera, seat of municipal government.

caciques, village chiefs, or headmen, who were responsible for collecting taxes and tribute from their fellow villagers in colonial times.

cafecultor, coffee grower.

cafetal, coffee grove.

campo, countryside.

caña, sugar cane.

cargo system, traditional system of political and religious responsibilities.

chicharones, fried pork skin.

chile, chili.

comerciantes, merchants.

comisariado ejidal, elected leader of the ejido.

camote, sweet potato.

compadrazgo, god-parent relationship.

coyotes, coffee brokers who subject Indians to severely unfavourable terms of trade.

criollo, local, or "home grown".
descansar, lie fallow, or rest.
despulpadora, hand cranked mill for taking the fruit off the coffee bean.
edidatario, a person with a right to a parcel of ejidal land.
ejido, common land owned by a community which may not be bought, sold, or rented.
encendero, a person with a grant of encomienda.
encienda, Colonial policy whereby colonists were granted the right to tribute from Indian communities.
finca, plantation, or sometimes a cattle ranch.
finquero, proprietor of a finca.
fríjol, beans.
hacienda, large plantation, or cattle ranch in which land was privately owned by the proprietor and debt peonage was often used to secure a labour force.
henequén, sisal.
herencia, inheritance
juez municipal, municipal judge.
ladino, a cultural type who, in contrast to an Indian, speaks Spanish as his mother tongue and whose lifeways largely correspond to those of mainstream Mexico.
lámina, corrugated asbestos, or corrugated metal used for roofing.
legua, unit of measurement approximately equal to four kilometers.
limpia, weeding.
masa, dough made from corn soaked in lime.

mata de platano, banana plant.

mestizo, person with mixed Indian and Spanish ancestry.

milpa, a field in which maize is grown, often in association with beans and squash.

minifundia, landholding too small to support a family, in Mexico any landholding under five hectares is a minifundia.

mita, see repartimiento.

moral, shoulder bag.

municipio, municipality.

negocio, business.

palacio municipal, municipal building.

paleta, ice cream, or frozen fruit juice on a stick.

palo, digging stick.

panela, unrefined sugar product.

parcialidades, groupings within a village, possibly clan based.

particulares, individuals not belonging to a group or organisation.

pasear, stroll around the plaza.

patronato, board of governors, or directors.

peonés, workers, often attached to a finca.

peon de albañil, bricklayer's assistant.

pistoleros, gunmen.

plátano, banana.

Porfiriato, regime of Mexican president Porfirio Diaz which was ended by the Mexican Revolution of 1910.
pozolé, gruel made from masa and water.
repartimiento, colonial policy used to exact labour tribute.
selva, lowland jungle.
sociedad, society or cooperative.
socio, member of a sociedad.
solar, backyard.
tienda, shop.
tierra corriente, ordinary land.
tortilla, unleavened flat bread made from maize.
traje típico, traditional costume.
transportistas, people who transport farmers’ produce to market.
zacate, tough grass used for thatch.
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I. Introduction

"Peasants are often interested in the world beyond the village. Yet it is very rare for a peasant to remain a peasant and be able to move. He has no choice of locality. Therefore it is logical that he treats where he lives as the centre of the world. The fact that a stranger does not belong to this centre means that he is bound to remain a stranger."

Object and focus

The object of this thesis is to explore the manner in which the heterogeneous economic landscape of highland Chiapas, Mexico, (see map 1) is economically integrated, both internally as well as with national and international economic systems. Such an examination of the mechanisms by which a peripheral and underdeveloped region within a Latin American country is linked to larger economic dimensions gives us both an understanding of the particular and manifold nature of underdevelopment in highland Chiapas, and an appreciation of the way in which local economies have become articulated to the world economy. This thesis addresses its object in two ways. First, the peasant economic form is conceptualized as a logical, and in some respects functional, adjunct of the national economy.

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map 1. The State of Chiapas in Mexico

map 2. The State of Chiapas
Second, results of ethnographic investigation into the village institutional framework and the economic strategies of individual highland Indians in the villages of Sibacá and Abasolo are related to the conceptualisation to illustrate specific patterns that integration may take.

It has been widely accepted that the world has developed an interconnected, or interdependent economic structure. Different economies, characterized by different forms of economic organization and different technologies, have become integrated to form a mutually impacting and complex whole. The problem confronting this thesis is to explain how a heterogeneous economic landscape - that is to say the highland economic landscape which is made up not only of capitalist economic forms and modern technologies, but of peasant forms and archaic technologies also - is internally interconnected and further, how this local structure relates to larger economic systems.

The matter of integration is a function of two complementary factors. On the one hand capitalist economic forms integrate with the local peasant economy because of demand for peasant products or resources held by the peasant economy. On the other hand the peasant economic units, household economies, are unable to reproduce themselves in a fully self-sufficient manner; i.e. an economic strategy of full congruence of household consumption with household production cannot meet the needs of family consumption. The particular ways in which these phenomena are expressed constitute concrete mechanisms of
integration which allow us to place peripheral, and apparently insular, local economies in a larger context.

The analysis focuses on field data collected from two villages in the Tzeltal linguistic area of the central highlands of Chiapas. These people are among the descendents of the Maya who dominated pre-Hispanic Middle America. Primarily from the perspective of peasant production, as it is carried out by Tzeltal Indians, the present analysis is informed by theories on underdevelopment and the position of the peasantry in the economy of Mexico, which in turn has bearing on the economic development of Latin America.

**Importance of the topic**

The most widespread poverty in Mexico, as in Latin America as a whole, is to be found in rural areas. In Mexico, according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, 49% of rural households are situated below the poverty line, in contrast to 20% of urban households. Clearly the process of economic development as it has taken place in Mexico has benefitted the urban industrial sector of the economy more than the rural areas which are largely populated by people organised in peasant forms of production. The economic plight of rural Latin America, of which the peasantry is the largest component,

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2 Oscar Altimar, "Poverty in Latin America." *CEPAL Review*, no. 13, (April 1981), Altimar defines poverty in terms of the relationship between income and a minimum needs budget. Data is disaggregated according to national and rural/urban distinctions. p. 74)
underscores the importance of the topic addressed by this thesis.

The theoretical question that arises in relation to the peasant economy is not why peasants are poor - they are poor because a lack of resources, primarily land - but how the peasantry is integrated into the national and world economy. It has long been evident that the Indians of Middle America have been tied to economic dimensions beyond that of the local ethnic unit. Institutions for the exploitation and economic organisation of the Indian population into structures designed to meet the demands of dominant groups in Spain were naturally among the first accomplishments of the Spaniards in New Spain. The fact of integration is self-evident. What is not yet properly understood is the position that the peasant economy occupies in the contemporary capitalist world economy, or the mechanisms that maintain this position. Interpretations of the position of the peasantry in the contemporary world and national economies have varied widely, ranging from idealized evolutionary constructions that placed the peasantry midway between tribal and urban forms of social organization to presentation of the peasantry as a necessary sector of dependent

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capitalism. Recent theoretical discussion centres on two debates. The first debate concerns the relation of the peasantry to the process of economic development as it takes place in Mexico in terms of whether the peasantry contributes to capitalist development through the net transfer of value from peasant economic forms to capitalist ones, or whether the communal land tenure and family labour arrangements, characteristic of much of the Mexican peasantry, inhibit the extension of capitalist economic forms in the countryside.

Secondly, a major debate focusses on the future of the peasantry in terms of whether the dynamic of Mexican economic development involves the strengthening or the weakening of the viability of the peasant sector. The findings of this thesis demonstrate that these questions cannot be categorically answered because the relation of the peasantry to the national economic system depends on the concrete circumstances of the household and the actual form integration takes - which is variable. The pertinence of this issue is not, of course, limited to the situation in Mexico, but is relevant to the entire Latin American region.


This thesis addresses the importance of the peasant economy by investigating specific forms of integration in a peripheral peasant area as they are characterized by people in different communities. Because of the variation in the concrete environmental, historical, and social circumstances that are involved in the integration of a heterogeneous economic landscape, the mechanisms by which integration takes place are not amenable to theoretical deduction. Research of the type this thesis presents adds both explanatory and conceptual depth to the simple assertion of integration by setting forth some of the complex forms that integration may assume in particular circumstances.

**Methodology: Approach Taken**

Ethnographic methodology was employed for the gathering of information for this thesis. Field observation in and around the villages was combined with open ended interviews with individuals representing different positions within the communities. Five months were spent in Mexico. Of these, one month was spent in the Tzeltal region of the highlands of Chiapas gathering information. Besides time spent in the centres of San Cristobal and Ocosingo, making logistical arrangements and collecting information, a week was spent living with a peasant family in each of the villages.

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*The names of those interviewed have been changed to protect their anonymity*
Open ended ethnographic research has a number of limitations in terms of the reliability of information and lack of sampling procedure but was judged to be appropriate for two reasons. Firstly, there is a lack of information available from secondary sources which means that the researcher must collect his own data. Even secondary sources such as an accurate list of *ejidatarios* in the villages were unavailable in the villages examined, meaning that sampling would have first required the researcher to conduct his own census. This scale of effort was beyond the resources available for the present study. Secondly, the research must be open ended because there are no universally applicable and accepted theoretical predictions of the forms that peasant integration is likely to take. Indeed, these forms vary from village to village and through time. Understanding the nature of integration therefore requires the pursuit of the unexpected. For this reason a structured questionnaire was deemed inappropriate. A further factor involved in the choice of methodology is that, as a student from Canada, a status which had no reality for the Tzeltals, I was a suspicious stranger lacking any legitimate or comprehensible explanation for my presence in the first place. This required an attitude of flexibility, as well as discretion.

Persons from different positions within the community were studied because peasant villages are not uniform in terms of the

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economic profiles of their members, although there are important
commonalities as a function of the constraints shared by people
working in the same environment. It was judged that an
indication of the spectrum of profiles characteristic of the
villages could be best gained by interviewing a political leader
and the leading merchant in the village who could be compared to
two villagers who did not have these responsibilities (or
advantages). This selection is intended to elicit differing
integration profiles as a consequence of differing positions in
the community as well as different relations to economic systems
outside the village.

The ethnographic study of peripheral peasant communities is
not a mainstream of geographical enquiry, but distinguished and
important precedents do exist. In the specific area of highland
Chiapas geographical contributions of note have been made by
Philip L. Wagner 10 and David Hill 11.

The Focus on Highland Chiapas

There are three good reasons why the Tzeltal area of
highland Chiapas (see map 2) has been chosen as the focus of
this study. Firstly, the highlands of Chiapas have been a
traditional region for anthropological study. Secondly, there
are fairly clear divisions between types of economic landscapes

10"Indian Economic Life in Chiapas", (Economic Geography, vol.
39, no. 2, April 1963)

11The Changing Landscape of a Mexican Municipio Villa Las Rosas:
(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.)
which are reinforced by cultural and linguistic divisions so as to be easily recognizable. Thirdly, examination of the Tzeltal region of the Chiapas highlands, as a peripheral area within an underdeveloped country, allows us to look at the question of integration from the very bottom of the system.

The highland Indians of Chiapas, as well as the ethnically related highland Indians of Guatemala, have been the focus of study, primarily by anthropologists, for at least four decades. These people and their social organisation are of interest from a number of points of view. Because they and, to some extent, their forms of social organisation, beliefs and technology, are descended from the pre-Hispanic Maya, they form an exotic and non-Western population, qualities which, of themselves, make the people of the highlands of academic interest. Also, the apparent distinctions between the Indian and the ladino, or Spanish speaking, inhabitants of the highland towns and cattle ranchers, are very strong which reinforces their attraction as a separate and unique group of people. The existence of a fairly large body of literature on the Indians of the highlands is also of use as a source of information for this thesis.

The clear distinctions between the Indian communities and the Mexican economy at large make the villages of the highlands appear as the archetypal closed corporate communities. Economically, the self-sufficient relationship between the Tzeltal Indians and their land is impressionistically described by Wagner:
In those lands, partitioned among the Tzeltal villages, are all the requisites of life, and the people know how to organize their use of the land to get a living for themselves without dependence on any distant stranger.

Communal landholding, village self-sufficiency, pre-Hispanic traditions and cultural patterns which include insularity, and occasionally hostility to strangers, reinforce an apparently perfect congruence between village production and consumption. This stereotypical image of highland communities, which stresses corporate independence and barriers to integration, makes highland Chiapas a compelling focus in view of the widespread assertion "...that even the most backward peasant regions are bound by fine threads (which have not yet been adequately studied) to the dynamic sector of the national economy and through it to the world market." (Laclau, "Capitalism and Feudalism in Latin America", New Left Review, no. 67, May-June 1971, p. 23).

Lastly, the highlands themselves are a peripheral component of an underdeveloped country. As implied by Laclau, there is a tendency for studies of underdevelopment to focus on problems of a macro-scale, such as imperialism, the international division of labour, transnational firms, and so forth. Examination of Indian villages in Chiapas directs our perspective from the bottom, so to speak, as economic relationships representing various scales of economic activity and organization determine the structure in which the Indian meets his land. All these

12"The Path, the Road, the Highway", Landscape, vol. 10, no. 1, p. 39
factors make the highland region of Chiapas a special area which may give us valuable insight into the problem of explaining how heterogeneous economic landscapes characterized by different economic forms may be integrated.
II. Theory and Conceptualisation of the Peasant Economy

"The economy of the interior, like a small puddle left drying in the sun, is unintelligible by itself: isolated, with no direction in which to flow, but a logical, inevitable result of the preceding storm."¹

Introduction

The present chapter sets forth the conceptualisation of the peasant economy employed in this thesis. This conceptualisation is developed from literature on the peasant economy generated by various disciplines. Emphasis is placed on social and economic structures, rather than on a cultural explanation of the peasantry's existence, and persistence, in Mexico.

Conceiving an abstract and general understanding of the peasant economy involves six sections to cover various aspects of the topic. First of all, the peasant economic form, with the household as its fundamental unit, is defined in terms of its characteristics and how it contrasts with other economic forms. Secondly, the significance of the village as a social and economic nucleus is examined. This involves the introduction of the concept of the local economy which is intended to comprehend the spatial confines on peasant production and its organisation in response to these confines. Thirdly, the manner in which

colonisation has transformed and integrated the peasants of New Spain and later Mexico, is analysed. This is a crucial feature of a conceptualisation of the peasantry as well as being an essential focus of theoretical literature on Latin America. Fourthly, the position of the peasantry in the modern capitalist economy as a contrasting, but logical and, in some ways, functional form is discussed. Fifth, the particularities of the study area are related to the above. Peasant forms vary a great deal according to the history of their integration with colonial and modern capitalist economies, their cultural features and ecological situation, among other things. It is clearly important that the particularities of an area be carefully related to a general conceptualisation if the former are to helpfully inform an understanding of the latter. Finally, the objective of the thesis is restated. Since the topic examined in this thesis does not exhaust the conceptualisation of the peasant economy, but only addresses a portion of it, the relevant portion examined is denoted.

It can be seen that the conception of the peasant economy as it is presented here involves both synchronic and diachronic analyses - pertaining to function and genesis respectively. Related but not identical, both the genesis of the peasant economy as an important form of economic production in Latin America, and its contemporary functioning as a part of the extant national system, are integral to the conceptualisation of the highland economic landscape. The synchronic view focusses on
linkages and interactions between economic units as they occur within an economic and social structure – circular migration to wage labour on coffee plantations, for example. The diachronic perspective explains the development of the received structures and institutions that condition contemporary functioning of the system. An example of this is the historic monopolisation of commercially workable land by ladinos, placing Indians within a structure which does not allow a strategy of complete congruence between consumption and production within the household, but requires partial proletarianisation. As these examples demonstrate, synchronic and diachronic perspectives are complementary. Historical processes explain the genesis of contemporary structures. The relevance of these structures is elucidated through a synchronic illustration of their functioning.

Understanding the peasants of Sibaca and Abasolo to be partially integrated with capitalist economic forms requires the use of concepts and categories that can comprehend both these forms of economic organisation. Concepts taken from materialist political economy, particularly as presented by Henry Bernstein and Harriet Friedman are employed here to understand the integration of these contrasting forms in the heterogenous


landscape of the highlands. Friedman in particular has stressed that the integration of peasants into capitalist markets, especially factor markets, allows students of peasants the "... application of a logic universally characteristic of capitalist social formations." Essentially this means that, to the extent that peasants participate in the same markets as capitalist economic forms, they must operate according to the same logic as capitalist economic forms, and that this is an important key to understanding precisely how peasants fit into a larger context.

That integration is only partial distinguishes the peasant economic form from its capitalist counterpart and also accounts for the extraordinary diversity of peasant forms 5. This view is congruent with the corpus of dependency theory which stresses the influence of capitalist accumulation and imperialism on the structures of Third World economies, a view which is becoming increasingly orthodox in the social sciences.

An obvious corollary to the above is that to the extent that peasants are not integrated into markets, they cannot necessarily be understood according to the logic by which capitalist forms operate. The study of how peasants differ is, according to the traditional academic division of labour, the purview of anthropology 6 and anthropological research on

4 'Household Production', p. 164.

5 Bernstein, 'Concepts' p. 7.

peasants offers insights on cultures, modes of economic calculation, and community integration, which have been useful in assembling the following conceptualisation. It is with these conceptual tools of materialist political economy, as well as insights into the peasant form as provided by anthropologists, that the present study explores the manner in which the Tzeltal peasants examined here are integrated into the heterogeneous economic landscape of highland Chiapas.

The Peasant Form of Production: the Household's Need for and Capacity for Integration

To characterize the peasant form of production it is necessary to define the basic economic unit, which is the household, and place it in a larger context as it relates to the modern capitalist environment in which it operates. Peasant production, although oriented to domestic subsistence, is not self-sufficient in terms of its capacity to reproduce itself.

\[\text{While the focus here is on economic integration, which is mostly between peasants and contrasting economic forms, cultural integration - the integration of a community that derives from shared beliefs and experiences - is also an important phenomenon which is often considered to be a hallmark of the indigenous communities of the highlands of Latin America (see Aguirre-Beltran, Regions of Refuge). As exemplified by George Collier (Fields of the Tzotzil: The Ecological Bases of Tradition in Highland Chiapas), this approach studies "... the causes of traditional behaviour and the reasons for its persistence." (p. 3) While Collier is studying the same sorts of people as I am, the approach is almost diametrically opposite. Collier seeks to explain the logic behind the contrasting culture and traditions of Indian communities in the highland landscape, while the present study explores the connections that unify the highland landscape economically.}\]
solely through direct consumption of its own products. Despite this inability to achieve self-sufficiency, subsistence production - in the case of the villages studied here, production of maize as the basic foodstuff - is the primary goal and dominant logic of the peasant economic form. This section sets forth in abstract terms the structure and the logic of the household economy as it focusses on subsistence production while engaging in economic exchange relations with other economic dimensions.

Peasant societies in general are characterized by the unity of the household in a number of senses which are summarized by Gamst: "the family is the basic social unit, of production, of exchange, of holding land and portable property, of ceremonial activity, and of relations in the wider social order." Referring to the Maya Indians of Panajachel, Guatemala, who live in approximately comparable patterns to the Tzeltal of Chiapas, Sol Tax adds that "no other segments of society even approach the households in social and economic solidarity." This theme recurs throughout the literature on peasants.

Within the household there is a division of labour according to both age and sex which has strong cultural reinforcements. In the highlands the clearest and most important, as well as symbolic, example is the sexual division

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of labour where the head of the household works the milpa to bring home the maize which is then taken off the cob and processed into masa and cooked into tortillas by the woman. Division of labour is roughly parallel to distinctions between production and consumption. Thus the household is a basic and unified, though not self-sufficient, system. As is pointed out by Gudeman, integration may be problematic if the unity of the system is threatened:

Households cannot and do not exist if the fundamental tasks are not carried out in cooperation. There is a veritable flow of goods from the fields to the house, from man to woman to consumption.

Withdrawal of the functions destroys the unit. 10 Although there are a variety of ways in which the head of the household may fulfill his function of providing maize for the family, such as purchasing it with money earned in temporary wage labour (the women's role tends to have less flexibility in this regard) the traditional division of labour along with its social, cultural and institutional concomitants, persists and reduces the ability of the peasant economic unit to fully integrate into the capitalist economy.

Manning Nash, in the specific context of Indian economies of Middle America, elaborates on the implications of the household organisation of the peasant economy:

Households are limited in the numbers and kinds of personalities they can recruit, the capital and savings they can command, the sort of economic opportunities to which they can respond. Given the fact that households,

10 Gudeman, Demise of a Rural Economy, p. 35.
not firms, are the economic organisation around which
the market economy is built, the limits of planning,
continuity, scale and technological complexity in
economic life become readily apparent. What makes these
economies different from a modern, dynamic economy with
a built-in drive toward economic and technological
development in thus clear." 11

Organisation into households is one of the features of the
peasant form of production that distinguishes it from the modern
capitalist form. At a more abstract level this difference can be
identified as one of reduced factor mobility. While capitalist
economic units rely on the circulation in a market of factors of
production, i.e. land, labour and credit, peasant economic units
participate in these markets to a reduced degree. It is this
relation to the modern capitalist economy - partial integration
into markets - that distinguishes the peasant economic form from
capitalist economic forms. 12

Partial integration of peasant labour in the modern
capitalist sector is the most distinctive feature of the peasant
form. This integration is partial because the household economy
has a limited capacity to release labour and also because
regional and national economies have a limited capacity to
absorb labour. One of the main integrating processes in the
rural areas of Latin America has been the theft, or
appropriation by other means, of land from peasants. Since land
is the most important factor of production for the peasant

11 Nash, "Indian Economies", p. 171.

12 Harriet Friedman, "Household production and the national
economy: Concepts for the analysis of agrarian formations", The
household, the very fact of alienation turns peasants into proletarians, thus bringing about their integration in the modern capitalist economy. In Mexico, however, the institution of the ejido makes land inalienable from the peasant community. This feature of communal ownership of land as a method of guaranteeing the peasant access to land, a feature which is common to many peasant communities, cuts off circulation of land among economic units as an avenue of integration, thus reinforcing the peasant form of production. Peasants also tend not to be fully, if at all, integrated into financial markets, although they are often subject to forms of usury, because of a lack of equity and investment opportunities, as well as social and ethnic discrimination.

The logic of the peasant economic form is to substitute household self-reliance for the expenditure of money, which is very scarce, and to engage in labour intensive agriculture because of the abundance of labour relative to land. In the case of the indigenous peasants of highland Chiapas this economic logic is congruent with pre-columbian milpa technology. The digging stick, as opposed to plow technology, allows the Indian peasant to recognize and take advantage of all the variables involved in his field, such as micro-variations in soil depth and moisture. With the digging stick the indigenous cultivator may realize every advantage that his usually marginal land presents him with. In the usual situation of the peasant cultivator, where arable land is scarce and labour is plentiful,
the economic logic which prevails is one where the peasant cannot afford not to avail himself of every advantage possible and this requires a labour intensive technique.

The labour intensive agricultural practices employed in the highlands correspond, for the most part, to individual labour, rather than collective effort. In this technological context most labour needs can be supplied by the individually functioning household. Thus the peasant system is primarily characterized by independent, rather than mutually dependent, households. Production is not socialized, nor is there any compelling reason for it to be. Collective effort and cooperative economic organisation have been among the goals of Mexican agrarian reform, but they have been largely unachievable, even though the ejidal institution offers a suitable framework for collectivisation. The fact that land holding and land use are individual in the ejidal sector\textsuperscript{13} suggests that atomisation is an aspect of the logic of peasant production.

This section has presented the peasant form of production with the household as the basic economic unit. Organisation of the household as a unit makes the peasant economy qualitatively different from the dominant capitalist economy into which it is partially integrated. Historical forces have conditioned the

\textsuperscript{13}Centro de Investigaciones Agrarias, \textit{Estructura Agraria y Desarrollo Agrícola: Estudio sobre las Relaciones entre la Tenencia y el uso de la Tierra y del Desarrollo Agrícola de México} (México: Centro de Investigaciones Agrarias, 1970), p. 23.
space economy of Mexico such that the peasantry suffers a shortage of land; their retention of pre-columbian labour intensive technology is an adaptation to these circumstances. A further aspect of the peasant economy is that it is atomised, which is to say that there is little meaningful economic integration between households.

The Local Economy: Comprehending the Village

The Middle American peasantry is not, of course, monolithic, but varies a great deal from village to village, as well as from household to household. The concept of the local economy is intended to comprehend the village and village lands as the significant arena of household economic activity in terms of the peasant economic system. It is important to deal with the village as a focus for a number of inter-related reasons. Firstly, because of environmental determinants, it is difficult to make cross village generalisations, and it is important to make distinctions on the basis of these determinants. Within the local economy of the village households do have similarities that may be explained in terms of the institutional structures and environmental constraints that they face. Secondly, the local economy has been interpreted as a sphere of exchange of a special non-capitalist type, qualitatively different from that which takes place outside the local economy. The fact of this exchange, along side an economic logic of subsistence, has led to conceptions of the local economy as being functionally whole.
in terms of its capacity for economic independence. These interpretations are particularly relevant to the present study in terms of their suggestions about the nature of the indigenous community in Mexico and need careful examination. Also, in the case of the indigenous communities of southern Mexico, there is an important ethnic solidarity giving the local economy a cultural dimension which has implications for relations with economic systems dominated by outsiders.

In the highlands of Middle America within the peasant sector the economic landscape is extraordinarily diverse. Tax has noted that "... each municipio tends to have its own cultural variant, and its own economic specialities." These variations also apply to differences which can be found between local economies, the nucleus of which is the village. Economic profiles in terms of the resources available to the peasant within the local economy vary a great deal from village to village. Because of the simplicity of peasant technique in terms of the limited factors of production involved in agriculture, the character of the local economy is largely determined in the instance at which the peasant meets his land. This simplicity of technique means that those variables which could influence production leading to a convergence of local economic profiles, such as the price of chemical inputs which would be the same from village to village, are very few and insignificant. Therefore, conditions are not abstracted in such a way that they

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Tax, *Penny Capitalism*, p. 11.
form instructive or important commonalities. The institution of communal landholding reinforced by ejidal legislation tends to confine agricultural activities to a distinctly bounded territory which generalizes the conditions under which peasants meet their land within the local economy. This makes the concept of a local economy describing a group of household units operating under similar conditions a useful one.

Within the local economy there are certain patterns of economic organisation which give it a coherence beyond simply the generalisation of agricultural conditions. These are patterns of economic organisation which have traditionally been interpreted as qualitatively differentiating the peasant economy from a modern capitalist economic form. Largely this distinction rests on the observation that within the intimacy of the village economic interaction is a personalized exchange of aid among equals in contrast to an opportunity for economic advancement. Robert Redfield in his study The Folk Culture of Yucatan suggested that the lack of commercialism in peasant villages was an aspect of the nature of interpersonal relations in the village.

"The relatively insignificant commercialism consists not simply in the fact that there is less buying and selling. It consists also in a relative disinclination to deal with a friend and a neighbor in such a way as to regard him as an opportunity for practical advantage that can be expressed in terms of money. A person is one to whom one acts as one would oneself find pleasant or unpleasant. A customer is one whom one may use to obtain a commodity or a price."15

15 Redfield, The Folk Culture of Yucatan, p. 183.
Although Redfield's interpretation of the nature of economic cohesion is unfortunately coloured by a romantic and dubious assumption of widespread amity as an essential feature of village life, the relevant thrust of his statement is that intra-village economic relations may not easily be classified as capitalistic. In a less sentimental vein, Harriet Friedman restates this traditional conception of economic relations within the village.

"While some commodity production is often part of the definition of the peasantry, competition does not exclusively or even principally define the relation of peasants to each other or to outsiders. Peasant households have important communal relations including local exchange of products and reciprocal sharing of labour."\(^{16}\)

Traditional anthropological studies of Middle American peasantries have focussed on this aspect of non-monetized exchange within the community whereby a peasant could call upon his neighbors to help with a task requiring labour beyond that which could be mobilized within the household. Generalized reciprocity and various cultural mechanisms for the organisation of non-monetized exchange within the community, such as the cargo system, have been interpreted as complementing household subsistence production such that the village community, or local economy, is essentially a functional whole, capable of economic independence. With this assumption of independence, or separateness, economic linkage with outside economic systems is

\(^{16}\) H. Friedman, "Household production and the national economy", p. 65
interpreted as intrusive and disturbing. The overall conception of economic linkage from this perspective, along with what are now untenable assumptions of social evolution, is summed up by Stavenhagen:

"The commercial exchange of products or wage labour outside the community, mentioned only when they played an important part in the domestic or community economy, were generally seen as external factors disturbing communal stability and self-sufficiency. Peasant communities, especially indigenous ones, were seen as part of a traditional pre-urban, pre-industrial world or as a stage preceding a modern economy, the adoption of urban values and patterns of behavior."17

Attention has shifted to the role played by contact and integration, not as a disturbance of the peasant economy, but as an essential and defining feature. In fact, cases of labour sharing and other non-monetized traditions of economic exchange appear to be very rare. In the case of the villages examined in this study, such practices as generalized reciprocity or labour sharing were not apparent while wage relations between villagers were. Gudeman has observed that "The fundamental units of the (peasant, T.M.) society are not changing but their focus of integration is, from the community to the market. This fact suggests ... that the traditional forms of inter-household labor organisation are not themselves fundamental relations of production."18

From this we can conclude that a focus on the non-monetized relations, a focus epitomized by Redfield but widespread, can

17Stavenhagen, "Capitalism and the peasantry", p. 27.
18Gudeman, Demise of a Rural Economy, p. 20
lead to an erroneous conception of the village as a functional whole in terms of its capacity for economic autarky. Similarly these non-monetized relations, though possibly characteristic of some peasantries, are not at all a necessary condition for the operation of the peasant economy, nor are they its principal defining feature. Although the local economy is a useful and important concept, it does not refer to a fundamental economic unit, but an aggregation of household economies which may be more or less integrated with each other.

In the case of the indigenous communities of the highlands the fact of ethnic solidarity is very important and reinforces the cohesion of the local economy. Despite the fact of integration there is an important aspect of defence by which communities assume an integrity that defines them and distinguishes them from other communities. Jacinto Arias describes the nature of this defence as follows:

"La tendencia natural de cada pueblo, expresada por sus dirigentes consiste en protegerlo y resguardarlo contra toda posible intromisión, en primer lugar de los ladinos y, segundo, de cualquier otro pueblo." 19

To a certain extent this reflects an element of xenophobia and hostility towards strangers which is characteristic of the highlands, but also it reflects the adaptation of the Indians to their integration with a dominant ladino society which is

The natural tendency of each community as expressed by its leaders consists in protecting it and preserving it against all possible penetration, in the first place from the ladinos, and second, from any other community. (T.M.)
discriminatory and exploitive. In this sense the culture of Middle American Indians, especially its insularity, functions "to manipulate and close out their oppressors."20

Ethnic solidarity, as a defence, is crystallised into the village structure and reinforces it. This gives the local economy additional significance as a cultural and social entity. There are, however, two sides to the coin of community defence. The communities themselves, in terms of their location and composition as well as their internal organisations are reflections of Spanish and Mexican policies to control and administrate Indian populations. This means that there is an ambivalence to the "tendencia natural de cada pueblo, expresada por sus dirigentes..." such that it may "serve to consolidate sets of external relationships that are important for the progress of the community or certain sectors of it."21 This is to say that it is important to comprehend the tension between community defence and penetration within the context of partial integration rather than village autarky.

The local economy, then, is not conceived as a fundamental unit of the peasant economy, nor as a conceptual necessity based on a qualitative differentiation between capitalist and village economic organisation. The local economy is significant as an


empirical given in terms of peasant settlement, community allegiance and cultural patterns according to which household economies, as the fundamental units of peasant production, may be aggregated.

**Historical background to the Mexican Peasantry: Conquest, Integration and Revolution**

The conceptualisation of the peasantry presented here has stressed the partial integration of the peasant economy into the modern capitalist economy. Contemporary patterns of integration are the result of conquest, colonialism, and articulation with the developing world economy. In order to understand the contemporary peasantry it is important to appreciate the historical processes that have led to the present structures and relationships. The importance of a historical perspective is stressed in the authoritative *Estructura Agraria y Desarrollo Agrícola* in its interpretation of the contemporary indigenous village which states that:

"La natureza actual de estas comunidades 'corporativas' es el resultado de su larga evolución histórica desde épocas prehispánicas. Pero su estructura contemporánea es consecuencia, ante todo, de la política colonial y de las relaciones que durante cuatrocientos años han mantenido los grupos indígenas con la sociedad global."

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22 Centro de Investigaciones Agrarias, p. 30. The nature of those "corporate" communities is the result of their long evolution from pre-Hispanic times. But their contemporary structure is a consequence, before everything else, of colonial policies and the relations that over four hundred years have kept indigenous groups a part of global society.
The following section is a brief sketch which puts the peasant economy of Mexico into historical perspective relative to the dominant forces which shape it.

Upon the conquest of New Spain the Spaniards were faced with a society whose economy was developed and structured to provide for its own needs. The challenge was to transform Indian society to serve the interests of the various elements of the Spanish imperial economy. This came to entail control of Indian land and labour, which radically disturbed pre-Hispanic patterns of peasant reproduction and led to the economic integration of Indians at a much more profound level than that which preceded the conquest.23

The initial conditions of the Spanish colonisation of New Spain, most salient among them the small number of Spanish colonists in relation to the large Indian population, made the Spaniards hesitant to modify the pre-Hispanic system of economic organisation, which was basically peasant agriculture with the super-imposition of a local market system and tribute payments to a politico-religious elite. As Frank points out:

"During the first period after the conquest, that is until about 1548-1549, the Spaniards sought to maintain the pre-Hispanic organisation of economic activity in Mexico. After replacing the Aztec rulers at the top of the pyramid, they appropriated tribute from this economy for themselves."24

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The initial system by which the pre-columbian economic forms were exploited was called **encomienda** and is described by Keith:

"Both administration and exploitation of the Indians were performed through the existing local political authorities, the caciques, whose name, along with the term "repartimiento", was carried by the Spaniards from the Caribbean to other parts of the New World. The encomienda system thus was based on the largely unconscious assumption that indigenous social, political, and economic organisation would survive in more or less the same state in which the Spaniards found it, because there seemed to be no alternative to the control and exploitation of Indian populations through arrangements and patterns which already existed."\(^{25}\)

The **encomienda system**, through its utilisation of existing pre-Hispanic institutions and economic forms, sought to maintain the localized peasant agriculture of the indigenous peoples while directing the surplus labour and surplus product to the **encomenderos**, mining industry and Spanish townspeople.

Development of the colonial economy, abuses of the legal provisions protecting Indians from over-exploitation, as well as policies such as the **reducciones**,\(^{26}\) did not allow what had been essentially a dual economy to persist past the sixteenth century. Dramatic declines in the Indian population in particular, made the indigenous base of the dual economic


\(^{26}\)For the most part pre-Hispanic settlement patterns were relatively dispersed. In order to overcome the problems faced by the Spaniards in the management of a dispersed Indian population, many communities were "reduced" to more nucleated settlements which were more accesible and more convenient from the point of view of colonial administrators. The term **reduccion** refers to this settlement policy.
structure inadequate relative to the demands of the growing colonial economy for agricultural products produced within the indigenous sector. Growing demand for agricultural products in relation to the inability of a decimated Indian population to supply those demands made agriculture a profitable enterprise. This in turn attracted capital and Spaniards to capitalist forms of agriculture to provide for the expanding export sectors of the colonial economy. Specific racial policies favouring Spaniards, as well as their general domination of the indigenous people, led to the allocation of economic activities in agriculture between Spaniards and Indians according to the relative profitability of the activities. This had the important effect of making a clear distinction between what are now *ladino* dominated capitalist forms of production and indigenous peasant forms. Furthermore, the emergence of a profitable agriculture led to competition for land and the alienation of commercially workable land from Indian communities. The implication of this is that the non-viability of the peasant *minifundia* as a functionally whole economic form has its roots in the seventeenth century development of capitalist agriculture. This may be put in the context of dependency by Franks's suggestion that "... the utility and profitability of Mexican agriculture resulted in its becoming a product of the colonial economy, just as the colonial economy

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was a by-product of and contributed to the world-wide expansion and development of the mercantile capitalist system."

The process of land monopolisation as well as integration into international commodity markets for products such as coffee, cacao, and henequen, continued through independence from Spain and, in fact, intensified as a result of independence. Freedom from Spain meant more liberal economic policies and therefore less regulation and restriction on the entry into international trade with the growing industrial economies of Europe and North America. Also, freedom from the authority of the Spanish crown, as well as official anti-clericalism, meant that the Indian communities lost two powerful advocates and protectors of their right to a communal land base. Encroachments on Indian land increased in this period.

The process of colonisation was one in which the Indian population was integrated into national and worldwide economic systems. The concomitant alienation of the communal land base meant that the peasant economic form was not capable of economic independence within the framework of the local economy. Erosion of the subsistence base requires new additional support through exchange relations outside of the local economy. This process of the transformation of so-called "natural economies".

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29 Henry Bernstein uses the term natural economy as "a useful abstraction from which to start our analysis." 'Concepts,' (p. 5). It is used here in the same sense as a term describing an economic state prior to colonisation where production for a
as they existed prior to conquest by colonial powers, abstracted
to describe the conditions of peasantries in general, is
outlined by Bernstein:

The question confronting capital was how to organize the
conditions of exploitation of labour and land, which
necessitated the breaking of the reproduction cycle of
the various systems of the natural economy, a process
which has two important and related dimensions. One
concerns the withdrawal of labor from use-value
production, whether in agriculture, animal husbandry,
hunting, fishing, or in branches of craft activity ...
The withdrawal of labor from use-value production
undermines the material reproduction of the natural
economy. At the same time the monetisation of some of
the elements of reproduction forces the rural producers
into commodity production, either through the production
of cash crops or through the exchange of their labor
power for wages. 30

In the case of Mexico, monopolisation of land by large
landowners was not balanced by absorption of Indian labour
except under the extremely oppressive conditions of the
hacienda. Alienation of indigenous land reached its apogee
during the regime of president Porfirio Diaz whose policies
encouraged a "...concentration in ownership of land to an extent
unequalled before in the history of Mexico, and perhaps it is no
exaggeration to say, unequalled in the history of any other
country in modern times." 31 The pressure on the peasant economy,
caused by the alienation of land as the most important means of
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29(cont'd) market, especially a world market, was very much less
important that it was to become following colonisation.

30Henry Bernstein, "Concepts for the Analysis of Contemporary
Peasantries", in The Political Economy of Rural Development, ed.
Rosemary Galli, p. 5

31Exler N. Simpson, The Ejido: Mexico's Way Out, (Chapel Hill:
The University of North Carolina Press, 1937), p. 27
production, exploded in the Mexican Revolution of 1910. That the revolution had agrarian roots is affirmed by Estructura Agraria:

"No cabe duda que las huertas revolucionarias estaban compuestas de campesinos que ante todo peleaban por la tierra y contra las injusticias del sistema hacendario."

Following the revolution agrarian reforms were instituted, the most important of which was the institution of the ejido. The ejido reinstituted government guarantee of communal land holding by preventing the sale or rental of ejidal land, and served as a framework with which to redistribute land to peasants. In effect, the ejido has served to consolidate and support peasant production. Since the peasant economic form is predicated on the immobility of factors of production, the ejido serves to consolidate the peasant form by immobilizing land as a factor. The ejido has not reconstituted the peasant economic form as a self-sufficient natural economy, but rather has fortified the partial nature of economic integration by immobilizing a crucial factor of production.

The preceding section has shown that in order for the Mexican peasantry to accommodate and serve the dominant interests of Spain and Mexico it was transformed and integrated with colonial, national and international economic systems. More than four centuries of often systematic policies for its integration have conditioned the peasant economy to be part of the national economy. 

32Centro de Investigaciones Agrarias, Estructura Agraria, p. 338
(There is no doubt that the revolutionary base was composed of peasants who before all else fought for land and against the injustices of the hacienda system.)
larger system. The fact that traditions and techniques practiced by peasants prior to the conquest persist in seemingly unscathed form does not contradict the fact of the transformation and integration of the peasantry but may be explained by Long's statement that "... many cultural items are malleable. It is this that enables certain cultural features to persist in quite different social environments." Practices developed in pre-columbian times in the villages studied in this thesis, notably agricultural and dietary practices, are just such an example of cultural malleability.

**Historical Trends in the Economic Integration of the Highlands**

Mexico is a country of enormous diversity, consequently a single historical overview of the peasantry masks important differences in the development of the peasant economic landscape. Variations in pre-columbian landscapes which greeted the conquering Spaniards resulted in different patterns of integration and considerably different synthetic landscapes. Similarly, various regions in Mexico have been influenced by national and international demands in various ways, and with varying intensities. The following section outlines some of the historical particularities of the integration of the highlands of Chiapas which make it a distinctive area and give a frame of reference within which to place the patterns of integration characteristic of the villages studied in this thesis.

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33Long, *Sociology of Rural Development*, p. 51
The first official contact between the Indians of Chiapas and the Spaniards was in 1522, soon after the conquest of the Aztecs. At this time the town of Espiritu Santo, now known as Coatzalcoalcos, was founded on the gulf coast and the Indians of the sixteen surrounding provinces, which included Chiapas, were put into encomienda. This arrangement worked fairly well in most parts of New Spain, but there were some complications in terms of the application of the encomienda system to the concrete situation of Chiapas at the time of the conquest.

Firstly, the highlands did not present the Spaniards with a passive rustic population accustomed to the orderly payment of tribute to a distant politico-religious elite, as was the case in other parts of the colony. Chiapas was, even before the conquest, a peripheral area which was poorly, if at all, integrated into the pre-columbian imperial structures of the Maya and Aztec empires. With reference to the pre-conquest situation of the highlands of Chiapas, anthropologist Robert Adams interprets the archaeological record as follows:

"Products and towns of the area are notable for their omission from the Aztec tribute lists. In light of their other achievements the inference is not that the Aztecs avoided the area out of respect for its defences. Instead they seem to have passed it in pursuit of more populous and prosperous objectives."34

Adams estimation of Aztec respect for Tzeltal and Tzotzil prowess does not imply that they were a pacific people, since he

also points out in the same article that the settlement pattern of the highlands was largely inspired by military considerations. This, along with the observations by Spaniards that warfare was endemic suggest a very economically disarticulated and hostile people. In part this explains the following reaction of the highland Indians to the conquest and its implications:

"Many of the Indians refused to pay tribute to the Spaniards of Coatzalcoalcos. Although there is no evidence that prior to apportioning the Indians among themselves the Spaniards had even met the Indians they were treating as vassals, much less conquered them, they nevertheless interpreted the Indians refusal to pay them as 'rebellions'." 35

In order to overcome the non-compliance of the Indians and effectively subjugate and benefit from Indian labour the Spaniards founded the Ciudad Real in 1528, now San Cristobal de las Casas. Along with the actual settlement of the Spaniards, the settlement pattern of the Indians was modified into a more convenient pattern. Indians were regrouped into more nucleated settlement patterns which made the organisation of encomienda and missionary activity less difficult. In the colonial period, and following Mexican independence as well, there have been two bloody uprisings in the highlands in reaction to subjugation by the dominant Spaniards (the Cancuc rebellion of 171236


36The Cancuc rebellion is particularly significant since, as the following passage from Bricker indicates, the uprising led to a reorganisation of the population into a more manageable pattern: "On his way to visit San Pablo Calchitan, Santa Catalina Pantelho, and Santa Marta, Monrroy (the intendente, T.M.) took
and the War of St. Rose in 1869) but the patterns laid down by the Spaniards of limited integration complemented by substantial subsistence activity remains. In the highlands of Chiapas integration of Indian land and labour did not progress to the level of the hacienda, presumably because the value of land as an expression of the profitability of agriculture did not warrant a more complete subsumption of peasant economic forms by capitalist ones.

In other parts of Mexico, notably the Yucatan peninsula near the gulf coast, the pattern is quite different. The invention of the McCormack harvester in the middle of the last century in the United States created an explosive demand for henequen fibre and in response to this demand vast acreages were planted in henequen in the Yucatan which displaced Indian communities. These plantations were organized according to the hacienda system. Keith explains the major differences between the hacienda and the encomienda systems as follows:

"The hacienda...possessed a labor force which had been

36(cont'd) note of the fact that they were very isolated towns which were naturally protected by the ruggedness of the countryside. He therefore recommended to Cosio that the people of San Pablo Calchiuitan should be moved to Chenalho, those of Santa Catalina to San Miguel Mitontic, and those of Santa Marta to Santiago Huistan, where he would be better able to keep an eye on them and intervene should they cause any further trouble. After discussing the recommendation with the bishop, Cosio decided to implement it. Similar decisions were made to consolidate other rebel towns. The Indians of Tenango were moved to Guatiqueque and Sitala. San Martin (now known as Abasolo, T.M.) was 'reduced' to Oxchuc, from which it had split off only the year before. And Cancuc was obliterated and its inhabitants moved to other towns." (Bricker, The Indian Christ the Indian King, p. 65).
largely removed from its traditional social environment and permanently settled on land belonging to the estate. To the extent that this development was complete and transitional practices such as the labor repartimiento or mita had disappeared, the hacienda was completely independent of the traditional indigenous economy of the region."

Under this arrangement the hacendados benefitted directly from the labour of the Indians as workers on the hacienda, rather than indirectly from the appropriation of the surplus produced in the local economy. As a result of the rapid regional growth fueled by international demand, the local economy was dissolved in two ways. On the one hand the henequen economy expressed itself directly on the landscape with the establishment of vast plantations - this entailed the physical displacement of the traditional milpa agriculture. On the other hand, the demand for labour as it was supplied through the institutional framework of the hacienda system required that the Indian workers be bound to the hacienda. The previous economic symbiosis which prevailed when cattle ranching was the major economic activity of the hacendados, in which the Indian villages maintained an independent subsistence base, could not survive the introduction of henequen.

The Mexican revolution freed the Indians from the peonage of the hacienda, but since the local economy had been shattered the contemporary village economy in the Yucatan is much more integrated, especially in terms of Indian reliance on wage labour relative to subsistence activities, than its Chiapan

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counterpart.

While an explosive international demand for henequen fibre transformed the peasant economy of the Yucatan and is largely responsible for its present form, integration of the highlands of Chiapas is largely a response to increasing Mexican and North American demand for beef and international demand for coffee in the twentieth century. Prior to independence from Spain in 1821 Spanish legislation protecting Indians, as well as the peripheral situation of the region relative to the demands of the colonial and imperial economies, limited integration to the realm of exploitation of the peasant surplus primarily through taxes and petty commerce. This naturally placed a burden on the peasant community, but did not require fundamental changes in subsistence patterns.

Following independence, liberal economic policies were introduced which stressed private property as an aspect of personal freedom. This encouraged ladinos to "denounce" communal lands and assume their ownership, thus making Indians landless who, in return for access to the land which they no longer owned, were required to work four days a week for their landlords. This as well as other economic abuses that intensified after independence placed intolerable burdens on the Indians of the central highlands. Led by Chamulas, they rose in bloody revolt in 1869. "After slaughtering the entire ladino

population of the central highlands they were themselves defeated by government forces three months later. "39

Those ladinos who fled the terror of the uprising returned soon after its suppression. Their experience with the direct integration of Indian land and labour in the social and geographic conditions that prevailed in the highlands encouraged a different and less intrusive strategy of occupying stolen Indian land with small single family ranches, instead of large haciendas. These ranches, which were largely established during the Porfiriato, continue to dominate the ladino agricultural use of highland lands. While these ranches alienated Indian land — usually the most fertile and accessible lands — they did not draw on Indian labour in such a way as to make up for the reduction of land available to the Indians.

To a certain extent the squeeze on the local economies caused by ladino invasion of Indian land has been meliorated by the development of coffee plantations by foreign investors in the lowlands of Chiapas, particularly in the lowlands east of Ocosingo and the Pacific slope of the Sierra Madre, in the early part of this century. Because the plantations were located in sparsely inhabited areas, labour supply was a problem. The initial effort to supply labour was through the encouragement of Mam Indians from the highlands of Guatemala, as well as Tzeltal and Tzotzil people, to settle in the coffee zones. After the revolution, however, the approach changed, as is pointed out by Wasserstrom, "Land and Labour in Central Chiapas", p. 445

39 Wasserstrom, "Land and Labour in Central Chiapas", p. 445
"In the years following World War I, they (the coffee growers, T.M.) concentrated their attention upon a different but related problem, how to guarantee a steady supply of temporary laborers during the harvest period. To this end they introduced a series of measures, such as the use of small cash advances which bound highland residents to work on the plantations for 3 or 4 months a year. So effective were those measures that coffee growers were able to increase their production dramatically in the first third of this century. The significant thing about such arrangements, of course, is that they no longer required Tzotzil and Tzeltal people to abandon their communities."

This integration with the coffee industry and the meager income it provided was important for the highland Indians. That it had the effect of supporting communities who had suffered from ladino encroachment on their subsistence base is substantiated by the fact that with this integration highland "...population increased in a significant and sustained fashion" 41.

Encroachment on Indian land by cattle ranches and the development of circular migration to wage labour on the coffee plantations are the most significant historical trends shaping the contemporary economic landscape of the highland Indians. Because ladino ranches are relatively small, the revolution did not return stolen lands to the Indians, but agrarian reform put a brake on further encroachment on the subsistence base of the local economies. While these trends outlined for the region do not explain fully the manifold patterns of integration in the

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41 Wasserstrom, p. 139
highlands, the patterns and mechanisms that do emerge must be interpreted with reference to these trends.

The Peasant Sector in Contemporary Mexico: Logic and Function

It has recently been estimated that 80.4% of the agricultural labour force of Mexico may be classified as peasants.\(^{42}\) This section describes the peasantry as a contrasting but logical, and in some ways functional, aspect of modern Mexico. Essential to the understanding of peasants in contemporary societies is the recognition of their subordinant position relative to other groups.\(^{43}\) As a subordinate form within modern capitalist economies it is important to understand the peasant economic form from two perspectives: first, that of how it allows a group of subordinated people to cope with their disadvantageous position; second, of how the dominant capitalist forms may benefit from the structural subordination of the peasantry. In explaining the logic and function of the peasant economic form the present section outlines both of these perspectives.

The historical development of the modern Mexican economy, as pointed out in the two preceding sections, has encroached upon the peasant land base and has thereby reduced the ability of peasants to make a living from the land without important

\(^{42}\)Emiliano Ortega, "Peasant Agriculture in Latin America: Situation and Trends", CEPAL Review, April 1982, p. 82

\(^{43}\)Gamst, "Peasants in Complex Societies", p. 30
integration with other economic dimensions to compensate.
Similarly this has meant that not all persons within the peasant
sector can be employed productively. In formal economic terms
the contemporary peasantry may be classified as occupying a
position in which the marginal productivity of labour is zero.
This explains the high rate of rural to urban migration in
Mexico. Often making matters worse is the fact that peasant
produced commodities grown under technically backward and
resource poor circumstances must meet those produced by modern
capitalist agricultural enterprises under more efficient
conditions in the market. How the peasant form may persist in
the context of such unfavourable circumstances is succinctly
described by Heynig:

"... the survival and the persistence of small peasant
production is due... mainly to the fact that the family
unit can carry self-exploitation to an extreme that
allows it to exist in conditions of under-employment in
non-agricultural activities. (In such circumstances,
T.M.) small peasant production may subsist, but only in
miserable and over-exploited conditions of life and
work."**

It is the capacity of the household economy, as the basic unit
of the peasant economic form, to intensify labour inputs
relative to the small amount of land available that allows the
peasant sector to persist, even though it operates in the
context of technological backwardness and inferior resources.
However, while this strategy allows peasants to make a living
(in the sense of an almost complete lack of alternatives), as

**Heynig, "Principal Schools of Thought on the Peasant Economy",
p. 130
Bernstein correctly points out, it is also the cause of some of the critical symptoms of rural underdevelopment.

"Such intensification can soon result in the exhaustion of both the producers relying mainly on instruments fueled by human energy and of the soil cultivated with grossly insufficient inputs of irrigation and fertilizer."45

In the final analysis, the peasant form of production, as a contemporary phenomenon, is predicated on a historic encroachment on the productive base of the peasantry along with a concomitant incapacity of the national economy, dominated by capitalist forms of production, to productively integrate the peasants it has displaced. This conceptualisation underlies the assertion that:

"La solución definitiva del problema del campo está fuera del campo. Acelerar el desarrollo del resto de la economía, en forma tal que absorba todo el éxodo potencial rural puede convertirse, a la larga, en la 'política agraria' de más transcendencia."46

Thus the contemporary logic of the peasant economy extends beyond its significance as a strategy of survival for a subordinated group of people.

From the perspective of the national economy there are functional aspects to the peasant economy. It is functional in

45 Bernstein, "Concepts for the Analysis of Contemporary Peasantries", p. 22

46 Centro de Investigaciones Agrarias, Estructura Agraria, p. 645

The definitive solution to the problem of the countryside lies outside the countryside. Accelerating the development of the rest of the economy, in such form that it absorbs the potential urban migration could be in the long run, the most far-reaching agrarian policy.
the first instance because it provides basic foods - the shortage of which is a perennial and serious problem in Mexico. In 1970 the peasant sector of Mexican agriculture contributed 69.9% of maize production, 66.7% of beans, 36.7% of wheat and 48.9% of fruit. What makes this contribution particularly important from the national standpoint is that the ability of the peasant economic form to intensify the application of labour in the context of the poor quality lands to which it has been relegated means that land which could not have been profitably worked by capitalist forms of agriculture, because of steep slopes, inaccessibility or infertility, is brought into production by peasants. This helps to keep food prices low and consequently reduces the costs of labour in the dynamic industrial sectors of the economy.

A further functional aspect of the peasantry which has received a good deal of attention (Clay, Collier, Heynig, Stevenhagen, Wasserstrom) is its provision of cheap labour for capitalist forms of agricultural enterprise. Since a significant portion of the consumption needs of labour are met within the household economy, temporary labour need only be compensated to the extent that peasant production falls short of the consumption needs of the household.

Finally, the peasant form of production is functional in the political sense such that it is a solution to the social problem of unemployment and and underemployment created by the

*Ortega, "Peasant Agriculture in Latin America", p. 84
inability of capitalist economic forms to provide a living for displaced peasants. This function is explained by Stavenhagen:

"...the incapacity of the process of dependent capitalist industrialisation to integrate productively the entire pool of labour produced by the disintegration of the peasant economy generates social pressures (urban unemployment, demand for social services, demand for goods for popular consumption at a low, generally subsidized price, and so forth) which make it convenient for the political stability of the nation that a design for retaining population in the countryside be developed. A policy of support for the peasantry has that effect."

The peasantry may in some senses be interpreted as an impediment to the progress and development of more productive capitalist forms of agriculture and therefore be in need of modernisation. Be this as it may, development of the various aspects of the heterogeneous Mexican economic landscape have conditioned relations between peasant and capitalist forms of production such that they have logical and functional relations to each other.

In the very long run, Mexican economic development shows a tendency for the peasant sector to dissolve and be replaced with capitalist forms. The term 'economic development' itself clearly implies capitalism in terms of a mobility of factors of production and their efficient allocation. Similarly, rural underdevelopment is clearly an aspect of the peasant form of production as it has developed historically. The inexorable tendency towards the elimination of non-capitalist forms notwithstanding, the peasant form of production as a source of

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*Stavenhagen, "Capitalism and the Peasantry", p. 35*
livelhood for the majority of the agricultural workforce, and certainly for the Indians of highland Chiapas, is likely to persist well into the foreseeable future. This is so for two reasons; the peasant economic form is a strategy of survival for those who have no alternatives and, it is functional from the perspective of the national economy.

Summary

This final section summarizes the conceptualisation of the peasant economy and relates it to the objective and approach of the thesis. The conceptualisation presented offers a common thread or frame of reference, if not a theory, which can comprehend and give meaning to the various and almost infinitely variable characteristics of local economies. Relating the villages studied to this abstract conceptualisation allows the systematic interpretation of patterns of partial integration as they are expressed in the concrete situations of Sibacá and Abasolo. The approach taken here does this by situating the household in the institutional framework of the local economy and this in turn may be related to the regional and national conceptualisations of the position and development of the peasantry.

In the introduction the objective of the thesis was stated, in general terms, as the exploration of how the heterogeneous economic landscape of the highlands of Chiapas is integrated. More specifically the key to this problem involves understanding
how the peasant economic form, which is incapable of reproducing itself independently, is partially integrated with other economic forms. With reference to figure 1, we can see that this objective represents the understanding of a particular portion of the conceptualisation, which has been arrived at through field investigation of patterns of integration in two villages.
diachronic external forces which have shaped the peasant economy

synchronous mutually reinforcing characteristics of the peasant economy

colonisation and the development of commercial agriculture

historic monopolisation of commercialisable land by Spanish/ladinos

restriction of peasants to hillside minifundia

household strategies based on atomised subsistence agriculture

economic patterns of partial integration

incapacity of capitalist forms to productively absorb peasant labour

commercial demand for peasant products

Figure 1

Schematic Conceptualisation of the Peasant Economy
At the synchronic level the peasant economy has been presented in terms of three mutually reinforcing characteristics. Production, undertaken with simple technology fueled by human energy, is confined to economically marginal minifundia units. This reinforces an economic logic of atomised subsistence agriculture, organised in household units. These two characteristics are mutually reinforcing as the economic logic tends to prohibit collectivisation or other means of transcending the confinement to hillside minifundia. The basis of atomised subsistence agriculture is the household and this implies limited mobility of labour and property which in turn means that economic integration with other economic forms can only be partial. This partial integration, in its turn, reinforces the logic of subsistence which is the only way that the household may guarantee that its minimum consumption needs are met. In the case of the highlands of Chiapas, access to the means of subsistence is only possible by clinging to hillside minifundia.

The peasant economic form, as it has been presented, is not a case of spontaneous generation, nor a historical constant. It has developed and been conditioned by its domination by colonial and national economies. Colonisation and economic policies restricted indigenous participation in commercial agriculture which crowded Indians onto poor land. This is the historic basis of minifundia agriculture. In more recent times, modern capitalist development, which largely takes place in the context
of labour saving technology, has been incapable of productively absorbing peasant labour. This barrier reinforces the partial integration of the peasant economic form because of the simple fact that there is no alternative to reliance on subsistence agriculture to guarantee consumption needs.

In the context of this conceptualisation this thesis particularly focusses on the relationship of the economic logic of atomised subsistence agriculture to partial integration. This involves exploration of the restricted capacity of peasant economic units to integrate with capitalist economic forms, and examination of the concrete links that do exist. This portion of the underlying logic of the peasant economy is examined in relation to the entire conceptualisation to give it meaning beyond simply the limited significance that can be attached to the particularities of unique villages.
III. Chapter III: The Setting: Ocosingo, Sibacá and Abasolo

"These areas of rugged countryside, isolated from transportation routes by physical barriers, with a harsh landscape and scanty agricultural yields, constitute regions of refuge. They are not immense areas like the Amazon basin, nor limited reservations for the protection of small groups, as are the deserts; they are compendia of small or medium sized territorial units, distributed throughout the continental mountain range. They contain the greater part of the indigenous population of the Americas."  

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the setting of the peasant economy in which the Indians of Sibacá and Abasolo meet their needs. The central highlands of the Mexican state of Chiapas, in particular the Tzeltal and Tzotzil linguistic areas represent a unique region in which complex relief, extreme social and cultural contrasts, as well as a peripheral position in the Mexican national economy, combine to create a complicated heterogeneous economic landscape. The key feature of the area, in social and economic terms, is the prevalence and distinctiveness of the indigenous population. This chapter, besides describing the villages of Abasolo and Sibacá, as well as the regional economic central place, Ocosingo (see map 3), describes the particular position of the contemporary indigenous

peoples in the highlands, which is subordination to the dominant ladinos.
map 3. The study area.
The Indians of the highlands are distinct from ladinos both culturally and socially. Distinct differences between the two groups of people, interdependencies notwithstanding, invite the conceptualization of a dual economic and social structure. Essential to description of the setting of the highlands is an appreciation of the deep rooted, and indeed structural, antagonism between Indians and ladinos. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltran has been the most influential in developing this theme of antagonism and, in the context of Latin American highlands describes it as follows:

"The dual structure juxtaposes two types of economic organization with separate orientations, That of the Indian is aimed at satisfying subsistence needs, and that of the Ladinos at strengthening the profit motive and increasing the accumulation of capital goods. But continued first-hand contact between economies based on contradictory concepts forces interaction and merges antagonistic features."

The consequence of this is that:

"Indians and Ladinos live in socio-economic symbiosis, each group retaining its own identity. They form relationships that place them in separate economic, social and political spheres, which they cannot leave without causing serious conflicts leading to violence and repression."^2

These distinct groupings maintain separate identities yet come into constant contact. This contact derives from the inability of the household economy to reproduce itself independently. Therefore the peasant economic form, as embodied by the highland Indians, requires regular economic exchange with other forms. In Chiapas these forms are dominated by ladinos.

^2Aguirre Beltran, Regions of Refuge, p. 71
The relations between the two are profoundly asymmetrical when Indians and ladinos come into contact, as the following passage from David Hill vividly illustrates:

"To ladinos, Indians are social inferiors who speak Spanish imperfectly, and are 'stupid', 'uneducated', 'dirty', 'superstitious', 'lack social graces', and are to be feared because of their 'treacherousness'. In a sense ladinos treat them as 'children', but with important qualifications, i.e., the ladr no does not expect the Indian to improve his lot, he exploits him continually, and he treats him more callously than children are usually treated by adults."  

In terms of the subsistence orientation of the Indians of the highlands they are clearly classified as peasant since they expend a large part of their time and resources on production of what they themselves will consume. In Chiapas this means milpa agriculture. This is the cultivation of maize, often in association with squash and beans (see photo 1). The technique is digging stick for planting and the fields are cleared at the end of the agricultural cycle by burning. After a period of time, which varies according to the quality of the soil, the land must be left fallow for a number of years before it may be cleared and burned again. This allows the land to replace nutrients exhausted by maize cultivation. Milpa culture dates back to the very beginning of Meso American civilization. Besides the antiquity of the technologies employed in peasant production, Indians retain certain practices and institutions, as well as retaining Mayan dialects as the primary

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medium of communication; Tzeltal in the case of Sibaca and Abasolo. In contrast to the holdovers from pre-columbian times is the colonial cargo system of religious and civic responsibilities and the revolutionary system of ejidal communal land tenure. Thus we find the influence of various historical epochs on the landscape of the highlands.

Social cleavage between ladinos and Indians, plus milpa agriculture as the basis of peasant production are two of the constants in the highlands. There is, in addition, a great deal of variation within this general pattern. The following section describing Ocosingo, Sibacá, and Abasolo illustrates some of these variations.

Ocosingo

Ocosingo is the cabecera (seat of municipal government) for the municipio of the same name (see photo 3). It is now the primary locus of contact between Indians and ladinos in the area of the villages studied. Although Ocosingo is obviously a ladino town - this is evident from the appearance of people, the scale of commercial activities and automobile traffic, among other things - its origins predate the conquest. As a settlement, Ocosingo was mentioned in Spanish records as early as 1535. It did not become an important centre, however, until the mid-seventeenth century when it was considered to have been the
principal centre for the "Provincia de Zelddales", * or Tzeltal region. Ocosingo is still the dominant centre in the area and a focus for much of the economic exchange that goes on between Indians and ladin@s.

The centre of Ocosingo conforms rigidly to the colonial grid-iron pattern, but as one moves away from the central plaza the structure becomes less organized until there is a smooth transition to the surrounding rural area. Contemporary Ocosingo is the major central place between Palenque and San Cristóbal de las Casas with a population of approximately 8000 people. It has a daily market, with a permanent municipal building sheltering the stalls of ladin@ vendors of meat, vegetables, herbs and dry goods. The hundred meters, or so, of cobbled street beside the church and abandoned convent which leads from the plaza to the market is lined by Indians sitting on the curb with their produce displayed in front of them for sale. The variety of indigenous costumes show that people from all parts of the municipio come to Ocosingo to sell their products. In the market one may also observe the ecological complementarities of the region - one person had come from as far as Oxchuc to sell passion fruit which was not available in the municipio of Ocosingo. Sibatecos may be seen at any time in the market selling plátano (bananas). Because plátano is a crop that can be

harvested at any time of the year, by the hand, but cannot be stored very long, women take the family crop into market at Ocosingo as often as once a week. Abaselenos do not bring their produce into Ocosingo because Abasolo itself is the site of a periodic market.

Ocosingo is also a social focus for the people who live in the outlying villages. Every Sunday evening Indians come into Ocosingo to pasear (stroll around the plaza), to sit and talk, and generally enjoy the urban amenities which the town has to offer but which are unavailable in the villages. There are church services in the cathedral, and for those who have been converted to other faiths, there are other churches, including Jehovah's Witnesses. Most villages do have a church but are only visited by priests every month or so. People also take the opportunity to savour such treats as paletas (frozen fruit juice on a stick), chicharones (crisp fried pork skin), and perhaps a taco de carnitas (small bits of cooked flesh, served on a tortilla). Next to marketing, this social function is the most apparent of the interactions between the villages and Ocosingo.

Other central place functions of Ocosingo are distribution of labour to wage work on plantations or construction, and service as a regional centre for government services. The jungle to the east has recently been developed into a major coffee producing area. During harvest time especially, there is a large demand for wage labour, and this is mainly supplied by Indians from the highlands who need cash. The most important of the
government services available are those offered by the Instituto Mexicano de Cafe (Mexican Coffee Institute) which will be discussed later. An office of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista as well as Seguro Social which provides health services, and CONASUPO, which sells basic foods at subsidized prices, are also located in Ocosingo. Besides these there are many shops which provide all that the peasant may need such as machetes, steel tips for digging sticks, or material to make clothes. Locationally, Ocosingo is important because it represents the primary nexus, or interface, at which the peasant economic form meets capitalist forms.

Sibacá

Sibacá is a six kilometer walk northeast of Ocosingo. Going to Sibacá from Ocosingo the essential differences between the Indian and the ladino economic spheres are apparent. The walk is uphill. The fertile valley in which Ocosingo lies is dominated by cattle ranches and intensive maize cultivation. The intensity of cultivation gradually decreases as valley sides steepen. To reach Sibacá one first passes the modern cattle ranch, el Contento, at which point the paved highway is left for a rough track which has been improved to the extent that small trucks may pass in the dry season. At this point the scenery is dominated by mixed pine and oak forest with occasional clearings for pasture where land has been cleared by individuals from Ocosingo to keep a few cattle of indeterminate breed (see photo
That el Contento and the smaller pastures dominate the low-lying land in the valley is the contemporary expression of the crowding of the Indians onto the hillsides.

The traditional economic exchange between Indians and ladinos is also evident in the walk to Sibacá as women take the surplus agricultural production of the household to the ladinotown for sale in the market. In the early morning there is a steady stream of mostly women in traje típico (traditional costumes) carrying loads of platano on their heads to Ocosingo (see photo 5). Traffic on the route to Sibacá includes ladinomen riding donkeys to check their cattle, cowboys from el Contento on horseback and the daily trips of the ejidal truck. On arrival, Sibacá is seen to be a group of about one hundred tightly nucleated dwelling compounds housing 670 people (see photo 6). At the time of our visit the coffee harvest was in progress and those who were in the village were busy spreading out their coffee to dry on cement pads behind the house and running the raw beans through a hand-cranked mill, called a despulpadora, to remove the fruit from the bean. Other than this there is little activity within the village, besides domestic chores of the women, such as washing clothes or preparing maize. Children are in school in the daytime.

The village is crisscrossed by dirt tracks organized in roughly a grid-iron pattern, which is most definite towards the centre of the village. Crossing the main street are two streams which are used for bathing, washing clothes and drawing drinking
water. Housing compounds are close together, but each has its lot clearly defined either by a stone fence, a stick fence, or barbed wire (see photo 9). The oldest houses, and most tightly nucleated, are beside the main square. In the centre of this square is an enormous ceiba tree (see photo 7). The ceiba is sacred in the Mayan religion and traditionally marks the centre of villages in the Maya region. On two opposite sides of the central square are school buildings. On the south side of the square the old municipal building has been turned into class rooms and on the north side a new school building has been constructed. Mexico's drive to educate the Indians of highland Chiapas, in combination with the bottom heavy demographic pyramid of the peasantry has meant that primary schools play an important part in shaping village morphology, and an increasingly important part in the Indian economy and society as indigenous teachers, who are part of a bilingual education programme, assume an important position in the community. This is, however, less a factor in Sibacá than in Abasolo. Next to the old municipal building is the chapel and across from the chapel are two huts which serve as offices for the comisariado and the agente municipal, who are the two important figures in village politics and village political integration with the state and national levels.

On the outskirts of the town, immediately left of the square, are the crumbling remains of what was once a very large church (see photo 8). This points to a relatively more populous
past in Sibacá. Sibacá was mentioned in grants of encomienda in 1528 at which time it was composed of three parcialidades (village subdivisions, possibly clan based). Sometime after 1625 it was reduced to two parcialidades, and now only one remains since the colonisation of San Marcos. This may explain why the square is no longer situated in the centre of the village, but all habitations lie to one side.

Houses generally face the street. They are all of the same pattern, except for three new ones made of modern building materials. The typical house is divided into two rooms. In the main room, which has a door leading onto the street, and one onto the back yard, there are a few chairs and a table, perhaps with a shrine to the Virgin of Guadelupe in the corner. Visitors are received in this room and the corn is also stored here. A hammock may be slung from the rafters for an afternoon nap. The main room takes up approximately 3/4 of the house. The other small room is where the husband and wife sleep. Smaller children will also sleep in the same room as their parents. Others spread themselves around the rest of the house. Behind the house there is invariably a second building, usually less elaborate in construction with perhaps a thatch roof, or simply tar paper, where food is prepared and served.

Houses are made of stones, collected from nearby, and mortar, which is made from lime which the Sibatecos manufacture by burning limestone. Some people have roofs of lámina (corrugated asbestos) and this is thought to be a desirable
material, but most have tile roofs. Both forms of roofing are no
more than eight years old in the village because it was too
difficult to bring these materials into the village until the
lumber company made the trail from Ocosingo to Sibacá passable
to vehicles. Previously roofs were of *zacate* (straw thatch). The
switch from *zacate* to tile and *lámina* was a fortunate one since
*zacate* is a breeding ground for vermin and therefore a health
hazard. In the *solar* (back yard) is the cement pad for drying
coffee beans, a *despulpadora*, and chickens as well as an
occasional duck, turkey, and pig.

The village is roughly set out in a grid pattern, but it is
clear that surveyors were not on hand to lay out a plan. The
farther one moves from the central plaza, the more spontaneous
is the residential pattern. Except for the houses on the
periphery of the village, which may have a few *máfas de platano*
(banana trees) in their *solar*, the only economic activities that
go on in the housing compounds are processing of coffee and
livestock raising. It appears that at one point in the village's
history there may have been an organizing principle behind the
settlement pattern, perhaps when the Indians were first
organized into a parish under the influence of the church whose
remains lie at the west end of the plaza. Now, however,
contemporary expansion appears anarchic.

The separation of the people of Sibacá from those who went
to San Marcos (see below) has obviated the need for much
expansion over the past decade. But presently the growth of
families has necessitated new housing compounds. The dynamic of this expansion is predicated on the primacy of the nuclear family as the contemporary fundamental social unit. Upon marriage every son builds a new house for himself. If there is room the son will build himself a house in the family compound. Given that there are often ten or more children in a family it is obvious that this pattern cannot be sustained for very long. Depending on the inclination of the individual and the space available at the time of his assumption of family responsibilities, he may have to find a site for himself on the outskirts of town and make a home for his family there. This is also the case in a situation where the son has a dispute with his family and living within the family compound may no longer be an option.

The village of Sibacá has an atmosphere of sleepy tranquillity. Because the most important economic activities take place outside in the ejidal fields, the only signs of activity to the observer are the occasional tasks involved in drying coffee, caring for a few pigs and chickens, women washing clothes, and children playing. Except for one household, all women are dressed in their traditional clothes, a blue skirt and an embroidered blouse with ruffles (see photo 10). Men mostly wear 'western' clothing, except for a few very old men who wear the traditional costume which is white cotton breeches and a white shirt.
The impression is one of self-sufficiency. The village does not appear to be particularly prosperous, but nor are there any signs of dire poverty or severe deprivation. The countryside is verdant and fairly productive. Furthermore, and more importantly, there are no signs that the local agricultural resources of the ejido are being exhausted. The ejido of Sibaca is comprised of 1720 hectares. Not all of this is arable, but since it is not possible for a peasant using digging stick technology to work much more than two hectares, there is room left for expansion in the sense that the carrying capacity of the ejido has not yet been exceeded.

Abasolo

Abasolo is 25 kilometers from Ocosingo, 72 kilometers from San Cristóbal de las Casas. The bus trip from Ocosingo takes an hour and costs 35 pesos which is equivalent to over one third of the average daily wage for agricultural labour. Because of the poor construction and frequent landslides in the area, the road is damaged in various places so that for much of the way only one lane is passable. The road is a relatively recent addition to the municipio and is still under construction.

Passengers consist mainly of Indians on their way to and from Ocosingo and to and from fields outside their own ejidal lands that they may be working on a rental basis. Some tourists on this route take the bus from San Cristóbal to Palenque, both of which are major tourist centres, but because of the bad road
conditions most tourist traffic goes via Villahermosa in Tabasco. Teachers and lower level government employees also rely on the bus system for transportation to villages in the area.

Although the distance from Sibacá to Abasolo is not great, the change in altitude and particularly the change in the relation of population to the carrying capacity of the ejido make for a marked change in the aspect of the two communities. Whereas the lands of Ocosingo, and Sibacá, located in the fertile valley of the Rio Grande appear quite lush and productive with thick forests, the surrounds of Abasolo appear stunted and barren in contrast (see photo 11). The marginality of the community is accented by a perilous degree of soil erosion caused by deforestation and overgrazing (see photo 12). Trees are sparse in Abasolo because of over-cutting for firewood. Stands of oak and pine forest are common and easily accessible in Sibacá, but in Abasolo the collection of firewood requires a walk of several kilometers (see photo 13). Oak is used for firewood because it burns slowly and does not make too much smoke. In an effort to preserve the oak stands there were regulations which restricted the cutting of firewood, but the regulations were neither observed nor enforced. It is likely that their observation by the Abasoleños would entail hardships. The people of Abasolo appear so constrained by their environment that legal restrictions would have to be enforced by fairly harsh penalties before they would have any impact on behaviour.
In contrast to the often held view that traditional agriculture is a harmonious system in balance with its environment, Abasolo gives an impression of severe disequilibrium. This impression is coupled with one of severe poverty. Abasoleños are, for the most part, dressed in rags. Children, almost without exception, have distended bellies indicating gastro-enteritis and malnutrition. Colds and bronchial infections are endemic as a result of dust contaminated by human and animal waste. Virtually no considerations with regard to sanitation are evident. Those that do exist are simply there because of a happy coincidence with conventions of modesty.

The main square of the village is about one hundred meters to the north of the highway. It is dominated by the school buildings on two sides, which, in contrast to the ubiquitous mud walls of the other buildings in the village, have been constructed of metal siding painted green and yellow. On the other side of the plaza from the official school buildings are two ramshackle wooden buildings which are class rooms for the overflow of children which the regular school buildings cannot handle. One of the reasons that the school buildings are so prominent in Abasolo is that the village is a central place in the area supplying services, like schooling and health care, for the people that are between Oxchuc and Ocosingo. The school has a dormitory for children who live too far away to walk to school every day.
On the other side of the square is a dreary looking municipal building painted a tired looking grey. In contrast to the school buildings which have the modern lámina roofs, the municipal building, which is 19 years old, has the traditional tile roof. To one side of the square is a basketball court where children can sometimes be seen playing.

Behind the central square, to the north, behind the palacio municipal, is an open space about 30 meters square surrounded by mud huts. This is the market square. The mud huts open as tiendas (small shops) on market day, but some of them are also open when their proprietors come home from the fields in the evening. There are no commercial establishments in the village which provide the main source of household income (except perhaps one); all are supplemental to subsistence agriculture. Market day is on Saturday at which time people from all the surrounding villages, as well as ranchers and ladino merchants from Ocosingo and San Cristóbal, come to sell their products and buy those of others (see photo 14 and 15). Its poverty notwithstanding, change is in the air in Abasolo. This is particularly evident in the organization of institutional buildings and space. Behind the market square, to the north, a new palacio municipal is being built. Abasolo is seeking to become the head of a new municipio, the Municipio de Abasolo, distinct from the Municipio of Ocosingo to which it now belongs. In order to fulfill this new responsibility it must construct the requisite offices, and organize and fill the necessary
positions. Whether or not Abasolo ultimately achieves this ambition will depend on how well it can prepare itself for that responsibility, i.e. the final decision still has to be made by the state government. A further change, in keeping with its tentative future status, involves the resiting of the market place. An area to the east of the present market is being levelled by the lumber company that is exploiting timber on the ejidal lands. Following the levelling of the market area, the square will be covered by a cement surface (this will represent a significant improvement over the former square, particularly when it rains) and proper stalls will be constructed around the perimeter. The old market will be turned into a park. To the observer these plans seem grandiose in contrast to the present aspect of the village.

To the east of the central square is a very old Spanish colonial church dating from 1700 (see photo 16). Although it is still used on Sundays, the church has not been maintained and threatens to collapse at any time.

Houses are universally made of mud plastered on a lattice of sticks of corn stalks which are in turn supported by upright posts driven into the ground. Traditionally roofs were made of zacate and many still are. Recently, however, the COPLAMAR programme was implemented which supplies free lámina roofing and cement for plastering mud walls and dirt floors. Risk of disease from thatch, mud, and dirt surfaces in the home is thereby reduced. People are rapidly adopting the new style of house
construction (see photo 16).

The settlement pattern of Abasolo is extremely unpatterned without an underlying organizing principle. There is a central area with a municipal building and school, but not in the usual relation to the church which is on a small rise behind the temporary school buildings. The dwellings are spread out and scattered according to no apparent logic (see photo 17), and occupy all available space. The reasons for this may be related to the "reducción" of Abasolo to Oxchuc following the Tzeltal rebellion of 1712 and, later, a plague of whooping cough which caused the Abasolenos to disperse all over the ejidal lands, leaving the church and municipal buildings isolated. Around 1952 the Instituto Nacional Indigenista began to encourage the community to nucleate around the main village buildings in order that services might be provided more conveniently. This has been achieved to a small degree, but the dominant impression is one of dispersed settlement. As a consequence of the greater amount of space that the Abasoleños have for their dwelling compounds, they often have fairly substantial agricultural activities in their compounds, including small milpa, patches of sugar cane, and other horticultural activities. Land between the compounds is common pasture for the benefit of those who have cattle and horses.
photo 1 (left)
This shows a Sibateco milpa. Note the association of maize with frijol climbing the stalk and squash in the centre foreground.
photo 3 (left)
This shows the view of Ocósingo looking down its main street.

photo 4 (right)
Cleared pasture with cattle on the route to Sibacá.
photo 5 (left)
A Sibateca woman, and her son, bringing plátano to the market at Ocósingo.

photo 6 (right)
View of Sibacá, looking southwest. Note the ceiba tree in the centre-right of picture marking the village plaza.
photo 7 (left)
This show the ceiba in the central square surrounded by the village church, on the right, school buildings on the left and right, and the ejidal office behind the tree.

photo 8 (right) Sibacá. These are the remains of the abandoned church behind the present one.
photo 9 (left)
The main street of Sibacá. In this photo the stone construction of houses and different styles of roofing may be observed. Also note the demarkation of family compounds.

photo 10 (right)
A Sibateco family in characteristic clothing. The mother, second from left, wears a more simple costume than her daughters on the right. The father wears western clothing.
photo 11 (left)
Aspect of Abasolo.

photo 12 (right)
Abasolo cattle grazing on common pasture.
Note soil erosion.
photo 13 (left)
Women carrying firewood home to Abasolo.

photo 14 (right)
The Abasolo market place on market day. Note permanent stalls in the background.
A potter from Tenango with water jugs for sale in Abasolo market.

Abasolo's church.
photo 17 (left)
Housing types in Abasolo. Traditional mud and thatch construction may be observed on the left with plastered mud walls and tile, or lámina roofs on the right.

photo 18 (right)
Dispersed settlement pattern of Abasolo. In this photo the intensive solar development is apparent with platano prominent on the left and centre foreground, and sugar cane in the centre.
IV. Sibacá

"... se puede decir que no es el pequeño campesino quien tiene el dominio de su proceso de producción directo; aun si posee jurídicamente los medios de producción, no es, de hecho, dueño de elegirlos."

Introduction to the Institutional Framework

Following are some of the more salient relationships with the government, ranchers, each other and other villagers that make up the institutional framework within which Sibatecos operate. This is an important focus because these institutions reveal the linkages by which Sibaca is articulated with other groups, in local, national, and international economic systems. These relationships represent the juncture between different economic forms. The manner in which they are linked, in turn reflects their internal structures. Furthermore, these internal structures have a limited capacity for integration—obviously, because otherwise a modern capitalist economic form would be generalized throughout the highlands.

The unabridged version of the Random House Dictionary defines the term institution as a "well established and structured pattern of behavior or of relationships that is

1 Foladori, Polemica, p. 127. "... it can be said that it is not the small peasant producer who controls the process of production; even though he is the legal owner of the means of production, he did not choose them."
accepted as a fundamental part of a culture..." In the present context the focus is economic, but the meaning essentially remains the same. The economic patterns that pertain in Sibaca and Abasolo are determined by the relationships of these communities to various economic systems. Historically these institutions have maintained and continue to maintain, for the most part, people in their traditional economic forms, forms which can best be described as adaptations to past constraints. The following section describes institutions in the various legal, cultural and economic contexts that they occur in. All of these institutions are relevant in that they contain the linkages by which the villages and people in this study may be placed in a larger context.

**Land Tenure in Sibacá: What it means to be an Ejidatario**

In a peasant community based on agriculture the arrangements governing access to land are naturally of primary importance. Mexico is a particularly interesting country in this regard. Since the Reforma Agraria which was one of the major achievements of the Mexican Revolution there have been legal provisions which prohibit the sale or rental of ejidal land. This means that ejidal land is effectively barred from circulation as a commodity in the national market. The revolutionary institution of the *ejido* in turn reflects pre-columbian traditions which were largely upheld by the Spanish crown during the colonial period but were eroded by
expansion of the national economy into the agricultural sector, particularly in the nineteenth century. Vast amounts of land were alienated from the Indians causing their displacement from their ancestral lands and subsequent integration as agricultural labourers on ladino haciendas.

In order to guarantee peasants access to land and thereby to a more secure livelihood, one of the major reforms that came about as a result of the Reforma Agraria was the ejidal system of collective land ownership. Historically, regional development in Mexico has taken various forms in different settings and consequently the ejidal system means different things to different Mexicans. Throughout history Chiapas has been a peripheral participant in national economic integration. Large scale developments which alienated vast tracts of Indian land, as occurred in the case of the Maya Indians of the Yucatan Peninsula with the production of henequen, were not characteristic of highland Chiapas. The commercial activities that have been undertaken with the intent to produce commodities profitably for a market have mostly been concerned with cattle ranching - an activity which has not required the integration of much Indian labour.

For this reason the ejidal institution lacks the revolutionary significance that it has in other parts of the country. Instead it represents an unbroken tradition of usufruct land tenure within the bounds of village control. The ejido as a legal provision, however, is significant because it provides an
official barrier to the alienation of village lands by outsiders. This aspect is well appreciated by Sibatecos. When asked when Sibacá became an ejido Sibatecos invariably answer that Sibacá has always been an ejido. One is not an ejidatario by virtue of government documentation but simply by virtue of being a Sibateco. Similarly Sibaca has always been communally organised in terms of its land tenure arrangements. The idea of ejido has a conservative and concrete practical meaning which is inseparable from the sense of belonging to a community. Conversely the idea of community is very much rooted in the notion of community as representing a right to a plot of the village land.

Land may not be sold, but it may be inherited. People tend to work on their family land with their brothers and parents, but only so long as a person is single. After marriage a man has the right to parcel off a piece of the ejidal land for himself with barbed wire (to protect the crops from foraging animals) and works by himself until his sons are old enough to help him and the cycle repeats itself. The ejido of Sibacá still has some lands that have not been occupied and are available for clearing and cultivation. However, since it is naturally the best and most accessible land that was the first to be occupied, the passage of time and the growth of population means that the land available to new families (not including their inheritance) becomes more and more marginal both in terms of accessibility and quality.
Presently people are not concerned by a lack of land. Indeed, for the time being the ejidatarios have as much land as their labour can occupy. Under these circumstances and given the high value of the cash crop that they produce the Sibatecos are able to satisfy their basic food needs within the communal land base. In addition, everyone spoken to had land and time available for the cultivation of coffee as a cash crop to provide income for things such as clothing, medicine and other consumer goods.

Growth and Expansion: the Colonisation of San Marcos

At the time of our visit to Sibacá the southeastern portion of Chiapas was to receive a visit from the presidential candidate of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (P.-R.I.), Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado. Upon our arrival in the village this visit by the candidate was presaged by an extraordinary event - the sky began to sparkle. Wonder at the spectacle brought the women out of their houses and the children out of the class rooms. As the sparkle descended it revealed itself to be small pieces of paper. There was no evidence of the airplane which must have passed overhead earlier. On the paper was an invitation to meet Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado in person at the Palenque airport.

Ejidal officials in the region had already been notified that their attendance, as well as that of as many villagers as
could be persuaded to come, was expected. The celestial confirmation underlined the importance of the event. Villagers were to meet in Ocosingo the next day where the government would provide transportation to the Palenque airport with trucks from the highway department.

In Ocosingo that evening we met an ejidal official of the village of San Marcos who had seen us on the road to Sibaca earlier and was curious about our activities, supposing that we were either working for the census or had something to sell. Upon introduction he related the story of San Marcos and its relation to Sibaca.

The village of San Marcos lies four leguas\(^2\) away from Sibacá. In 1968 the growth of the village of Sibacá in relation with the distance of some of the ejidal fields that they were cultivating meant that some of the ejidatarios had to walk over sixteen kilometers to reach their fields, thereby expending a great deal of energy simply getting to and from their milpas. This has the result of seriously restricting the amount of time an individual may devote to the care of his crops and consequently the amount of produce he can bring home, unless he sleeps out in his fields which is both uncomfortable and insecure. Carrying the harvest back home, particularly if one does not have a beast of burden, is especially onerous. In view of the transportation difficulties that were being suffered at the time, a number of Sibatecos who were working the more

\(^2\) A legua is approximately equal to four kilometers.
distant fields decided to colonise the area near the more distant fields and begin a new community and a new ejido. Papers were drawn up and boundaries surveyed to create the village of San Marcos, named after the patron saint of Sibacá. There are now 69 ejidatarios in San Marcos which indicates that about half the population of Sibacá were involved in the colonisation.

According to the reports of Jacinto, the informant, there is a very noticeable difference between the two villages, and this is important because in part it underlines the changes that have happened in Sibacá in the last thirteen years; changes that are attributable to the cultivation of coffee and the encouragement of coffee by the government of Mexico, and the road which has allowed for an increase in the integration of Sibacá with other economic systems. The concrete conditions of San Marcos have not resulted in an integration pattern similar to that of Sibacá. This is because it does not have land suitable for growing a high value commercial crop and its land base is not sufficient to meet the consumption needs of the individual households of the community.

In appearance San Marcos is described as much more triste (sad, subdued and depressed)\(^3\) than Sibaca. The houses in San Marcos are made of mud and thatched with zacate (a tough grass) which is undesirable both from the standpoint of comfort and status. There are two reasons for this contrast. First, there

\(^3\) Quite often the terms triste and alegre (joyful or happy) are used to describe the aspect of a village and what it is like to live there.
are no rocks at the site of San Marcos suitable for building houses similar to those in Sibaca. Second, according to Jacinto's interpretation, there is no road, so that people cannot transport roofing materials such as tiles or lámina (corrugated asbestos) into the community. The isolation of San Marcos is not only a factor because of the difficulties involved in bringing things into the community, but also of taking things out. The increased distance from the highway and from Ocosingo has made it prohibitively difficult for those who have colonised San Marcos to take their agricultural produce to market. Even though the San Marquenos may be closer to their fields and therefore in a more convenient position to undertake subsistence production, the move has made economic integration in terms of selling agricultural produce in the market in Ocosingo much more difficult. It is approximately a four hour walk to Ocosingo and longer going back since the return trip is uphill.

Commercialisation of agricultural produce in San Marcos is not worth while, but some form of money income is necessary. The response to this is circular migration to the selva (lowland jungle) to work on the coffee plantations for wages. Wages are about 80 pesos per day. It can be said in general that if an Indian from the highlands has a choice between working near to home and leaving the village to earn wages he will choose to remain close to his home. People are interested in alternatives to working in the selva and would prefer to work on a Sibateco
if the opportunity presents itself, even though the pay may be lower.

Besides isolation, another reason that people are compelled to sell their labour instead of their products in San Marcos is that the land is of inferior quality relative to that of Sibacá. This means that the San Marquenos are often unable to meet their household requirements of maize and beans. In combination with the lack of any other product of sufficient value to overcome the barriers of isolation this has forced members of the community of San Marcos to step outside the local economy. San Marcos represents a problem of marginal resources which is compounded by a peripheral location in the regional economy. A telling sign of the predicament of San Marcos, according to our informant, is that some people cannot afford to eat salt anymore.

Collective Enterprise in Sibacá: The Ejidal Truck

An important aspect of the ejidal system is that the framework which accompanies the collective ownership of land also makes possible community ownership of other property and sets a precedent for cooperative enterprise which is in turn supported by the Mexican government (in fact, collectivity is sometimes a necessary condition which must be met before an individual, or an ejido may apply for credit from the ejidal bank). The ejidal institution also provides a focus for the
centralisation of funds which would otherwise be atomised beyond any usefullness in terms of investment. In Sibaca collective enterprise has taken the form of a truck.

This truck is meant to have an integrative effect on the local economy by facilitating the marketing of Sibateco products, as well as by bringing in products from outside. The truck cost approximately 400,000 pesos which was paid for by royalties that Sibacá receives from a lumber company that logs ejidal land. This is the same company that built the road into Sibaca in order that its own trucks and equipment might have access to the timber.

Hypothetically the truck would appear as a positive addition to the local economy by functioning as a mechanism of integration whereby household production can be directed towards exchange. As an improvement over transportation by foot and mule it would in this way release labour expended in the transportation of goods to and from Ocosingo so that time could be spent in more directly productive activities and simply make marketing a less onerous task. However, a number of factors have confounded this hypothetical impact of the ejidal truck. These factors are integral to the local economy of Sibacá and serve to illustrate how the local economy as an adaptation to past circumstances may be inert in the face of contemporary opportunities and thereby act as a brake to change and to economic integration.
The first problem that the Sibatecos encountered was a reflection of their isolated position with respect to the national economy. Nobody knew how to drive. Exclusion from full participation in the national economy which is dominated by ladinos is reinforced by class and ethnic relations, all of which conspire to keep Indians in ignorance of many of the informational requisites of integration -- integration on their own terms, that is. Despite its apparent usefulness, full integration of the truck was impossible due to the structure and the limited resources of the local economy. The necessary extension was a step outside the local economy to engage a driver from the town of Bachajón. The driver has been given a house to live in and is paid a wage.

Every day the truck leaves Sibacá for Ocosingo, in the evening it returns. Its main cargo is women and platano, nevertheless, most women walk to Ocosingo. These are peripheral sources of income and do not free the labour of men for more productive activities. Sibatecos are charged for the services of the truck. A person with a cargo is charged twelve pesos regardless of whether or not he is from Sibacá. This is not an inconsiderable amount, particularly in relation to the meager amount of income that a single trip to the market generates. Another problem arises when the intended trip to Ocosingo includes more than one family member. Ordinarily women walk down to Ocosingo in groups and often with their children. In this case the social nature of the trip is not compatible with the
transportation the truck provides. As a consequence of this the majority of Sibatecos walk to Ocosingo.

The contribution that the truck makes to the extant peasant economic system is negligible. It does, however, have an important economic function which is independent of the local economy. Upon arrival in Ocosingo the ejidal truck stations itself by the plaza along with other trucks and waits for the business of particulares (non-members of the ejido) who may need cargo hauled. On a good day the truck earns about 1000 pesos gross revenue. Out of this the driver is paid and money is held aside for maintenance and repairs. Although the truck does not materially benefit the ejido in any appreciable way, the Sibatecos do find it a source of pride and it symbolises their material advantage with respect to some of the other ejidos in the area.

The main problem is that the truck has not been integrated in any meaningful way with the local economy of Sibaca. It has simply been tacked on as a fortuitous consequence of the existence of exploitable timber resources which a lumber company must buy access to. Given the atomised nature of the local economy this is a logical outcome. Since each household works independently labour is not specialised and oriented to the production of a common product but atomised and as a result the product of the ejido emerges in atomised form in terms of both time and ownership. The challenge that the collective transport of an atomised product presents in terms of coordination in time

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and space have not been overcome and consequently the truck is not integrated with the local economy at a very profound level. Instead the truck is drawn to the ladino economy dominated by capitalist forms of production, where widespread commercialisation of the economy creates more of a demand for the transportation services offered by the truck. The subsistence orientation of Sibacá, where a significant part of production is confined to the household does not have any need for the services of the truck, nor are there transportation routes to the fields which permit motorised traffic. Thus the truck is largely irrelevant to the peasant form of production as it operates in Sibacá.

The Fincas: Ethnic relations in the Local Economy

Ethnic relations in the highlands of Chiapas are epitomised by the relations between the Indians in the campo and ladinos in the towns. Although this rural/urban distinction is important, it is not exclusive, there are also important relations between Indians and ladinos in the campo where they live side by side. But just as the economic roles of the Indians and ladinos are polarised in the rural/urban context, in the countryside they also represent two different planes of activity characterised by completely different forms of production.

These differences in the forms of production - milpa agriculture as distinct from cattle ranching - illustrate the
way that social relations have been translated into
differentiated patterns of access to factors of production which
in turn result in economic heterogeneity parallel to ethnic and
class lines. As was discussed earlier, these contrasts reflect
the historical process of the economic development of the
highlands. This process has largely taken place as ladino
dominated capitalist economic forms have encroached on the land
base of Indians operating in peasant economic forms.

Sibacá is surrounded by three fincas: el Contento, between
the village of Sibaca and the highway, la Providencia, between
the village and the ejidal lands, and the finca of don Edmundo
which is next to la Providencia. Although the Sibatecos I spoke
with neither liked nor respected the figueros, they invariably
preceded their names with the title "don". This is an obvious
indication of the status that ladinos have enjoyed relative to
Indians ever since the conquest and is a hallmark of ethnic
relations between Indians and ladinos commonly observed by
ethnographers of the area. In the past Sibatecos would
occasionally work for wages on the fincas. The tasks were
mending fences, planting milpa and odd jobs. Wages are low,
sixty to seventy pesos per day, and the Sibatecos now receive
enough income from their coffee that they can avoid wage
relations with the fincas. There are a few families of peones
who reside on the fincas and provide labour. At those times when
the fincas cannot internally meet their labour requirements they
may hire peasants from other villages which are poorer than
Sibacá and for that reason willing to do the work. In the immediate vicinity San Marcos and Tenango provide wage labour for the fincas. Sibacá is not integrated with the fincas in an important way in terms of contact or exchange, both of which are minimal despite the proximity of the fincas to the village. The significance of the fincas in terms of their influence on the local economy lies in their genesis and their locational situation as a local expression of regional ethnic relations and the profound impact that these relations have had in the determination of how the local economy of Sibacá is integrated.

The story of the fincas was related to me by a young Sibateco who was a teacher and interested in the history of the village. Around the turn of the century, presumably during the Porfiriato, a lawyer came into Sibacá. He informed the leader of the community that there were some irregularities in the community's title to its communal land. In order that this problem could be cleared up he took the documentation into town with him. The Indians acquiesced to his apparent authority. Following the removal of the documents from the possession of the community some of the best vega land was enclosed by barbed wire, cattle were introduced and ranches built. The legal documentation of Sibaca's right to the land was not returned but the ranches remain.

The duality of regional culture and economy explain the success of this invasion. At the time of the invasion no one spoke Spanish well enough or was familiar enough with the legal
system to effectively challenge the ranchers. In any case the pervasive discrimination would probably have favoured the finqueros regardless of their legal position. It was in this way that the local ladinos founded their productive base. Ladino invasion of the best land has reinforced, if not determined, the partial nature of indigenous integration with the national economy. Ranchers were attracted to the land they invaded because of its commercial possibilities in terms of relief, fertility and accessibility. As this land is monopolised by ladinos, Indian agricultural activities occupy what is left over; i.e. lands that lack the capacity to commercially produce enough to warrant a strategy of full integration into the national economy on a commercial basis. Thus the social relationship between the Indians and the ladinos at the historical juncture of the invasion of Sibateco land has locationally constrained Sibacá to the extent that their limited resources preclude full commercial integration of their agriculture. They must still rely on milpa to meet their basic food needs.

That the labour intensity of cattle ranching is dramatically lower than highly labour intensive milpa agriculture is significant and illustrative of the nature of the relations between Indians and ladinos. Generally speaking the fincas do not have to draw upon Indian labour except in a sporadic and insignificant way. Hence the two economic forms are functionally quite independent. Given the social polarisation
and a pervasive level of ethnic hostility cattle ranching represents an appropriate adaptation of the finqueros to the opportunities and constraints of the area; opportunities to monopolise productive resources but constraints on the extent to which Indian labour can be exploited due to the historical frictions between the two groups, frictions exacerbated by the manner in which the fincas came to establish themselves originally.

The methods by which the fincas were established, fraud and theft of Indian land, remain widespread throughout Mexico. Diego Ortega related a recent incident in which don Cecilio of La Providencia attempted to annex some of Sibacá's land. Just as before, the land was first enclosed by barbed wire. Because of the changing times and increased cultural integration the ejido was fortunate enough to have a member who spoke enough Spanish and had enough confidence to go to a lawyer in the state capital, Tuxtla Gutierrez, and speak to him about the problem. The government was subsequently notified about the dispute and sent a surveyor to settle the problem. The surveyor was accompanied by the entire population of the village, women and children included. When they arrived at the site of the land invasion they were met by don Cecilio and two pistoleros. As the surveyor approached, along with the men of the village, the

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pistoleros threatened to shoot if they came any closer. don Cecilio insisted that he had paid for the land and was therefore the rightful owner. In the words of Diego Ortega, the Sibatecos "Se pusieron un poco valientes" (they mustered up their courage) and encircled the gunmen and the finquero. It became clear that don Cecilio and his men were outnumbered and that they could not intimidate the Sibatecos into ceding their land to him. The finqueros and the pistoleros then fled back to the ranch and the surveyor clipped the offending wire. According to Diego, the moral of this anecdote is that if a person can speak Spanish and has the confidence to deal with lawyers and representatives of the government his life is immeasurably more secure than otherwise. There is nothing to be gained and everything to be lost if an Indian remains so culture bound in traditional ways that he cannot deal with the ladino dominated society on the grounds of the ladinos.

Community Allegiance: Sibaca-Government Relations

Although the local economy and associated cultural complex of Sibaca are not fully self contained, there is an economic and cultural integrity in Sibaca. The maintenance of this integrity

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*This is, in fact, a distinct possibility. Feder quotes a rancher from the Tempoal area in the state of Veracruz who commented in the context of taking ejidal land that: "It is cheaper and faster to bribe them with money and cattle than to have an invasion." (p.161) It is, nevertheless, against Mexican law to rent or buy ejidal land.
is possible because the Sibatecos are able to flexibly integrate and ally themselves with certain aspects of national society in relation to particular circumstances, as the preceding section shows. In the case of the land invasion with the fincas the village was enough a part of the Republic of Mexico to call upon the national legal system for help.

This particular example of reliance on the government for help does not mean that the community is allied with government agencies in all cases. The relationship is ambivalent and depends on specific circumstances for its determination. In cases where there are threats to Sibatecos from the outside, the community is the foremost concern and commands the greatest amount of allegiance. This is illustrated by the case in which a Sibateco had broken a law regulating the harvest of timber. This crime was observed by some San Marquenos who alerted the authorities. When it was learned that a government agent was coming to apprehend the offender preparations were made in the form of a stone barricade which was put across the entrance to the village. A group of Sibatecos met the government agent and when he got out of his vehicle they proceeded to stone him. He immediately left and the matter was dropped, presumably because the risk involved in enforcing the law outweighed the severity of the crime. Because of this Sibacá gained a bad reputation as a dangerous village and it was a considerable time before other government agents came to the village.
Although there are few linkages within the village that integrate it internally, it is clear that the Sibatecos are capable of unifying in the face of threats from outside, and in this sense the ejido and the village are meaningful as economic units. The local economy therefore can be thought of as an entity beyond the simple grouping of various household economies which by chance occupy the same land base. But it is an entity not because of any absolute quality or characteristic that is common to local economies in the highlands, but only in terms of its relation to other economic forms and according to the particular circumstances that surround these relations. To a certain extent the local economy is an island and, like all islands, it is defined not by its content but by what surrounds it.

The Instituto Mexicano de Café: Linking Sibacá with the World Market

A contrast to the subsistence oriented milpa production upon which Sibatecos rely for most of their food consumption, is apparent in coffee production which is the primary source of cash incomes among the peasants interviewed in Sibacá. The sale of plátano also generates cash incomes, but it is qualitatively different from coffee because both the production and the ultimate sale to consumers are handled within the household. The men are responsible for plátano production and the women are in
charge of the marketing of the product. All the requisites for
the production and marketing of *platano* are within reach of the
capabilities of the Sibateco household. The sale of coffee,
which ultimately takes place on the world market, is far beyond
the capabilities of the household and consequently the
mechanisms of integration are different. Because the
capabilities of the household are not sufficient for the
marketing of coffee, the consumers of coffee must be articulated
with the producers through intermediaries. The coffee is sold on
the world market, an abstraction representing destinations
infinitely beyond the reach of the marketing capabilities of the
individual household.

Integration of the atomised production of coffee with the
world market is via the federal government agency Instituto
Mexicano de Café (hereafter referred to by its acronym,
INMECAFE). The role of INMECAFE is important for two reasons.
First, because it provides a link with the world market for
coffee which allows Sibatecos to enjoy an income greater than if
the sale of coffee were confined to local demand. Second, the
government agency, in the interests of increasing production and
hence foreign exchange, has displaced the very exploitive
traditional relationships with *coyotes* by which Indian coffee
growers were articulated with the world market. So there are two
reasons why the government has displaced the private coffee
brokers; to be involved in coffee production in order to
manipulate that production according to an economic logic based
on a national rather than a purely local scale, and also to raise production by paying full market prices to the coffee growers instead of the unfairly low prices offered by the coyotes.

The displacement of the coyotes has led to a happy complementarity of interests between the Sibatecos and TNECAFE. This is best shown by an examination of the former system by which most of the peasant producers in Middle America were, and continue to be articulated with the world coffee market. Coffee brokers are known by the uncomplementary name coyote as a consequence of the Indian resentment of the brokers' exploitation of them in relation to the dominant ladino society in terms of isolation, ignorance of market conditions, the precarious security of the Indians' economic position, and patron-client relations. Isolation gives coyotes an opportunity to overcharge for transportation services, especially when the producer has no alternative way to take his coffee to other buyers in town. Ignorance of market conditions allows the coyote to pay whatever price suits him, without much fear of his judgement being challenged. Asymmetrical patron-client relations between Indians and ladinos, based on class differences parallel to ethnic distinctions, lend automatic authority to the coyote which not only reinforces the other mechanisms of integration but may also involve the manipulation of personal ties such as the compadrazgo (godparent relationship with the cafecultor or his son) to obtain a monopsonistic relationship with an
individual, a family or perhaps even a whole village. The precarious economic situation that the Indians find themselves in which is routinely punctuated by such crises as illness and crop failure, often forces Indian peasants to deal with coyotes on unfavourable terms because they are in urgent need of cash. In such a situation Indians may approach coyotes for a loan. The loan will then be extended at usurious rates, repayment of which may be in terms of a right to the harvest of the debtor. Coyotes in the instance of a catastrophe befalling the cafecultor may also find it advantageous to buy the coffee harvest before it is ripe which means that the coffee is introduced to the market at lower than potential quality and value. The reasons for premature sale stem from the exhaustion of income from the sale of the last cycle's harvest in which case the peasant is not in a position to wait until his crop is fully mature and the coyote is willing to capitalise on his vulnerability.

INMECAFE has interposed itself as an alternative to traditional brokers in order to improve the quality of coffee and increase productivity as well as insure the coffee growers a fair price for their coffee. The latter is probably the most important facet of the work of INMECAFE. According to the comisariado ejidal, everyone in Sibacá sells their coffee to INMECAFE which invariably provides a higher price than the coyotes. The higher prices paid by INMECAFE, and the better incomes received by the coffee growers have broken the vicious circle that bound Indians to economic relations with
unscrupulous middlemen.

All producers of coffee may sell their product to the receiving stations of INMECAFE regardless of whether or not they belong to any of its programmes of assistance. Membership in these programmes does have palpable benefits that outweigh the risks involved in a contractual tie to a monopsony for some of the Sibateco coffee growers. Membership provides a level of security and, in some cases, subsidisation for technical improvements and even the financing of expanded production. There is a limited budget for these programmes however, and at the time we spoke to the administrators of the receiving station of INMECAFE in Ocosingo the Instituto was unsure of the policies of the incoming presidential administration, and doubted that there would be funds available for the expansion of the subsidisation and technical improvement programmes. Even now not all the Sibatecos who would like to join these programmes are able to. The three programmes offered by the Instituto; Normal, Pider INMECAFE, and INMECAFE, are outlined below.

In Normal, begun in 1972, producers are given access to technical aid if they request it. More important is the displacement of the coyotes by the provision of anticiposos de cosecha (prepayment on the anticipated harvest). A participant in the programme is entitled to 1000 pesos per bulto (a measurement of coffee worth 2400 pesos) of projected production. If the coffee grower is, for one reason or another, in need of cash, he is entitled to the anticipo de cosecha. When he has
harvested his coffee and deposited it in the receiving station he is paid for the value of his coffee minus what he received as *anticipo*. This measure ensures that the coffee grower is not financially victimised by the coyote in times of personal economic difficulty, and that the coffee stays on the bush until it is ready. Thus both the producer and the product are protected.

In other instances where the government has intervened in traditional marketing systems with the intention of securing a better income for the producers the very important element of flexibility in the face of unforeseen circumstances has often been missing. The traditional relationship, it must be remembered, incorporated a symbiotic function in a parasitic relationship. If the element of symbiosis is displaced along with that of parasitism the intended beneficiaries may be in a worse position than before. *Anticipos* are a good example of the conservation of the symbiotic element. Belonging to Normal, as well as with any of the other programmes, involves a contractual tie with the Instituto requiring that all production is sold to the Instituto. Presently this is not a problem because INMECAFE pays the best prices.

Another program, Pider INMECAFE, begun in 1979, involves all of the above, plus provides credit for the expansion of *cafetales* (coffee groves) and their renovation. This means that the Instituto covers some of the cost of replacing older unproductive bushes for new ones. Coffee bushes do not bear
fruit until they are a number of years old. Consequently the
decision to replace a poorly producing older bush for one that
will be more productive but will not bear for years can be an
understandably agonizing one. The support provided by the
Instituto makes it easier to take the decision to replace the
older tree. Similarly, credit is given for fertilisers,
fungicides and insecticides. Instructions on the use of these
inputs are given by technical extension officers and if these
instructions are followed properly the credit received will be
forgiven. It appears, however, that many recipients of the
credit understand it to be a gift without any conditions
attached. This perception undoubtedly lubricates the process by
which the government introduces new technology.

The programme which offers the most benefits to its members
is the MECAFE programme. Its members receive all the provisions
of the other programmes plus they may hire people to do their
limpias and harvesting. Costs incurred in the form of wages
will be repaid by INMCAFE. A three year contract binds the
member to the programme. If the beneficiary does not follow the
technical advice he is given then he is liable for the costs he
has incurred and may be asked to pay them back to the Instituto.

Clearly the offerings of these programmes are very
tempting. Although some Sibatecos (see Francisco Martinez) feel
that their autonomy and freedom of decision making is too
valuable to be compromised in exchange for free inputs and
credit, most I spoke with would like to be a part of the
programmes, but there was no more room in the budget of the Ocosingo office for more members. Participants in the programmes are selectively chosen so that the resources extended by INMECAFE will have the most positive impact. If they are good members of Normal and exhibit an ability to make good use of what is offered, then they are eligible to apply for Pider INMECAFE. The same process is involved in moving from Pider INMECAFE to MECAFE. The majority of the clients of the Instituto have between a half and a full hectare of cafetal, with the largest member in the municipio of Ocosingo having four hectares. The maximum hectarage eligible for assistance is 10 hectares. Finally, members of the programmes may receive crop insurance up to 10,000 pesos.

The articulation of Sibaca via the Instituto is the most important and most direct linkage that the village has with the rest of the world. At this point in time, it appears that there is a consonance between the needs of the Mexican state and the expanded reproduction of Sibateco households through the development of their cash crop. Coffee is the second largest earner of export dollars in Mexico, (after petroleum), moreover, 53.8% of Mexican coffee is produced by peasants. As Mexico tries to disentangle itself from the very large foreign debts it has contracted it is likely that the decline in oil prices and the

6Ortega, 'Peasant Agriculture in Latin America,' p.84. Peasants are defined as such in terms of landholdings. An agricultural unit of less than 5.1 hectares, ejidos and comunidades are assumed to represent peasant production according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL).
monolithic inefficiency of PEMEX will increase the country's reliance on coffee exports. The structure of peasant production offers a good opportunity for increasing production. The transfer of value from the coyote to the coffee grower will serve this end by increasing the worth of the time spent on the cafetales and this may result in the allocation of more of the resources of the household economy to the production of coffee relative to production of subsistence crops. INMECAFE, through its various programmes, aims to increase the yields of the peasant cafetal and to a certain extent the manner in which this is done channels local rural wage labourers to peasant production, as opposed to the lowland fincas. This effort, common to relations between government agencies and peasant producers of cash crops is characterised by Bernstein as vertical concentration, which is explained as follows:

"vertical concentration ... refers to the coordination, standardisation, and (greater or lesser) supervision of the production of numerous individual small producers through a central agency whether this represents productive capital directly (as in outgrower and contract schemes), forms of merchant capital which thereby actively intervene in the organisation of production, or whether that agency is that of a cooperative of state managed scheme."

Considered in this light the programmes of INMECAFE, besides benefitting the cafecultor, may act as an infrastructure through which more control over coffee production can be exercised. This is particularly evident in terms of the conditions under which credit may be forgiven. These conditions are such that as the

"'Concepts', p. 18."
form of production becomes more dependent on modern techniques the locus of decision making moves to the Instituto. Furthermore, as appears to be the case with Diego Ortega, the choice to grow coffee, in so far as subsidisation is not likely to last forever, entails a move away from traditional subsistence production. Taking the example of the payment of wages by the MECAFE programme, once this cost is internalised within the household, resources previously devoted to subsistence production must somehow be translated into commercial or cash producing activities so that the household can afford to pay the wages for the extra labour that expanded production requires. This is also the case in terms of the purchase of chemical inputs.

Effectively the programmes of INMECAFE have the impact of commercialising the local economy, which is not of itself good or bad, but signifies a swing towards the integration of the local economy into the economic logic of Mexico and of the world as an integrated whole. Within this larger logic it is likely that the peasant coffee growers of Sibacá are destined to play a subordinate role. With a fall in the demand for coffee they may be sacrificed in an effort to accommodate larger concerns. Ortega describes the general pattern for Latin America as follows:

In some cases, such as that of coffee, when the situation on the international market becomes difficult and there is a drop in demand, the first thing that processors or exporters do is reduce their purchases from small producers. When conditions are favourable, in contrast, they expand their purchases from that stratum, so that it becomes a sort of cushion which allows medium sized and large producers to regulate, in their favour,
the volumes marketed.  

In the case of economic fluctuation, assuming this relationship prevails, variation in the product demanded of the local economy is intensified by its subordinate position. The household economy's ability to retreat into subsistence functions as an insulator and is clearly an adaptation to the particular circumstances which surround the integration of peasant economies into the national and world economic systems. The relationship of the coffee growers of the region to the Instituto exemplify the ambivalence of the process of integration. On the one hand the process of integration is fraught with risks for the members of the local economy since any economic fluctuations are likely to increase in negative intensity as they move down the scale to the local level of the peasant household. On the other hand increased cash incomes require integration.

Commonalities and Contrasts of Four Sibatecos

The four profiles of individual Sibatecos from different positions within the village serve to illustrate the commonalities and contrasts of strategies by which Sibatecos can adapt to constraints and resources within the ejido and the opportunities that lie beyond the ejido. The accessibility of these opportunities must in turn be understood in relation to the prevailing institutional structure. Focussing on individuals

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Ortega, Peasant Agriculture in Latin America, "p.83."
is important because it serves to highlight the degree of economic differentiation within the village. Villages are often treated as groups of more or less similar households - this is not the case and generalisations can serve to misrepresent what is in fact a complex reality.

Another facet of the focus on individuals is that it points out the different attitudes towards integration and change that may be adopted. In the following profiles basically two attitudes are evident. The conservative attitude on one hand reflects a risk minimising strategy and seeks to maintain peasant autonomy and flexibility by restricting economic integration to the exchange of peasant produced products; i.e. the consolidation of petty commodity production. The other attitude is more economically risky and signifies a willingness to invite more profound economic integration in the interests of expanded reproduction of the peasant household.

The commonalities shared by the Sibatemos are fundamental and form a basic peasant profile. More importantly, the nutritional needs of the family are met by the cultivation of corn and beans through traditional milpa techniques. These crops are not produced in quantities that exceed household needs so that a surplus might be produced for the market. Clearly the orientation of milpa production is towards family subsistence.

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*To a certain extent the subsidised price of maize by CONASUPO may make locally produced corn uncompetitive with that supplied by the government stores and thereby the national economy acts to reinforce the subsistence orientation of milpa production.*

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This subsistence production is in all cases supplemented by *platano* and coffee which are cash crops although they are important components of the Sibateco diet, as well. Of these two, coffee is the main source of income. It is bought by the Instituto Mexicano de Café. Presently none of the Sibatecos interviewed work for wages, but they may have in the past.

Where the Sibatecos differ, and what is of interest in terms of understanding how the Indians fit into a larger economic context lies in their departures from the above commonalities which constitute a basic economic profile. Individuals elaborate or step outside the basic profile and the variations in how this is done reflect the different strategies available within the context of Sibacá. These differences emerge in relation to agricultural technology, credit, involvement in commercial activities, experimentation with new products, and livestock raising.

*Lázaro* Gomez

*Lázaro* is an older man with a grown son who has married and is building a house in family compound next to Lázaro's. His son had worked with a French archaeologist, or perhaps a smuggler of pre-Columbian art, and wondered whether we would be searching for gold idols and hiring people to help. His father was less mercenary in his willingness to talk with us. Lázaro has never been to school and feels uncomfortable and bashful speaking
Spanish, but he is nevertheless able to make himself understood quite clearly. His house is made of stone and tiles. It faces the main road going out of town towards the ejidal fields.

Lázaro has two different kinds of land for growing milpa. One is tierra corriente on the hillsides past the ranches and the other is a piece of vega land which was not taken by the ranchers and is adjacent to the village. The tierra corriente may only be worked for five years before yields decline to the extent that it must be left another five to lie fallow, in order that the nutrient level of the soil may be built up. Another characteristic of the tierra corriente is that it is only capable of one cycle of milpa per year. Vega land is much better because it is more fertile and therefore gives higher yields. It needn't be left fallow, but can be worked continuously, It can support two cycles per year of milpa and because it is flat it is capable of supporting mechanisation. Internally the village obviously does not have the resources necessary to own a tractor. It would only be used a few days out of the year and only for one agricultural task. Furthermore, since the vega land is fragmented among various ejidatarios, but not all ejidatarios, no one person has enough land to make a tractor economical. Collective ownership is not possible because it would be obvious that not everyone would be able to benefit.

To fill this gap and bring mechanisation to Sibacá the Instituto Nacional Indigenista brings in a tractor to turn the soil prior to seeding, and charges those who use the service at
ther rate of 1000 pesos per hectare. Following this, planting is done with the traditional palo, or digging stick. Lázaro has a half of a hectare of vega land and does use this service. In this way he makes an integrative link with the national economy which transcends exchange and enters peasant production at the technological level. Lazaro's yield of milpa products is usually sufficient to feed his family, but occasionally, in bad years, the harvests have not lasted the full cycle and he has had to buy maize from the CONASUPO in Ocosingo.

Lázaro relies on platano and coffee for his cash income, and only on these products. He used to work on the local fincas in the past, but he has stopped for two reasons. First of all, the meagerness of the wages does not make it worth his while. The wages are between 60 and 90 pesos per day for the kind of work that is available to Indians in the area. These wages, which are lower than the minimum wage (90 pesos per day at the time), are oriented to those in the region who are desperately poor - which Lázaro is not. The work on the fincas is unpleasant, and in contrast to the independence of atomised production where the work is done at the peasant's own pace and according to his own judgments, the person working for wages is subject to the supervision and orders of his employer. Lazaro may make better use of his time working on his milpa and cafetal/platanal. Lázaro's other reason, as stated, is that "el gobierno no quiere que salga del pueblo para hacer los ricos más rico" (the government doesn't want me to leave the village to
make the rich richer.) It is likely that Lázaro is projecting his own feelings onto the government which he perceives as sympathetic - or possibly the statement refers to some P.R.I. campaign slogan that just happens to coincide with the concrete material conditions of Sibacá. Moreover, Lázaro, like all the other Sibatecos interviewed, places an extremely high value on his traditional economic independence and just plain prefers to work within the household economy rather than for anyone else.

Tomás Juarez

Tomás Juarez was chosen to be interviewed because he is the proprietor of the largest tienda in the village, complete with a refrigerator for sodas and beer. He is a young man and can be counted among the most dynamic elements of Sibacá. He is friendly, outgoing and successful even though he started his household economy from an especially disadvantageous point. Of the four Sibatecos described, Tomás is the one whose imagination appears to extend the farthest beyond the bounds of the village. Illustrative of this outward looking ambition is his boxing pastime. He regularly goes to Ocosingo to compete and is aiming for the local championship.

At the time of the interview Tomás's activities were divided between his tienda, his milpa, and his cafetal/platanal. He started out with nothing but milpa, and on marginal land at that, but elaborated milpa production to include livestock
raising and this generated the product that allowed him access to the lándino economy of Ocosingo which in turn was necessary to gain the capital required to begin his cafetal and his tienda. Clearly, not all Sibatecos enter into the local economy under the same circumstances. The case of Tomás is not only instructive in terms of its illustration of this point, but also because it shows the economic mobility that may be possible, even within the restricted and hypothetically egalitarian structure of the ejido in a highland village. This is not, however, to suggest that such mobility is typical.

The disadvantage that Tomás began with was his exclusion from family land. When he reached adulthood he was not given a piece of family land, as is usually the custom. This is important because the first land to have been occupied was naturally the best in terms of both quality and accessibility. If a person is excluded he is at a disadvantage since the only land available is locationally peripheral and qualitatively marginal. He then worked for wages to earn the money needed to buy barbed wire to protect his two hectares of ejidal land from wandering cattle and horses. For three years, from 1973 to 1976 he worked his milpa and tried to support himself and his wife. He recalls with anguish the feeling of limitation and insecurity that attended this stage in the development of his household economy. He exemplified this feeling of constraint with the comment "no hay donde" (there isn't anywhere). In order to escape this constriction he elaborated milpa production by
purchasing a sow to breed and then sold the piglets to be fattened elsewhere, usually in Ocosingo. With a sow the maize grown on the milpa may be converted into a higher value product - piglets - for which there is a good demand in the towns. Another aspect of livestock that make them a valuable addition is that they are a fairly liquid form of capital and may be sold in case of a desperate need of cash. Maizé in the field is obviously not as liquid.

After two years the savings from the sale of piglets were invested in more wire for a cafetal/platanal. The platanal would produce in one year, which gave him a commercial crop and an agricultural profile parallel to that of the rest of Sibacá. The reason that he did this was that the return to coffee and plátano is much better that that of milpa via pigs.

Finally in 1980 he was able to save up 15,000 pesos in the bank. He had made friends with the bank manager in Ocosingo and told him that he had an idea to start a tienda in Sibacá. The bank manager gave him advice and paternalistically let him take out 8000 pesos of savings to begin his enterprise, reserving the rest in case of failure. He also borrowed money from some of his friends at 3% interest rates. 10 The tienda is now successful - in so far as it is well stocked and has not failed. By no means, however, does it produce enough income to support the household.

10 There appears to be no sign of generalised reciprocity or other traditional sharing practices in Sibacá. The economic dealings between villagers are all done on a strictly business basis.
While his wife runs the tienda Tomás works on his fields. Earnings from his various activities are funneled into the expansion of his inventory and a new house that he is building. This new house is made of brick and has both windows and a flat roof. Tomas is advertising his success by building a ladino type house. Reflecting on the progress he has made he measures his success by his ability to choose whether he wants to go out to work on his fields or stay home on a day to day basis. Now the choice is his rather than a matter of being compelled to work by poverty and hunger.

Certain aspects of modern technology are being introduced to the household economy of Tomás Juarez. Now that he has savings and has elaborated his household economy to the extent that it is relatively secure, he has been able to invest in modern technology. In 1981 he bought a hand pump for the application of herbicide (2200 pesos) which he uses for clearing the weeds in his milpa. Also, now that he has money, he can think of his time in terms of money. The logic that determined the choice of buying the pump was that with the new herbicide one can weed an entire hectare in one day. With the traditional method, using a machete the same hectare takes two weeks to clean. Tomas figured that if the going wage is 100 pesos per day (a generous estimate), the pump pays for itself after the two weedings involved in one milpa cycle. Clearly this logic of spending money to save money requires that the 2200 pesos required to purchase the equipment are available and that they
are not required to purchase food; conditions that are by no means universal in the highlands.

Of the four profiles presented, Tomás Juarez probably represents the most successful attempt to elaborate the household economy through the utilisation of resources confined to the local economy. In conclusion it is appropriate to discuss some of the circumstances surrounding this process of elaboration. Reproduction of the household economy is transgenerational. As a man leaves his family to start a family of his own he usually retains access to some of his parents' resources. Tomás did not, and perhaps this disjuncture led to a focus on the opportunities that lay outside the traditional pattern, i.e. setting up a tienda. Also it is worth noting that the major challenge in the Sibateco case is not the establishment of a milpa for the production of subsistence goods, but the establishment of a cash producing activity. Furthermore, the general expansion of incomes in the region due to coffee production and improved prices for coffee must have enhanced opportunities available for commercial activities of which Tomás was able to take advantage.

Francisco Martínez

Francisco Martínez is the comisariado ejidal of Sibacá. He lives on the main road immediately next to the plaza. Both the location of his house and his position in the community suggest
that he is a well established Sibateco. There is, however, nothing in the aspect of the exterior or interior of his home to indicate that he enjoys a higher standard of living than his fellow villagers. But he does have a considerable economic base in terms of livestock which mirrors the status of his position. The impression one gets of Sr. Martinez is one of canniness that borders on suspiciousness. While he was happy to exchange pleasantries and talk about the community in general, when he was questioned about the specifics of his property and economic activities his replies often became clipped and ambiguous. This is the reason that the following profile is somewhat sketchy.

Sr. Martinez has a half hectare of milpa on vega land giving him enough maize for the consumption needs of his family. He does not use the tractor provided by the Instituto Nacional Indigenista because, he says, his land is too muddy. Consequently, before he plants either of the two yearly cycles of milpa he must first clear the land by hand with a machete and then break the soil with a hoe. This takes twenty days of work to prepare the land for seeding. His cafetal gives him five bultos of coffee now and will give more when it matures. Occasionally he finds that he must hire people from other villages to help him clear the cafetal of weeds and harvest the ripe coffee. An interesting aspect of his coffee activities, which was mentioned in the introduction to this section, is that he had the opportunity, as a leader of the community, to take part in the programmes of INMecaF, but he declined to do so.
The reason he gave is that "a mí me gusto ser libre" (I like to be free). Being in a position of authority and occupying the office that represents the direct political link with the government and ruling Partido Revolucionario Institucional, Sr. Martinez may understand the obligations that such membership entails, particularly in terms of the subordination of peasant control of production to the technical control of INMECAFE. Besides the milpa and cafetal he has three pigs \(^{11}\) and three cows the offspring of which are bought by people from Ocosingo and the ranches. Cattle raising among the ejidatarios is rare. It is usually a ladino activity. This is because of the expense of the animals; pigs and fowl are more economical, but also because of the shortage of pasture available. Francisco Martinez, as comisariado may have preferential access to this resource which other Sibatecos would not. He would like to have more cows, but the lack of pasture prevents him. Finally, this household economy is elaborated with a small stock of morales (nylon shopping bags that are a ubiquitous peasant accessory in Mexico) and thread for the embroidery with which Sibateco women decorate their blouses.

In the case of Francisco Martinez we can see a household economy that is primarily confined to subsistence and petty commodity production, even in the face of opportunities to take

\(^{11}\) The feed requirements of the pigs would indicate that he had, in fact, more than just a half hectare of milpa. Recall that Tomas Juarez had two hectares, albeit of poorer quality, for just one sow. It is unlikely that the stated size of Sr. Martinez' milpa would suffice for three breeding sows.
advantage of modern techniques and money offered by INMECAFE. A plausible interpretation of this is that, as a well established individual with a secure economic position, the comisariado sees no point in risking this position by economically integrating into areas beyond his control. Besides the risk involved in such an extension there is also the positive value that is associated with economic independence and sufficiency that is achieved within the traditional parameters and thereby illustrates to the community an individual's fitness to assume village responsibilities, in this case as the comisariado of Sibacá.

Diego Ortega

Diego Ortega, like Tomás Juarez, is a young man beginning a family. Also, like Tomás, he is ambitious and seeks to break out of the traditional pattern. He has changed his religion - he is a Jehovah's Witness, and the only non-catholic in the village - thereby setting himself apart from the religious and cultural complex of the village. He lives in a new brick house next to that of his parents. Across from him on the other side of the ravine behind their house is an older brother, also named Diego, who did not change religions and has little to do with the family. Diego is the member of the family who speaks the best Spanish and is leading his family in a drive towards the modernisation of their household economy in terms of a diversification of the products they sell and the way that they produce them. He is somewhat disdainful of other Sibatecos and
feels that he understands the world much more profoundly than his backward co-villagers. In general it appears as though the implications of his world view are such that he rejects a strategy of subsistence production and aims for full integration.

Diego, as well as the other members of his family, is self-sufficient in maize and beans. He has a half a hectare of milpa which provides enough staples for his young family. He says that his milpa is capable of two harvest per year, but that the attention he must pay to his cafetal means that he does not have time to work another cycle on his milpa. Also, because he has no livestock, there is really no point in expanding milpa production beyond the minimum required to meet the food needs of the family. Following the same logic as Tomás Juárez, Diego has purchased a herbicide sprayer and intends to use it, but is concerned about the changes that will be required in his cropping pattern. The herbicide kills the frijol that is grown in association with the maize. Introducing this technology frees labour, but also would require that frijol be grown separately from the maize, or bought, if constant yields are to be maintained. Diego has not yet worked out the implications of this adjustment and how he can accommodate them.

Diego also has a cafetal of 1.5 hectares. The coffee is his main source of cash income and his main interest. INMECAFE is involved in Diego's coffee production as he is a member of the MECAFE programme. Because the 1.5 hectares is a good deal of
land to work, Diego, like other Sibatecos has to hire workers from other Indian villages to help him work his cafetal. This is especially the case for members of MECAFE, of which there are eight in Sibaca, because of the guidelines for cleaning, fertilising and shade management that are set down as requirements for those who receive credit. Diego employs four to five people for one week periods four times annually. The workers he employs generally come from San Marcos and they are paid 70 pesos per day.

The manner in which Diego is bound to the MECAFE programme transcends simple commodity exchange. In return for inputs and the increased product that can be expected from the application of INMECAFE's recommendations, Diego has effectively lost control of the cafetal in a decision making sense. If he does not follow the advice of the agronomists he will owe more money than his household economy is likely to produce as a surplus. Diego has understood this, not in contractual terms, but in terms of the essence of his relationship with the government:

"El credito es gratis. Si dicen 'limpiar,' hay que limpiar. Hay que obedecer a los ingenieros." (The credit is free. If they say 'weed' you have to weed. You have to obey the agronomists).

There is also an aspect of proletarianisation implicit in Diego's understanding of who owns the coffee that is produced with the aid of the MECAFE programme. Speaking of the coffee harvest Diego said: "Entonces, es del gobierno y ellos ganan de nuestro trabajo." (Well then, it belongs to the government and..."
they earn from our work.) As the nexus of integration moves into the space of the household economy the notion of usufruct land tenure as a guarantee of access to subsistence agriculture, which is the underlying reason for the ejidal system, becomes obsolete. This may have important implications for the ejidal institution if this integrative trend continues.

Diego has neither pigs nor cattle, but the women; his wife, sisters and mother, take care of a considerable number of fowl, twenty chickens and four turkeys. The chickens sell for 200 pesos in Ocosingo. The income from the sale of fowl and eggs belongs to the women and they control production and marketing.

The ambitious Ortega family has pooled its resources under the tutelage of Diego to begin an apicultural project. 20,000 pesos have been invested in bees and beehives. The bees have not yet produced, but when they do the honey will be marketed through a producers' cooperative in Yajalón. The inspiration for this enterprise came from another Sibateco who was particularly successful in beekeeping and the practice appears to be beginning to diffuse in Sibacá.

The profile of Diego Ortega indicates that he is eager to try new things and move away from subsistence oriented milpa production in every way that he can. Largely he has done this. In congruence with his integrated economic profile is his apocalyptic view of the world which accompanies his religious conversion. He believes that a Malthusian judgement day will soon arrive when the land is no longer capable of producing
food. Consequently all those that depend on the land for their subsistence will die of starvation. The only exception will be those that have had the foresight to earn a great deal of money to buy the things they need. He clearly has no faith in the traditional strategy of risk minimisation and subsistence orientation.

**Summary**

The pattern that emerges from examination of the four economic profiles is one in which a productive land base, in conjunction with exchange relations with economic systems outside the local economy provide a framework that allows the household to employ its labour within the bounds of the local economy so that the consumption needs of the household may be successfully met. Household production is self-contained in so far as members need not engage in wage labour at this point in time, nor purchase access to land outside the ejido. What is more, avenues exist whereby a surplus may be accumulated to be invested in cash productive, as opposed to subsistence productive, activities. The specific examples of this encountered in the four profiles are: tienda stock, livestock, herbicide sprayers, bees, and employment of workers from other villages as a consequence of elaboration beyond the labour capabilities of the household.

The basic profile common to the *ejidatarios* of Sibacá interviewed is schematically illustrated in figure 2. At the
base is the milpa for subsistence production and a cafetal/platanal which is primarily for cash crop production, although coffee and plátano are important components of the Sibateco diet. Of course, some of the other daily necessities of daily consumption such as salt, oil and clothing must be purchased, but in comparison to maize and beans, these are negligible. Plátano production is marketed by the women of the household at the level of the Ocosingo market. This provides one source of cash for the household. Coffee production is the main source of cash and this product is sold to INMECAFE which acts as a centralising agency and intermediary through which coffee is sold on the world market. A special feature of INMECAFE's role is that its vertical concentration of peasant coffee growers is in some cases intentionally structured so as to have an influence on the way coffee is produced. In all other facets of production where exchange with economic systems beyond the household is involved the nexus of integration is congruent with the sale of the product. In the instance of Diego Ortega, however, the nexus of integration has moved into the cafetal as INMECAFE exercises control over production.
Sibateco Basic Economic Profile
From this basic profile several elaborations emerge where peasants parlay the surplus gained from their milpa and cafetal/plátanal into more cash productive activities. The specific elaborations that emerge in the four profiles examined are in terms of livestock, merchandise, technical improvements and apiculture. Also significant is the fact that workers are hired from other Indian villages to meet the labour requirements of coffee production that exceed the capabilities of the household. In two cases livestock has been added to the basic profile as a cash producing activity. In the case of Tomás Juárez pigs enabled him to translate milpa production into a cash producing commodity, piglets, to be sold in Ocosingo. The returns were then employed to buy the requisites necessary to begin coffee production and assume a profile congruent with the Sibateco norm. Once this basic profile was achieved the returns to livestock raising in relation to those of the cafetal/plátanal did not warrant continuing. Francisco Martínez, in contrast, maintains livestock in addition to the basic profile as a cash producing activity. Owning cattle, which require little care, allows his household to individually benefit from common ejidal pasture. Surplus production may also be invested in merchandise to be sold at a mark up to other Sibatecos, thereby capitalising on the surplus of other households, which would otherwise be spent outside the community. Tomás Juárez has pursued this as his primary elaboration and Francisco Martínez has as well, but to a much
lesser degree.

The elaboration that appears to be the most pregnant with potential change for the peasant patterns of Sibacá is the investment in herbicide sprayers to reduce the amount of time required to weed the milpa. Both the purchase and the logic by which the purchase is made presuppose a certain level of surplus cash income. Employment of the sprayer - which in the the context of the maize-frijol association is of dubious utility - would release labour from subsistence activities to cash producing ones, possibly leading to a further elaboration of the household economy. Diego Ortega and Tomás Juarez, the two youngest men interviewed, have purchased sprayers. A further elaboration lies in Diego Ortega's entry into apiculture which represents the channeling of surplus into a cash productive activity. Beyond the cash outlay required to buy hives and bees little else is required, and since there is a precedence for the success of apiculture in Sibaca it is a logical elaboration for the Ortega household.

One of the most interesting implications of the sufficiency of the productive base of Sibacá and the abilities of the Sibatecos to successfully elaborate their household economies is that the requirements of the various activities engaged in, in conjunction with the expansion of coffee production, exceed the capabilities of the household so that at critical times in the coffee cycle wage labourers from other villages must be engaged. These people are drawn from villages where there is an
insufficiency of cash producing activities in relation to the need for cash - such as Abasolo and San Marcos. This incongruence between villages with a sufficiency of resources within the ejido and those without is one of the few examples of integration between Indian households in the highlands, the local market is the other. Francisco Martinez and Diego Ortega have both had occasion to hire Indians to help them in their cafetales.

Within the basic profile itself, exchange relations underlie the structure of peasant production. This reflects the fundamental inability of the peasant household to reproduce itself independently - even in the context of sufficient land - and the partial nature of integration as it is expressed in Sibacá. From this basic profile examples of further integration can be classified as elaborations. These elaborations presuppose the generation of surplus cash which in turn presupposes the sufficiency of subsistence production in relation to cash producing activities. All these elaborations have developed in the context of a reported expansion of coffee production in conjunction with high prices for coffee and the displacement of coyotes by INMECAFE. Thus there appears to be a swing towards integration at this point in time, but the structure of Sibateco production, with the household-milpa-cafetal/platano triangle at the base of figure 2, still allows consolidation of the household economy towards subsistence activities in the case of unfavourable changes in the relationship of the household to
other economic systems.
V. Abasolo

"I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion, 
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature, 
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time 
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up."  

*Introduction to the Institutional Framework of Abasolo*

As noted in Chapter III, in which the settings of Sibacá and Abasolo are described, there is a marked difference in the aspect of Abasolo compared to Sibacá. It is poorer in agricultural land, in terms of both quality and amount. The Abasolenos also have a very different profile of integration; most important for their cash incomes is their integration with the surrounding Indian villages via the weekly market. Also there is a big difference in population size, Abasolo has a population of approximately 3000 people. Being larger by a factor of five than Sibacá, Abasolo has a few more functions as a centre than Sibacá; it has a local market, an elementary school which serves children from the surrounding villages, it attracts programmes like COPLAMAR, it is the location of a CONASUPO outlet, and it may assume responsibility as a the *cabecera* of a new municipio. But in many ways these are superficial differences. In contrast to Robert Redfields

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*William Shakespeare, Richard III, act I, scene I.*
idealized notions of a folk-urban continuum, Felix Webster McBride's observation that "Indians in thousands will not make a town but rather a large village, which may or may not be closely knit." is a better description of the situation. This is to say that the institutional pattern is more a reflection of environmental considerations and other peculiarities than of abstract conceptions of the relationship between size and function.

In a number of ways the institutional framework of Abasolo is the same as that of Sibaca. Regulations and understandings which govern the access to ejidal land appear to be the same, although the relative abundance of land is very different in the two communities. Ethnic relations also follow the same pattern of antagonism between ladinos and Indians.

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2 Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, passim.

3 *Cultural and Historical Geography of Southwestern Guatemala*, Institute of Social Anthropology, publication no. 4, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1947). p. 37

4 Graciela Carranza Perajrna cites the following example of ethnic hostility in her study of Abasolo as told to her by an Abasoleno:

"A tal grado llega su avaricia que una vez nos invitó una cerveza, éramos varios, y pensamos una para cada uno, y el muy sinverguenca pidió una cerveza y unas copitas y nos iba a repartir entre todos, entonces todos se la arrojamos la cara..."

(Their avarice is so much that one time this fellow offered us a beer, there were a few of us, and we expected one beer for each person, and that shameless jerk ordered one beer and a number of glasses so we could share that beer between us, our faces went
In Abasolo, however, the inability of the households to gain access to sufficient sources of cash income draws Indians into wage relationships with the ladino finca owners fairly regularly. This is not the case in Sibacá. The examination of institutions in this chapter is intended to shed light on the particularities of Abasolo, rather than on the commonalities which apply to much of the highlands.

An interesting aspect of Abasolo is the number of institutional contacts the village has with the government in terms of infrastructure, technology, education, retailing, and housing. These relationships are an addition to the household economy, but not in an integrative sense. Their addition or subtraction would have relatively little effect on the household economy. This does not mean that they are, however, irrelevant. Their presence in relation to their impact gives an indication of the capacity of the local economy to integrate with other economic systems as opportunities to do so are presented.

Abasolo can best be described as a marginal community in terms of its resources and their relation to the demands of other economic systems. As such, it has attracted a number of government programmes to spur economic development and improve conditions in the community. These efforts have been of limited success. This poor achievement is particularly illuminating of Abasolo's capacity for integration. Even when this integration

*(cont'd) red.*)
is ostensibly tailored to the needs of Abasolenos, it is limited. While the historical development of the peasant economy shows clearly that its structure is capable of substantial change, it is nevertheless not easily malleable; that is to say that it may not be easily manipulated as an independent component of a larger context. The manifold factors that maintain the contemporary peasant economic structure of Abasolo do not easily permit sudden and discrete changes in the community.

If the Sibateco pattern may be characterised as one of integration through elaboration of the household economy, the Abasoleño pattern is one of integration because of the dissolution of the household economy. Sibacá has sufficient resources to enter an economic niche in the world coffee market without jeopardising subsistence oriented milpa production. Abasolo, on the other hand, has integrated because it requires cash to purchase food to cover the insufficiency of its milpa base. While Sibatecos are able to cultivate as much milpa as their labour capabilities allow, which is roughly two hectares per household, Abasoleños are generally restricted to less than half a hectare of ejidal land. Half a hectare is not nearly enough to meet the consumption requirements of the household, consequently the household must enter into exchange relations to earn the cash required to buy maize from CONASUPO.

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to make up the shortfall. Because of this integration is interpreted here as a result of the dissolution of the capability of the household economy to meet its consumption needs.

The Instituto Nacional Indigenista and the Fate of Cooperatives in Abasolo

An important federal government agency in Abasolo is the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI). Because of the large population of Indians in the highlands of Chiapas it is especially active here, but it is present throughout Mexico. Two of the main functions of INI are the study and recording of indigenous lifeways in Mexico (ethnographies, linguistic studies, etc.) and the promotion of socio-economic development in the context of a respect for indigenous culture.

INI has had a palpable effect on the community of Abasolo; it provides health care, it has organised a number of cooperatives, and perhaps most importantly of all, it has trained Indians in the area, primarily from Oxchuc, but also from Abasolo, as bilingual teachers in the area's elementary schools. Besides having had an influence on the community, INI's programmes illustrate a political capacity for and a style of integration which is particularly characteristic of Mexico. This is embodied in the ideology of indigenismo which romanticises and glorifies the Indian component of the Mexican people. Judith
Friedlander perceptively comments on the incongruities of indigenismo in a society dominated by ladinos:

As far as modern Mexico is concerned, citizens are encouraged to identify with the Mestizo - a racial and cultural hybrid - and not with the Indian or Spanish separately. Yet in an effort to glorify the country's indigenous heritage, the government has found it economically and ideologically useful to keep present day Indians Indian, living relics of a previous era. As a result, contemporary Indians have been placed in a contradictory position: while being preserved as living tributes to Mexico's noble indigenous past, they are also being discriminated against for being Indians in a Mestizo oriented culture.6

The significance of these abstract contradictions notwithstanding, the support and efforts of INI have brought services to previously isolated communities. Children in Abasolo speak Spanish better than their parents, but still retain Tzeltal as their mother tongue. As a result of this educational initiative the traditional power structure of the community has changed because the teachers, with their links to the outside and drive towards progress, have initiated many community projects and tend to speak for the community when there is contact with government agencies. In this case the progressive integration of highland communities through the programmes of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista results in a change in the kind of people who make decisions in the community, thus there are political ramifications in terms of the internal structure of the communities. In some ways this relationship of the teachers with INI is analogous to that of the caciques to the

6Being Indian in Hueyapan p. 130.
tribute collectors of New Spain, in that internal relations are serving to consolidate external ones, in this case the realtionship of the villages to the Instituto Nacional Indigenista is fortified through the increased influence of the teachers in the community.

One of the mysterious tragedies of the attempts at economic development has been the consistent failure of cooperative organisations which INI funds and organises. In the last 10 years four cooperatives were begun. All but one failed. Two of the more successful ones, a chicken hatchery and a pig farm were reported as being well planned and organised. People came from all over the area to buy the chickens and pigs - the pigs especially were said to have been beautiful. When management was transferred from INI to the socios of the cooperatives, however, proper supplies were not ordered for the pigs, which caused the pig farm to collapse. The socios of the chicken hatchery split the chickens up between themselves after two years and sold the equipment.

Another cooperative, the late Sociedad de Caña, deserves more careful attention. It represents an attempt to reorganise and consolidate economic activity beyond the household level, and thereby improve extant peasant production, rather than add a new activity, as was the case of pigs and chickens. The Sociedad began when 50 Abasoleños started working together sharing one
large metal trapiche 7 The intention of the cooperative, from INI's point of view, was to introduce the new technology since the improved technology allowed the cane to be processed more rapidly, more juice to be extracted and less fuel (the scarcest factor in this process) to be needed. The Sociedad was given credit to buy more trapiches and at its peak it was divided into groups of seven or so socios who shared a trapiche each. The only impact of the Sociedad was to organise the processing aspect of panela production around the available metal trapiches. Everything else, including marketing, takes place individually. Upon the introduction of the new technology the primary goal of the Sociedad was achieved. It was also hoped that the Sociedad would continue as a corporate structure that could serve as a medium by which other aspects of panela might be improved, but this never came to be. Since informal mechanisms govern the access to, and distribution of, the trapiches, the Sociedad has disintegrated. The structure of panela production is such that production of cane takes place at an individual level within the household economy and marketing 8

7 The trapiche is a machine which squeezes the juice out of sugar cane. It is powered by a horse or a mule, which is harnessed to a vertical driveshaft. As the animal walks around in a circle it turns the shaft which has a gear attached to it. This gear meshes with another parallel gear. As sugar cane is inserted one at a time through the moving gears the juice is squeezed out and drips into a cauldron underneath. The juice is boiled down and poured into molds where it cools down into the local panela shape, pilloncillos, four of which are tied together to be sold as atapes. The traditional trapiche was hand carved from wood and because the gears did not mesh very tightly it was not as efficient in extracting juice as the metal trapiche which was introduced via the Sociedad de Caña.
takes place individually in the local market. The Sociedad de Caña may be interpreted as an organisational incongruence since the flexibility of individual production and marketing is interrupted by collective processing. The benefits that accrued from that collective effort were not enough to maintain the Sociedad as an organisation to manage a collective effort where an individual one can suffice. One of the consequences of this is that, as the metal trapiches that were introduced by the Sociedad fall apart, there is no organ to arrange for and finance their repair and maintenance, so they are lost.

However, the technology was introduced and, in the case of the hatchery, the skills involved in raising chicks has diffused to impact production within the framework of the household economy. Transformation of the local economy beyond this use of a cooperative medium for technological diffusion has been ineffective, or at any rate, INI has not been able to accomplish it under the present conditions.

An INI official as well as a member of the nearby Centro de Estudios Experimentales y Artesanías Rurales attributes the failure of these cooperative enterprises to the inability of the Abasoleños to work together. At one level this may seem like a facile answer, but not if it is interpreted in relation to the structure of the household economy of the highland Indians, rather than in relation to the character of the people of Abasolo, in which case the minimisation of risk, in combination with an economic situation where labour is focussed on

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minifundia family plots, creates a logic where self-reliant individual household production takes precedence over uncertain schemes involving cooperatives. Reliance on others involves an increase in the number of possibilities for things to go wrong. The very structure of the household economy implies risk minimisation and therefore any departure from that structure is relatively risky. This tendency towards the internalisation of economic activity within the household is an elemental feature of the peasant economic form. This is well illustrated by the disintegration of cooperatives in Abasolo. Thus it is not so much an incapacity for cooperation as an incapacity for coordination reflecting the concrete conditions of the economic landscape of highland Chiapas.

The fourth cooperative, which appeared to be working well at the time of our visit, was based around a group of sewing machines, also sponsored by INI. This clearly is not the kind of activity which makes a big impact on the local economy, but is was the only cooperative that was operating at the time of our visit.

Health: The Environmental Dimension of Rural Poverty in Highland Chiapas

In a community like Abasolo the integrated nature of rural poverty is very apparent. Not only does a lack of resources result in poor nutrition and low incomes, but the lack of
organisation and ignorance of sanitary practices in particular results in the village being a contaminated space. The major health problems, as related by the INI health agent in Abasolo, are gastro-enteritis and bronchitis. Both of these diseases are a consequence of environmental pollution. There are primarily two causes for this; no use of latrines, and the free ranging habits of pigs, dogs and fowl.

The use of latrines has been suggested by health agents to the people of Abasolo, but this addition to the community, and indeed to other communities in the highlands, has proved to be incompatible with cultural norms of modesty. The health agent understood the problem to be the reluctance of Abasolenos to construct a building in their compound which would be too outrageously conspicuous in relation to the function it fulfilled, which is of the utmost private nature. Latrines have not caught on as a means of containing contagious disease and, in view of the manner in which they are perceived, we can safely assume that the first adoptor to introduce a latrine to his compound would be subject to the derision of his peers, besides which he would probably get just as ill as before. In lieu of latrines people attend to their evacuation needs with discretion in terms of exhibition, but ubiquity with regard to location. As pigs and dogs consume human excreta they distribute it even more widely. Contaminated food and water causes gastro-enteritis and contaminated dust causes bronchitis as well as eye infections.
These obstacles to the containment of environmental pollution suggest that the introduction of latrines is likely to be unsuccessful in the near future, but efforts have been made to improve the healthfulness of the environment by introducing new materials into housing construction. The success of this can be gauged as a sign of progress in the modification of the village towards a more healthful environment. Both the thatch roofs and the walls of mud and wattle of the typical Abasolo home are ideal nesting places for vermin which creates added health risks. By supplying lámina for roofs, concrete for plastering mud walls, and raising hearths off the ground the sceptic nature of traditional house construction is reduced. Vermin do not find nesting places and dirt is not kicked into food.

Another problem is the scarcity of good water. This is not because the region is dry, but because there are no fast flowing, clean streams running through the village. A swift and clear river flows through the valley below Abasolo, but it is inaccessible because, as in most of the valleys of highland Chiapas, the ranchers have monopolised the valley bottoms leaving the Indians on the slopes. The ratio of population to the little bit of water available has resulted in its contamination. The government programme COPLAMAR has contributed to the improvement of the water supply by organising and supplying the materials needed for a piped water system. Provision was made for individual households to receive water.
but as the following section on technology and the water supply indicates, there is more involved in the provision of potable water than just plumbing.

The point of this section is that disorganisation, which is a reflection of atomised production, inhibits the spatial compartmentalisation of livestock and sceptic substances which is a precondition for limiting the contamination of the living environment and improving health standards. Seen in this light the health hazards associated with rural underdevelopment can be interpreted as an aspect of the atomised nature of peasant production and reproduction in the highlands. These unhealthy patterns can not necessarily be discretely modified, since they are a logical aspect of the peasant economy as it is expressed in Abasolo. Because of this the compartmentalised organisation of various features of household production would have implications beyond the containment of infection. Restricting pigs to pens, for example, would cut off their access to garbage meaning that maize, a scarce factor, would become a greater part of the pig's diet. This is incongruent with the shortage of and need for maize as food for the human members of the household.

The Water System in Abasolo: Difficulties of Infrastructural Consolidation

One of COPLAMAR's projects to improve Abasolo was the piping of water from a relatively uncontaminated source to the village. Six kilometers of pipe were contributed to the project.
The initial plan called for a main line to bring water into the village and from there to various public outlets. For those who wanted individual taps, provisions were made for them to buy and install their own pipes from the main line. This plan failed miserably, however, because when the main line was constructed, some Abasoleños, instead of buying their own pipes for household outlets, cannibalised the main line to lay their individual ones. Needless to say this brought many halts to the service. The water system was finally worked out, but was suffering severe maintenance problems. The plan intended that the Abasclenos would maintain the system, but as we observed this local maintenance it became clear that this approach to self maintenance was not effective and would probably lead to the degradation of the water system.

At our visit the pipe which brought the water to the village sprang a leak which reduced the pressure in the system to the extent that water was not reaching the village. Because of this women were forced to go to the creek which trickles down through the village for water. The ravine through which the stream sluggishly flows was littered with garbage and the water it contained was obviously unpotable. The person responsible for fixing this infrastructural problem was the agente municipal. He recruited six adults and eight teenage boys to come along with him and help. On the way he also picked up the necessary parts from the person in charge of distributing the materials supplied by COPLAMAR. The problem was a loose joint of a steel pipe near
a plastic elbow. In order to unscrew the problem pipe its extension, a portion of plastic pipe was excavated and broken so that the galvanised steel pipe might be wiggled to loosen the joint. This didn't help so the plastic pipe was repaired. A can of pipe cement which had instructions in English only was smeared all over the new joint. Having accomplished this the original problem of the leaking pipe remained. The intractability of the threads of the joint (the problem was that the joint was unevenly threaded so that one side was tight while the other leaked due to looseness) was necessarily accepted. The agente municipal then decided to take another approach and sent some of the boys back to the village for COPLAMAR cement. Rocks were heaped over and around the leaking joint which was then plastered with cement.

This mason's solution to a plumber's problem does not bode well for the future maintenance of the water system. At a superficial level the problem is one of inadequate extension services. If the agente municipal was given instructions on plumbing then he might have been able to fix the problem instead of postponing it while inflicting further damage to the system. At a deeper level we can see that infrastructure such as a water system presupposes a certain amount of community coordination and consolidation. The sabotage of the system by individual theft represents the actions of individuals exercising flexible independence to take advantage of opportunities as they become available in an effort to minimise the outlay of cash which is
very scarce. In the same way as Sibacá’s historical lack of integration underlies its need to step outside the bounds of the community to find someone to drive the ejidal truck, Abasolo must step outside its community bounds to insure the correct maintenance of its water system. The community on its own, at this juncture, is incapable.

The Central Place Functions of Abasolo: The Local Market and CONASUPO

Abasolo has three central place functions which attract Indians, as well as a few local ladinos, to the village. These are the local market, the CONASUPO, and the Presbyterian Church. As was noted in the introduction to this chapter, these functions do not impact in a basic way on the household economies of Abasolo, in so far as to differentiate them from the household economies of Sibacá, for example, although there are a few Abascleños who benefit from the increased commerce in the village. Nevertheless, these functions do give us insight into the nature of the local economy. The local market is the most fundamental example of economic integration between Abasolo and other Indian villages. The CONASUPO store represents the influence of the Mexican government; its policies of subsidisation and its attempt to guarantee an affordable supply of basic food items. In this case maize is the relevant food item. The Presbyterian Church has located in response to
Abasolo's central position location.

The local Indian market is a long-standing exchange system - dating back to pre-Columbian times. In contemporary studies of Middle American Indians the market has been an important focus. It is, in fact, the institution that has led to the explanatory maxim for the cultural geography of highland Middle America that environmental diversity leads to social interaction and economic integration. The environmental peculiarities of each village, a function of the complex relief of the highlands, means that communities specialise in different products. Sibacá specialises in coffee and platano, Abasolo in panela, Cancuc in chile, Mesbilja in camote (sweet potato) and etc. Complicating a pattern that corresponds to environmental comparative advantage are patterns of handicraft skills. Weaving from Bachajón and Sibacá finds its way into the market at Abasolo as do clay pots from Tenango and woven morales from Oxchuc.

For Abasolo the market is an essential feature because it is the only source of cash incomes that can be generated short of proletarianisation. Panela itself is an Indian product, that is to say that is is a part of Indian consumption patterns distinct from those of ladino ones. Consequently the source of cash the Abasoleño requires does not come from the national economy. Does this mean that the local economy of Abasolo is insulated from the national and world economy; that the household complemented by the local market forms a functional whole or a closed system? Not really. In Abasolo as everywhere
else, Manning Nash' assertion that "All economies are tied, more or less tightly to the national and international economies..." holds true.

In Abasolo the household economy, with *panela* as its linchpin, is influenced by the price of refined sugar, supplied at a subsidised price by the CONASUPO. Sugar is a substitute for *panela* and, although *panela* is the traditional sweetener, there is no unwillingness on the part of Indians to substitute sugar for *panela* if the relative price levels favour sugar. For this reason the price of *panela* roughly corresponds to that of refined sugar. Fluctuations in the price of refined sugar respond to two factors far beyond the influence, or even comprehension of Abasoleños. Firstly, prices fluctuate as sugar, a commodity on the world market, responds to global economic dynamics. Secondly, the federal government's policies with regard to the subsidisation of basic food items may change. This is particularly likely in response to Mexico's position in the international financial system.

Although the limited and archaic appearance of subsistence agriculture combined with the traditional and quaint appearance of the local market suggest that the Indian economy is an independent and functionally whole economic system, as was stressed in Chapter II, this is not the case. The economic logic of the local economy in Abasolo, if not directly linked to outside economic systems, does strongly echo the rhythms of

*Indian Economies*, p.163.
economic dynamics as they occur in other economic systems. Like other connections, the relation of panela to CONASUPO and the world market is ambivalent, they may lead to the consolidation or the disintegration of the local economy.

A further aspect of the market system is its role as a nexus of integration between the ladino town dwellers and the Indians. This is, along with the payment of tribute and slavery, among the original forms of economic contact between the Indians and the Spanish. Before the development of capitalist forms of agriculture in New Spain the Spaniards relied on the Indians for food products and their traditional market organisation for the distribution of these products. Today in Abasolo ladinos come to the market to purchase eggs and fowl to take back to sell in San Cristóbal and Ocospingo at higher prices. Eggs and fowl are the economic domain of women and they generally retain the earnings from the sale of these products.

For many students of peasant economies, particularly those informed by dependency theory, the important feature of the peasantry's relation to modern capitalist economies lies in the net transfer of value from the peasant to the modern capitalist sector. The mechanisms by which this is accomplished are numerous. One of these mechanisms was observed in practice in the Abasolo market. Indian women lined up before a ladina woman from San Cristóbal who was seated on the ground. As they reached her they assembled eggs that they had individually wrapped in cloths and carefully brought to the market to sale. Eggs are not
a part of the Indian diet so naturally were not for sale to Indians. The ladina bought the eggs at 3 pesos, later to be sold for six. This constitutes a transfer of value on its own, but what is more, the woman cheated the Indians by counting the eggs in a very rapid and confusing manner so that ten eggs might be counted as six. Although it was obvious that the Indians were being cheated, no complaints arose.

CONASUPO is an agency of the federal government which is charged with increasing maize and frijol production and complementing this by providing a distribution network which includes retail outlets. Maize is the basic food for the majority of Mexicans, and what is more, there is an inverse relationship between income and maize consumption "en consecuencia las poblaciones más pobres consumen proporcionalmente este cereal en mayor cantidad , en tanto que las sectores de mayores ingresos observan una dieta más diversificada." This, in conjunction with the fact that more maize reaches consumers through CONASUPO than the private market (1977 data) means that it is an important institution in Mexico as a whole and particularly in terms of those marginal peasant communities which cannot meet their own consumption requirments. Because the maize grown in the highlands by Indians is primarily for use within the household economy itself, and because the

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9 In consequence the poorer sector of the population consumes proportionally more of this grain, in so far as higher income sectors have a more diversified diet" Centro de Investigaciones Agrarias, El Cultivo de Maiz en Mexico p.40.
level of production is structurally limited by the amount of land available, the price supports offered by CONASUPO are irrelevant from the highland production point of view. As an institution CONASUPO is present in Abasolo in terms of its retail function.

The shop itself is run by an elected committee of Abasolenos. In compensation for their time and responsibility they receive five percent of gross revenues. In this manner some income is gained by virtue of Abasolo's position as a central place. All basic goods that are received by the store are sent by the upper levels of CONASUPO, or the "government" as it is referred to by the Abasoleños. The committee may, however, order extras, like sardines or chocolates, if they feel the addition of these products is warranted by local demand.

Although the relationship of panela to refined sugar is interpreted as having a potentially disintegrative effect in the household economies of Abasolo, limiting the income that may be derived from the sale of commodities produced in the local economy, maize is in a different relation. Abasoleños need to buy maize. To the extent that CONASUPO maize is cheaper than maize would otherwise be, the point at which the household economy would be incapable of supplying the nutritional needs of its members is that much more distant than it would be without price subsidisation. The difference between the CONASUPO price and the price that would prevail under uncontrolled conditions may in fact be quite substantial. Traditional maize marketing
patterns, like coffee marketing patterns discussed in the context of Sibacá, were, and continue to be fraught with transportistas and other parasitic middle men. As INMECAFE replaced these to the benefit of Sibateco cafecultores, their absence, in the case of maize, in addition to subsidisation, benefits consumers of maize.

Another central feature of Abasolo is the Presbyterian church. In Chiapas, as in neighboring Guatemala, the Indians have been subject to a widespread proselytising effort by protestant faiths. Bob Short of CEEAR feels that this activity has had a profound impact on the region, not simply in religious terms, but by opening the highlands to outsiders. The story of the church began in the 1940's when two women, protestant missionaries, came into the highlands and translated the Bible into Tzeltal. Their point of entry was Oxchuc, one of the more passive communities. Through their actions and persistence they moderated the negative and sometimes violent reactions of Indians to intruders of Indian space. Previously it was unacceptable for strangers, including other Indians, to venture into foreign villages, unless there was a mutually sanctioned occasion, like a market day. It has even been remarked that one risked one's life in the crossing of community boundaries. INI next took advantage of the opening in Oxchuc made by the missionaries. Programmes initiated by INI such as the training of Indians as bilingual teachers and medical agents, have paved the way for the further erosion of corporate community
insulation as an expression of ethnic hostility. Because Oxchuc was the starting point of the penetration of the Indian world, a large proportion of teachers, medical agents, and other INI operatives come from that municipio. Now, except for a few communities, notably Cancuc where we were repeatably advised that it would be impossible to visit, violent insularity is rare, even though vestiges remain.

Rural Development in Abasolo: The Centro de Estudios Experimentales y Artesanías Rurales

The Centro de Estudios Experimentales y Artesanías Rurales (Centre for Experimental Studies and Rural Crafts) is an organisation operating just outside of the village. It was begun by a missionary and his wife who felt that they could be of more effective service to Tzeltal Indians through improving their standard of living than through their religious conversion. Two couples and occasionally the children of the older couple operate the Centro. The objective is to introduce improved methods and new crops into the immediate area. The obvious and major problem for the Indians in and around Abasolo is the shortage and poor quality of land, but this cannot be changed. CEPAR attempts to work at raising peasant productivity within the structurally determined limits that the Indians must work with. The strategy adopted focusses on raising the nutritional standards by improving subsistence production. This involves
improving the local strains of maize, improving cropping methods, introducing fertiliser and promoting the adoption of intensive horticulture.

Although not actively involved in proselytising, the staff of the Centro are affiliated with the Presbyterian church, and in many cases their work involves converts to protestantism. Besides religious motivations there are also social and economic explanations for why Indians convert to protestantism. Repugnance to the authoritarianism, alcoholism and conservatism that surround the traditional syncretic politico-religious complex of the highlands attracts individuals to the sobriety and promise of change associated with a new religion. Another facet of conversion that is connected with the work of CEEAR is the tendency for marginal members of the community to be drawn towards protestantism and change since they have no stake in the extant system (this is parallel to the contrasting attitudes of Diego Ortega and Francisco Martinez in Sibaca). In one sense, however, this does act as an obstacle to change since those who adopt the techniques suggested by the Centro are utilising them in the context of such a poverty of resources that dramatic results are not forthcoming. With regard to the slow and undramatic impact that the Centro has had in the last twelve years of one member's experience, he comments that outside of the context of a higher purpose it would be difficult to gauge the results of CEEAR as successful
One of the features of the Centro's integration into the community revolves around wage labour. The household economies of Abasolo are not endowed with sufficient resources to entirely occupy the labour capabilities of the household. As *minifundia*, they do not have the land necessary to support a family in cash or food. The obvious adaptation to this predicament is the search for wage labour, one source of which is CEEAR. By employing local Indians to help with projects and other necessary activities in the Centro and its fields CEEAR provides income, but this is also a forum for the dissemination of information on what is being done and how certain techniques work. Wages paid by the Centro are 90 pesos per day.

The activities of the Centro have been scrupulously undertaken and displayed in order to make it clear that everything it does is within reach of the resources and technical capabilities of the Abasoleños. The very location of the Centro embodies this approach. The land, which was purchased in the name of the Tzeltal Indians who are legally the owners of the Centro land, was exhausted by cane and poorly drained. This reclaimed land formed the basis of the experimental gardens. Besides the use of fertiliser which, although provided at cost, involves an outlay of cash, and the purchase of seeds, which also involves spending some money, the advice of the Centro is intended to fit within the existing framework of peasant production.
One of the major changes that is being promoted is a new approach to the preparation of the *milpa*. Traditionally *milpas* were burned after harvesting. This serves to clear the land, return a portion of the nutrients contained in the trash to the soil and inhibit weeds and pests from growing and damaging the next cycle's crop. CEEAR is recommending that trash be turned under instead of burned. In this way more nutrients are returned to the soil and land can produce more cycles of *milpa* before it is necessary to leave it fallow. There is a trade-off involved since the traditional method saved labour compared to what CEEAR is recommending. However, in the situation that prevails in Abasolo, where land is much more scarce than labour, the trade-off is a logical one.

Another important aspect of CEEAR's attempts to improve the productivity of the household economy within its existing structure is the improvement of the *criollo* strain of maize particular to Abasolo. The CEEAR strategy is in contrast to the introduction of hybrid seeds which was one of the major focusses of the "Green Revolution" of agricultural modernisation. The new hybrids introduced were often spectacularly successful in the dry, flat, irrigated, mechanised and technically controlled agricultural environments of Northern Mexico, but are not appropriate to areas like the highlands of Chiapas. In the highlands the local, or *criollo* strains usually give the best yields because of their hardiness. These local strains are the result of perhaps thousands of years of adaptation to
environmental peculiarities and may vary from municipio to municipio, and even from village to village.

Bob Short has discovered that the *criollo* strain of Abasolo has a genetic weakness to a certain fungus and that this susceptibility has led to a fairly dramatic loss in yield. He is trying to weed out the susceptible plants in the Centro’s *milpa* before they tassle, and through this process of selection create an improved stock of seeds for distribution. This scientific approach is, however, clashing with the traditional understanding of maize culture in the region. We had the opportunity to accompany a group of Indians that were being shown around the experimental farm. At the *milpa* Bob Short explained the process of selection. Stunted seedlings can be recognised as those which are vulnerable to the fungus. In Tzeltal he explained the method of identification. Upon finishing the explanation he proceeded to pluck out the bad seedlings and toss them out of the *milpa*. The danger of allowing the defective plants to mature was also carefully explained. They will not bear but will compete for moisture and nutrients with other plants. As they mature and flower the problem will be spread and transmitted to the next generation. It was suggested that the visiting Indians weed their seedlings as was being done at the Centro. Traditional wisdom contradicts this practice. As the seedlings were being plucked out the Indians looked on with expressions of incredulity. Astonishment was replaced with humour as the whole affair began to take on an aspect of
hilarity. For the Indians it was unthinkable that after one had gone to all the trouble of preparing and planting a milpa a person would proceed to destroy a plant that had germinated. The advice was paradoxical - to improve yields you must destroy plants.

Change within the peasant framework, that is to say directed and intentional change as is being attempted by CEEAR, takes place slowly and by small increments. The attitudes and traditions that support and permeate the peasant economy, even though they are the logical responses to the social and environmental situation of the highland Indians, may have an inertia that impedes or even precludes the improvement of productivity by correcting such problems as genetic weaknesses in maize.

The existence of CEEAR represents a link with outside economic systems. Funds for the support of the Centro come from churches, non-governmental agencies and multi-lateral organisations. Again we have a case in which a highland village is involved in a complex network of relationships that extends far beyond the national frontiers. The importance of this integration, however, is limited to the extent to which CEEAR has had an impact on the household economy. Admittedly, this impact is negligible, so that even though the promotion of change is intentionally planned and directed at the people in and around Abasolo, the concrete influence of the Centro is minimal in relation to the impact of fortuitous changes in the
price of refined sugar, for example.

Four Economic Profiles

The following profiles describe the types of integration that can take place in Abasolo. As in Sibacá the four men examined are comprised of a political official, a merchant and two individuals who do not have these responsibilities. Once again it becomes apparent that there is a range of adaptive strategies that individual households may pursue in order to meet the consumption needs of the household, or elaborate the household in the case where there may be a surplus of cash.

In Abasolo, as in Sibacá, these profiles are conditioned by the institutional framework and the environmental constraints of the area. Environmental constraints emerge as particularly important. The shortage of land available to the households of Abasolo means that they cannot meet their subsistence needs within the ejido. This requires a step outside the local economy to secure resources to make up the subsistence shortfall. The circumstances and strategies involved in the manner in which Abasoleños meet their consumption needs gives us insight into the particular patterns that integration can take in the concrete conditions of Abasolo.
Jorge Sanchez

Jorge Sanchez is a middle aged man who lives on the edge of town, right behind the church. He is a friendly open faced fellow who is neither involved in commerce or in local political administration. His house has mud walls, but the roof is of lamina and the floor is cement, the materials supplied by COPLAMAR. Jorge represents what is judged to be a typical Abasolo profile, except that he extends the level of peasant reproduction available within the bounds of the ejido not by selling his labour, but by using cash to rent land outside of the ejido.

Distribution of ejidal land is uneven. Unlike Sibacá where an ejidatario can fence off as much land as his labour can occupy, Abasolo suffers a shortage of land and land must be carefully parcelled out. Uneveness of land distribution has developed where some ejidatarios have up to two and a half and three hectares of ejidal land. Jorge has only half a hectare. He explains this discrepancy by virtue of the herencia that others have been fortunate enough to receive. Since usufruct rights to ejidal land may be passed from generation to generation, those families who have fewer sons, or sons who leave the village, will leave more land to those who remain. in the valley near Ocosingo he rents a hectare of land from a ranch which, if there is a good harest, gives him enough maize to meet the needs of his household economy. This year it rained too much so his
harvest is down to 500 kilos. A good harvest may yield as much as 2000 kilos of maize.

Besides milpa culture Jorge grows plátano, coffee, beans and sugar cane. Of these only cane is commercialised. All of these crops, plus a little milpa are grown on his half hectare of ejidal land. For animals he has one horse for transport and to run the trapiche which he shares with another Abasoleno, an organisational artifact of the late Sociedad de Cana. His wife has hens to lay eggs to be sold in the market and there is a sow for the breeding of piglets for sale to merchants who come to Abasolo to purchase livestock.

In terms of cash producing activities the Sanchez household economy produces panela, piglets and eggs. Sale of panela is the major income producer for the household. Yearly production of panela is in the neighborhood of 250 atapes. Each one sells for sixty pesos giving an annual income of approximately $500 U.S. (January 1982 exchange rate). Of this, plus whatever is received from other activities, money is channeled into consumption and the rental of land for milpa production. The primary focus, or economic goal of the Sanchez household is clearly the guarantee of nutritional subsistence, consequently money earned is not used to spend on food, probably because it would be inadequate, but to achieve access to land - the means of milpa production. Renting also constitutes an example of a case where the reproduction of the peasant household requires a transfer of value from the peasant sector to the ranch owner.
Working on the rented milpa is considered a hardship. Even though the ejidal land is 12 kilometers distant from the village, Ahasoleños working on the ejidal fields can return home after work each day. To reach his rented fields Jorge must take a bus to Ocosingo. At thirty pesos a trip, sixty return, the price of daily commuting is equivalent to two thirds of the daily wage. Returning home each day is therefore out of the question. When he goes to his rented fields he stays a week. For food he takes a basket of tortillas and a gourd of pozole. For shelter he makes a rude lean-to out of grass to sleep under. He works alone. This is clearly an uncomfortable and solitary way of working, but he has chosen it in favour of working on the lowland fincas or for the ranches.

Jorge Sanchez is an example of an individual who has used the cash earned by virtue of local-market integration to extend his subsistence base beyond the ejido onto rented land. The focus is subsistence and the importance of this example is its illustration of a case in which a cash crop is the key to gaining access to the means of subsistence. Furthermore, this is a case in which the expending of money earned via the local market on the rental of land, i.e. the transfer of money from one economic form to another, is essential to the ability of the household economy to meet its consumption needs.
Marcos Velasquez

Marcos is a young man with three children. Although his agricultural profile is similar to that of Jorge Sanchez, he pursues a different strategy for meeting his subsistence deficit. Marcos must look for wage labour outside of the *ejido* when he runs out of maize to feed his family. He does not specialise in particular jobs over others, but takes whatever is available. The types of jobs that are available indicate the labour requirements for the area. The pattern of articulation of Marcos's household economy to larger economic systems is dictated by these requirements. In the present case these requirements are various.

Marcos has a hectare of land but it is poor land, only half a hectare can be worked at a time while the other half lies fallow. Of the half hectare that is under cultivation only one cycle per year is possible. The maize and *frijol* supplied by the *milpa* is not sufficient to make up for the needs of his family. Ordinarily the maize runs out two or three months before he is able to harvest the next cycle. Besides *milpa* he has cane, a little *plátano* and 15 coffee bushes in his *solar*, and a mango tree. Except for *panela*, nothing is sold.

For animals Marcos has a horse, and his wife keeps some fowl. Unlike most Abasoleños his family makes a habit of eating eggs and a chicken every once in a while. In addition to this change in the diet Marcos has introduced a small *vivero* (green
house) into his solar of the kind that CEEAR is trying to promote. This is a raised mound of topsoil covered with a plastic sheet to keep in moisture and heat. Vegetables such as radishes, greens, carrots and cabbages are grown to add variety to the diet.

During the slack periods of the agricultural cycle Marcos leaves Abasolo to look for work. The wages he receives are in the neighborhood of 80 to 90 pesos per day. He works for one to two weeks before he must return to the village to catch up with agricultural chores. A wide variety of jobs are open to unskilled labour from Indian villages such as Abasolo, but this is not to say that work is plentiful. These jobs reflect the variety of ways in which economic systems beyond the level of the household may draw on Indian labour. The search for work involves travelling to either San Cristobal or Ocosingo. It is up to Marcos to solicit work for himself. People in search of labourers do not come into the villages to recruit them, as is sometimes the case in the highlands of Guatemala. This indicates a fairly plentiful supply of labour in relation to its demand, otherwise we could expect the local economy to be penetrated by recruiters from the fincas or other economic forms that rely on Indian labour.

The work in the regional economy that Marcos does is picking and weeding coffee in the large fincas of the selva Lacondon, or on the small cafetales around Ocosingo, as a peon de albañil (assistant to a bricklayer) and other unskilled work
related to construction. The final source of employment opportunities lies with the local ranchers in the area. The work done for the ranchers is invariably menial, usually involving the mending of fences, cutting of wood, or making of milpa for livestock on the ranch. Indians never work with cattle or horses. This is partly because they may not be familiar with these animals, but also because there is an implicit class distinction that the Indians make milpa while the ladinos ride horses and herd cattle.

Marcos works for wages in order to make up his shortfall in subsistence production. This introduces an element of proletarianisation to the highland peasant economy, but the basic structure of the household economy is not profoundly altered by this. The central economic strategy is subsistence and the availability of needed wage labour allows the persistence of a subsistence peasant strategy when such a strategy on its own would not be sufficient to maintain the household. The demand for labour that complements the subsistence economy comes from diffuse sources, suggesting that the points at which the peasant economy, or household economy as the basic unit, come into contact with other economic systems are indeterminate. The nexus of integration may be fairly close to the level of the world market, as is the case of wage work on the large fincas in the selva, or it may serve the regional urban network in construction, or it may serve to bolster production of meat for urban markets as is the case with wage
work on the local cattle ranches. That this spectrum of opportunities is available is a reflection of the heterogeneous nature of the economic landscape of highland Chiapas.

**Jacinto Santos: Agente Municipal**

Jacinto is the individual with political authority in Abasolo. An effort was made to speak with the Comisariado ejidal but he was very reluctant to meet with us. Rather than force the issue we interviewed Jacinto. The position of agente municipal is an elected position just as is that of comisariado, but the concern of the agente is with the village as a settlement unit, rather than with the ejido as a stock of communal land to be distributed. Fixing the water system and other infrastructural concerns come under the jurisdiction of the agente as does policing the village and settling village disputes, for which he has a number of assistants. It is an unpaid position. Jacinto is a stern and laconic young man who takes his job very seriously and appears comfortable with the power and responsibilities associated with his position.

Jacinto, like Marcos, has a full hectare of ejidal land. Every two years half must be left fallow. He grows maize, frijol, and cane, but also has fruits and vegetables which he sells in the market when there is a surplus. The time and resources that must go into the care of these fruits and vegetables is negligible compared with the requirements of cane and milpa. For
cane Jacinto has one of the trapiches purchased with INI credit for his own personal use. This suggests that he may have a preferential access to resources within the local economy.

As is the case for other Abasoleños, for Jacinto the ejido as a stock of resources proves insufficient for the reproduction of his household economy and this necessitates a step outside. The manner in which this extension is done gives us an example of an individual who was fortunate in having a herencia. In this case the herencia is land outside the ejido. Although he wouldn't say how much land this was, we can deduce from the amount of land that he purchased, in addition to his herencia, that he has access to much more land than the average Abasoleno. Besides his herencia he purchased land for 98,000 pesos. Prevailing land prices in the area are 12,000 pesos per hectare so with access to over 8 hectares of land he is certainly in a more secure agricultural position than most of his fellow Abasoleños. Jacinto reports that his land outside the ejido is used for milpa only. This gives him plenty of food for his household.

Assuming that the information given by Jacinto is reliable we can see that the basic logic behind his economic strategy is subsistence oriented. Having access to more resources, particularly in terms of land, he utilised these resources in milpa agriculture to guarantee the subsistence needs of his family. He has not attempted to elaborate the household economy through petty commodity production as was the case in Sibacá but
he has expanded his land base so that he now has internally within the household economy as much land as his labour can occupy. This is essentially an atomistic and insular strategy. The congruence of production and consumption within the same economic unit is the dominant logic rather than that of production for exchange.

Don José, the Merchant

Dominating the market square of Abasolo, which is ringed by tiendas, is the tienda of don José. It is the largest, best stocked tienda in the village and serves as a focal point in the community. Indicative of, and instrumental in the status his store enjoys are the refrigerator, television, and tape cassette player that make the tienda a place of entertainment in addition to the more pedestrian forms of commercial activities that are undertaken. The merchandise offered is that of a typical village general store in Mexico; dishes and flatware, canned goods such as sardines, chiles, and peas, pots and pans, Vicks vapo-rub, cloth, batteries, sodas, candy, flavoured ices, patent medicines, and school supplies. Don Jose is a middle aged man who is clearly at ease with strangers. He has a confident manner which likely relates to the success he has had in business.

José is an ejidatario with one hectare of land. He has a simplified agricultural profile which dispenses with the variety of agricultural pursuits available in the local economy. The
maize that is grown on his parcel of ejidal land usually meets the needs of his family. He did grow cane at one time, but the growth of his business has meant that he no longer has time for that activity. His organisation of milpa production is unusual for an Indian ejidatario. He does not have time for working his milpa during the labour intensive phases of the agricultural cycle, principally time for weeding, so he hires two or three abasoleños to do the work for him. He still has to work in the fields occasionally, but hopes that growth of his business will reduce the need for working on the land eventually. Besides his milpa don José also keeps three cows and a pig for breeding. His wife has chickens. If one can amass enough capital to buy a cow for breeding this appears to offer significant advantages. Cows require little care and they graze on common ejidal land. In this way those who have an initial advantage may place themselves in a position such that the benefits of common land are channeled to select individuals thus reinforcing a financially superior position.

Don José was not able to establish his tienda by relying simply on resources and opportunities offered within the limited framework of the ejido, nor did he have an herencia. In 1966 he began to work for the government in road construction. After eight years of this he was able to save 4000 pesos with which he started his business. From modest beginnings it has grown considerably (it was mentioned that to a certain extent this can be explained through the misappropriation of village funds that
he had been in a position to handle). Despite the fact that it is the largest tienda in the area between Ocósingó and Oxchuc, it does not generate enough income to fully support his family so he must work in the fields to supplement his commercial activities. It appears as though the nature of Abasolo, and indeed Indian villages in general, militates against the establishment of specialised activities which could fully support a family. The competition is stiff, don José's store is surrounded by other smaller shops and customers are not wealthy enough to provide much sales volume.

Directing money from the tienda to pay other Abasoleños to work an ejidal milpa appears to be a peculiar strategy. To be economically logical the value added to the harvest by the people he hires must be less than the value of his time spent handling his business affairs. Another important consideration concerns his right to land. If his land lies idle don José would effectively forfeit his access to land. This would in turn mean that his membership in the community, upon which are predicated some important responsibilities, would be jeopardised. He is a juez municipal (municipal judge) and a member of the patronato (board of directors) which is organising and supervising the construction of the new market place. Redfield, in the context of Yucatan has pointed out that the essence of being an Indian is located in the practice of milpa agriculture. Apart from the economic logic of maintaining an ejidal milpa, don José may need to maintain a congruence between the material basis of his
household economy and that of Abasolo at large in order to retain his position in the community.

**Summary**

The four economic profiles of Abasolinos show that insufficient subsistence production requires integration with economic systems beyond the household. The basic profile that emerges is not fully common to all four individuals in that the relationship of the household with CONASUPO and the relationship of the household with a milpa outside the ejido are alternatives open to the household economy rather than simultaneous relations for a for a single household. However, the fundamental pattern, as illustrated in figure 3, with the above qualifications, forms the basis of household production in Abasolo. Integral to this pattern is a deficit of subsistence milpa production which is a consequence of land shortage, the roots of which were discussed in Chapter II. Meeting the consumption needs of the household in this context of insufficient resources absolutely requires integration so that a shortfall in basic food products may be made up either through direct purchase of food, or purchase of access to land as a necessary means of producing subsistence products. The four profiles examined provide an indication of the various manners in which this necessary integration may be achieved.
Abasoleno Basic Economic Profile

Figure 3

subsidised maize production

CONASUPO

local market

household

private milpa

ejidal milpa

ejidal cane

$ food

food

food

labour

labour

labour

panela
The structural insufficiency of Abasolo milpa production — milpa production within the bounds of the ejido, that is — can be augmented by directly purchasing food from the CONASUPO outlet, or through gaining access to land outside the ejido. Marcos Velasquez and don José both lack access to land outside the ejido, and consequently purchase maize and beans from the CONASUPO. Jacinto Santos and Jorge Sanchez have access to land outside the ejido, but under quite different arrangements. Except for cases involving herencia, as is the situation with Jacinto Santos, the obvious requisite for these means of making up the balance of household consumption needs is a cash income. These sources of cash income lie in a set of two economic relationships. The first one, which is integral to the basic economic profile, is the relationship of Abasoleno producers to other Indians through the local market system whereby inter-village ecological complementarities and traditional specialisations allow Abasoleno panela producers to sell to other Indians. Every one of the four individuals profiled has relied on local market integration of panela. Don José, however, by parlaying his surplus gained in wage labour (and possibly other areas as well) into merchandise, has been able to transcend the production of panela, the returns of which have been outstripped by the profits of his tienda, and are therefore no longer essential to his household economy. Economic integration in this case is with the local system of exchange between Indian communities. Lados also participate in this market, but panela is not an important
part of their diet so the actual exchanges supporting the household economy that do occur are between Indians.

Of continuing importance for Marcos Velasquez and of past importance for don José is wage labour. Don José was able to earn a considerable amount of money working on the highway that passes by Abasolo. Although this money was critical as a base from which to start his tienda, now that he has crossed a threshold where his integration with other households via his tienda can supply as much income as is necessary wage labour is not an essential augmentation to his household. Marcos, on the other hand, requires regular wage labour to make up the shortfall in his milpa production. Unlike the case of don José, there is no sign of a surplus being built up which could be used to invest in cash producing activities. For this reason wage labour is likely to remain an integral aspect of the reproductive cycle of Marcos's household economy. In Abasolo, as in Sibaca, wage labour is avoided if possible, since it is unpleasant, takes the worker far from his family and involves subordination to dominant ladinos.

For those members of Abasolo, and outlying communities as well, who have either not chosen to, or not been able to use their cash incomes to gain access to land for making milpa, integration represented by the purchase of maize and beans from the CONASUPO outlet is of critical importance for the meeting of the consumption needs of the household. Underlying the exchange relation between the local CONASUPO outlet and the peasant
household in Abasolo are supports which are extensions of the Mexican national economic system. In terms of its immediate local expression in Abasolo, the CONASUPO represents the support of the local economy, which is inadequate to meet the needs of the household, through the subsidisation of consumption commodities by more dynamic sectors, such as the petroleum sector. This is to say that the exchange relation between CONASUPO and the household presupposes certain political-economic structures within the national economic system.

In Abasolo there is evident an inability of the household to confine its productive activities to the ejido. In order for this to be achieved the peasant household must enter into a number of exchange relations; with other peasant households, with land owners, with fingueros, with other employers of Indian labour, and with the Mexican governmental agency CONASUPO. It is apparent that meeting the consumption needs of the household involves participation in a web of economic relations which extend far beyond the local economy. The manner in which these relationships are articulated in turn means that market fluctuations, changes in government policies and other variations remote from the household economy, can have a strong impact on how a family's consumption needs are met - and ultimately on how the peasant household, as the fundamental unit of the peasant economy, is reproduced. Because there is a subsistence deficit in Abasolo, integration is of paramount importance. Furthermore, there is no room for consolidation
towards the subsistence base, as is the case with Sibaca. The implication of unfavourable changes in the relation of the Abasolo household to the outside economic systems that they are integrated with is an inability to meet the consumption needs of the household and the consequence of this is the unviability of the peasant economic form under certain circumstances.
VI. Conclusion

"This opposition has been conceptualized as one of direct and unequal competition. This is true, but at the same time they are also symbiotically related. From this perspective they are less like two boxers standing on their own feet, slugging it out, and more like wrestlers locked in combat, but holding each other up."!

The stated objective of this thesis is to explore the manner in which the heterogenous economic landscape of highland Chiapas is integrated. Economic integration exists between different forms in the highlands and between the highlands and larger economic systems. The analysis has focussed on Tzeltal households as the basic unit of the peasant economic form as it is expressed in the two villages of Abasolo and Sibacá. In conclusion the particular and manifold aspects that emerge as significant, and their implications are discussed. These aspects of peasant integration are:

1. That the patterns of integration are not homogenous, but vary according to both the local economy and the household.

2. That integration is a complex phenomenon in that it is not simply an adjunct to subsistence production that is analytically separable, but is closely intertwined with subsistence production in the household economy.

3. That the nexus of integration may occur in varying

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relationship to the household and in varying relationship to the exchange of peasant products. This has important implications for the structure of the peasant household.

4. That the partial nature of integration of the peasants studied here is a consequence of both the structure of the peasant household and the structure of the economic systems with which it is integrated.

1. It is amply evident that the economic integration characteristic of Sibacá is in marked contrast to that of Abasolo. These two villages share many similarities and are located in fairly close proximity, nevertheless profound differences exist. That these differences exist between two nearby villages with similar cultures strongly suggests that the spectrum of integration patterns pertaining to all of Mexico is immensely variable. This variation is magnified by the range of individual strategies pursued by individual households within a given local economy.

Comparing the differences between the villages of Sibacá and Abasolo a major distinction in the nature of economic integration becomes clear. This involves the manner in which integration with other economic systems becomes a part of the reproduction of the peasant household. In Sibacá the sufficiency of the land base allows for the most important consumption needs of the household to be met within the bounds of the communal land base to which all ejidatarios are entitled. This, in conjunction with cash earned from the sale of coffee has meant
that the households of Sibacá are in the relatively fortunate position of having an economic surplus at their disposal. This surplus is used to elaborate the household economy in the cases of the particular households observed. Elaboration in turn requires integration with other economic forms in order to dispose of the additional product of the elaborated household economy. Examples of this are; livestock raising for sale of calves to ranches and of piglets and meat to the ladinos of Ocotingo, establishment of a tienda as surplus is spent on merchandise, apicultural experiments, and improved technology which may have the effect of releasing labour from subsistence activities to those oriented to integration beyond the household. The implication of this kind of integration (providing that conditions in the world coffee market and the budget of INMÉCARE do not deteriorate) is also an expansion of peasant household reproduction. This is presently evident in the new and more comfortable styles of housing that are being adopted in the village.

In Abasolo the household must contend with an insufficiency of ejidal land. This requires economic relations outside the ejido in order to gain access to either food, or land on which to produce food. Every household economy profiled in Abasolo had different ways of integrating beyond the household to meet the consumption requirements of the household. In the transgenerational reproduction of Jacinto Santos' household economy an herencia of land outside the ejido has provided for
access to sufficient resources with which to meet the consumption needs of his household. Marcos Velasquez must pursue wage labour to buy the food that his family needs. Jorge Sanchez relies on integration with other indigenous villages via the local market system to rent land to make milpa. Finally, don Jose can support his family through the earnings of his tienda. The underlying reason behind integration in all these cases is the inadequacy of ejidal resources in relation to the needs of the household.

2. The examination of peasant households shows that economic integration beyond the level of the household is a complex phenomenon in that it is much more than an analytically separable adjunct to subsistence production. Integration and subsistence are two closely intertwined aspects such that integration in conjunction with subsistence production is essential to the reproduction to the peasant household. From this it follows that the economic structure of the peasant household involves the interplay of subsistence and integration. On the one hand the circumstances under which subsistence production takes place condition the ability of the household to integrate and, on the other the nature of the opportunities offered by capitalist economic forms to the peasantry require a strategy of maximum reliance on subsistence production.

In Sibacá the logic of integration presupposes a sufficiency of subsistence production. The elaboration that takes place as a consequence of this does not impinge on the
capacity of the household to meet its consumption needs internally. That this is the case is illustrated by the manner in which Tomás Juarez established his household economy without access to a family complement of milpa and cafetal/platanal due to the particular circumstances surrounding the transgenerational break in the reproduction of his household. His efforts were first monopolised by milpa production, the surplus of which he used to breed pigs. That it was milpa production monopolising his labour is a reflection of the concrete circumstances under which subsistence production takes place in Sibacá - conditions that are very widespread throughout Meso-America. That integration was in the form of the sale of piglets is a reflection of the nature of the opportunities afforded by the heterogeneous landscape in the Municipio of Ocosingo - as well as a reflection of the preferences of Tomás for petty commodity production as opposed to wage labour.

Concrete conditions in Abasolo are very much different. For that reason there is a different kind of conjuncture between subsistence and integration. Integration in Abasolo follows from an inability of the household to internally meet its consumption requirements. Because of this, integration with other forms in order to make up the shortfall in internal food production is especially critical. The two most important cash producing activities are wage work and panela production, the earnings of which may be either used to rent land or to buy food. Of particular importance is the fact that the types of integration
open to Abasoleños only provide very restricted incomes. The demand for *panela* production comes mostly from Indians who are no better off than the Abasoleños themselves, and furthermore, *panela* must compete with refined sugar which is subsidized by CONASUPO and produced under modern conditions. Consequently, *panela*, because of the market it is in, can only provide limited incomes. Integration with capitalist economic forms in terms of wage labour for coffee producers, ranches and other employers of Indian labourers is characterised by underemployment and very low wages. Because of the limited capabilities of capitalist economic forms to absorb Indian labour and the limited capacity for integration in the local market Abasolenos must engage in *milpa* production to the fullest extent possible. In the case of Abasolo Heynig's statement concerning the nature of peasant production in relation to restricted opportunities for integration bears repeating: "...peasant producers may subsist, but only in miserable and overexploited conditions of life and work."  

3. The nexus of integration may occur in varying relation to the peasant household and in varying relation to the exchange of peasant products. Important implications can be attached to these relations. By and large the nexus of household integration - that is to say the contact with outside economic systems - occurs outside of the household as finished products are sold, particularly foodstuffs. Production destined for the market such

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2 *Principal Schools of Thought on the Peasant Economy,* p.130
as panela, platão and most coffee, takes place on the communal land base and is carried out according to the judgements of the peasant producers. Wage work and INMECAFE's technical requirements of Diego Ortega's coffee production are notable exceptions to this.

Wage labour is a direct form of integration in that the peasant whose labour is reproduced in part by peasant production in the household economy - works in capitalist relations for economic forms producing for the market. This kind of integration, per se, is ultimately ambivalent in terms of whether its effect could be construed as fortifying or dissolving the peasant economic form. Thus wage labour is a Janus-faced factor in terms of the peasant economic form because while it represents the direct subsumption of peasant labour by capitalist economic forms it also provides the cash necessary to prevent the dissolution of the household.

Although the case of Diego Ortega is an isolated one, it has very important implications in terms of the relationship that peasant producers may have to brokers of their cash crops. In order to expand production of coffee which is largely destined for the export market, the Mexican government, through its agency, INMECAFE, is depending in part on peasant producers who produce more than half of Mexico's coffee. Improvements of and control over production involves moving the nexus of

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3Even in the case where an Abasceleño works for a Sibateco the relations are technically capitalist in so far as wage labour relations are involved in the production of a commodity.
integration onto the cafetal so that the labour and resources of the peasant, along with those contributed by the Instituto, are directed by the Instituto rather than the peasant. This leads to the recognition by Diego that the coffee he grows "es del gobierno y ellos ganan de nuestro trabajo." Effective control of the peasant land base moves from the peasant to the Instituto for reasons involving the national economic system and its position in the world economy. As the most subordinate actor in a long chain of integration the position of the peasant is manipulated to suit the logic of the larger system. As this happens the role of the ejido as a guarantor of a land base for subsistence production becomes confused and perhaps it becomes an obsolete barrier to the more efficient organisation of agriculture - efficient in this case for INMEECAPE as a representative of the national government.

4. The partial nature of integration of peasants with other economic systems is a consequence both of the structure of the peasant economy and the structure of the economic systems with which it is integrated. Since the perspective of this study has been from the level of the household, the capacity of the household to integrate has been stressed more than the capacity of outside economic forms to integrate peasant households, although attention has been drawn to the restricted opportunities available to peasants in highland Chiapas. This inability of the Mexican economy, as well as those of most Latin American countries, to productively absorb peasant labour
outside the household is well documented in other studies (Ortega, Heynig, Stavenhagen, Centro de Investigaciones Agrarias)

The atomised structure of peasant production is one of the primary factors involved in the structural inability of the peasant household to be economically integrated with other systems. This is evident in the failure of the ejidal truck in Sibacá and the cooperatives in Abasolo to serve as mechanisms of integration. In Sibacá the truck was not able to effectively improve the transportation link between Sibateco producers of cash crops and their markets because the product was not consolidated to go out in large cargos, but reached the market individually on the back of the producer. Once the truck was purchased, in order to be economical it was of necessity drawn to Ocosingo to provide a transportation service in the commercial centre between capitalist forms of production. In this case the truck as an integral part of the local economy was frustrated by the atomised structure of peasant production.

In the case of Abasolo, cooperative efforts to increase production for exchange were similarly frustrated by the inability of peasants to coordinate their efforts - as a consequence of this production dispersed from a cooperative level of organisation to the basic unit of peasant organisation, the household.

A further structural limit to the peasant household's inability to integrate involves the particular nature of access
to land, which is according to the usufruct provisions of the ejidal institution. Excepting illegal breaches of ejidal law, a peasant in the highlands may not leave his village without losing his right to land nor may he sell the land which he is working in order to leave the village with some money. This, in relation to the uncertainties involved in establishing oneself outside the home village may exert pressure to stay in the village and thereby insure that what integration does take place is partial.

The above aspects of the peasant economy of highland Chiapas, as profiled in eight households and the institutional framework of their villages, show that economic integration and subsistence production are fused aspects of peasant reproduction. More importantly the very viability of peasant economic forms as a means of meeting the consumption needs of rural households depends on integration with other economic systems. The implication of this is that under certain conditions in the national and world economic systems the peasant economic form may not be viable in particular local economies. This crucial matter of the viability of the peasant economic form, upon which rests the question of whether the peasant way of life will continue to provide a source of livelihood for the majority of rural Mexicans, depends as well on the particular conditions prevailing in a local economy in relation to those in other economic systems. Because of this it is not possible to make unilinear statements of how processes of
integration will proceed or general statements on the impact of integration of peasants. The value of the research presented here lies precisely in its effort to identify the concrete mechanisms of integration as they are incorporated in the reproduction of the peasant household. This in turn serves to illuminate the complexity and magnitude of the problem of economic integration in heterogeneous economic landscapes.


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